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OUT  **ON THE COAST**
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Covering the Space and Treasure Coasts

Issue #074, January 2009



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- Jan 16th: Kelli Randell
- Jan 23rd: Page King
- Jan 30th: Aysia Black



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- Jan 3rd: Angelica Kincade
- Jan 10th: Leigh Shannon
- Jan 17th: Kori Stevens
- Jan 24th: Tiffany McCray
- Jan 31st: TBA

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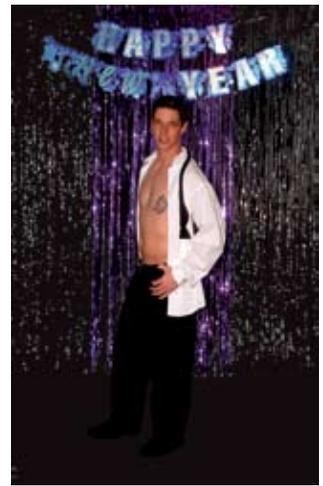
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Model: Brian, Melbourne
 Photo: LANZ

**Issue #074
 December 17, 2008**

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REBAR

photos: Lee, Richard



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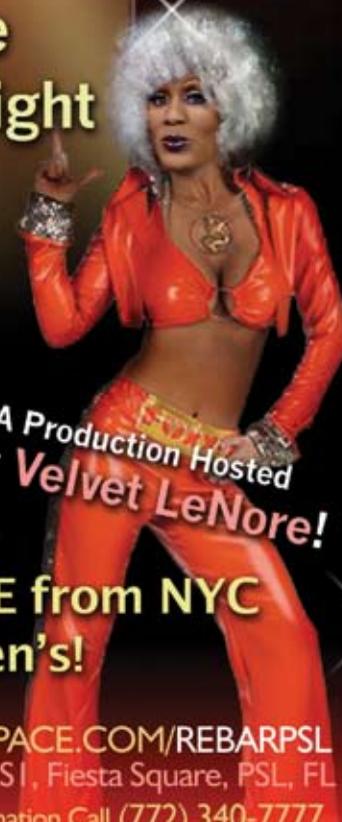
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HOROSCOPE *by Jacqueline*

We begin this month with Venus going into Pisces allows all of us to feel what we truly love. The full moon in Cancer on the 10th gives the emotional power to feel what nurtures us and with the Sun and Mars in Capricorn this month, empowers us to make foundational changes towards achieving it. However Mercury goes retrograde on the 10th. This will bring distorted views in how to achieve our goals. Learn to wait and not act during this time and you'll find when the New moon in Aquarius on the 26th comes you'll see the true picture. Next month will prove to be the beneficial time to take physical actions towards achieving your goals.

Aries March 23 - April 22 That adrenaline rush that began last month is giving you the motivation to finish projects and situations. However, after January 11th you'll have to wait until after February 1st for anything to finalize. But don't loose that natural high, during this slack time use your sense of humor and ability to live in the now to ease the tension.

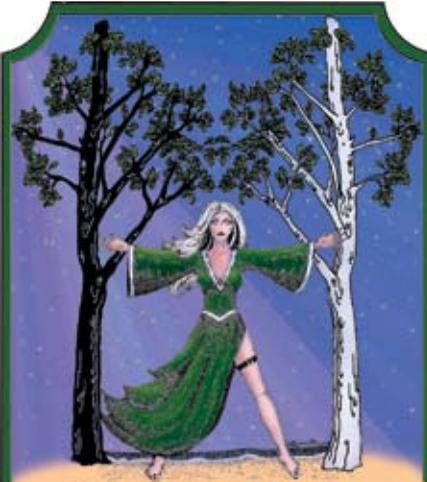
Taurus April 23 - May 22 As your sign implies, Taurus, the bull, determination and grace however, the plans and goals you've set forth this month will not be finished. There is more for you to learn. Now is not the time to be bullish, be open to what others are telling you and make sure you don't read more into their words. Put your anxieties to the universe and see what falls into place.

Gemini May 23 - June 22 Feeling a little restless and others aren't keeping up with you? This mercury retrograde heightens your intuitiveness and allows you to see what needs to be done however, others won't. This is a time when you stand alone. Stay with what you feel and everyone else will catch up after mercury goes direct.

Cancer June 23 - July 22 With Mars conjunct Pluto and opposing your sign, others will ignore or misinterpret your good intentions. Most importantly, nothing is urgent. This month you can be prone to accidents. So, take the time and please yourself; you'll find your friends and loved ones supportive.

Leo July 23 - August 22 With both the south node and vertex going through your sign this month, it's a good time to enjoy a nice winter hibernation. If you don't rest, you'll find yourself volunteering for things you don't want to do. So, find that loved one to cuddle up next to and relax. After mercury goes direct next month, all will return to normal.

continued on page 8



Jacqueline
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Astrologer/Tarologist

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Jan 10: Tiffany McCray
Shelita Cox & Melissa Love



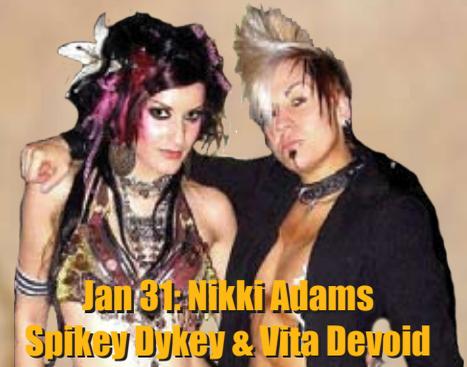
Jan 17: Kelli Randell
Latrice Royale & Champagne Bordeaux



Jan 24: Velvet LeNore
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Virgo August 23 – September 22 You start this year off focusing directly on your work. However, don't forget the human factor. Just because you are focused doesn't mean others will be. Do what you can and allow room for others to figure their part on their own. You'll find finishing a project or playing with one of your hobbies will be quite relaxing.

Libra September 23 – October 22 Now is not the time to procrastinate! Plan ahead, and ask more questions now or you'll experience misunderstandings with friends and loved ones after the 11th. This is a good time to travel or take walks through a natural setting. Know nothing is urgent and nothing will be resolved until next month.

Scorpio October 23 – November 22 With Mars sextilling your sun, you'll be endowed to perform Herculean efforts! Others will look to you as the advisor and mediator. However, be digressive and use tact with your answers and it will draw others closer to you. Music will prove to be extremely beneficial for you now.

Sagittarius November 23 – December 22 Now that you've enjoyed a very social month and probably packed on a few pounds, it's time to go back to a routine. This is a good time to set a good exercise routine, not only for the weight, but also for the peace of mind. This month is a conservative month for you. Make sure you watch what you spend.

Capricorn December 23 – January 22 Happy solar return! Having Mars and the

Sun in your sign this month empowers you to make dynamic, decisive, and foundational changes. Use this time to make the changes in your life personally instead of using it for "the greater good of the world". You'll find better results.

Aquarius January 23 – February 22 This month proves to be an adventurous month for you. Your free spirit and humanitarianism pays off this year. This month is a good time to start on a new path or a new direction on the same path. You'll find it will not only bring you financial security but also great success in the long run.

Pisces February 23 – March 22 With Venus going into your sign on the 3rd, continue living in the moment this month, but move slowly now. Those who are true will prove that this month. Allow the others to quietly pass. You're intuitive abilities are strong, especially with love. You may find that special one you've been searching for.

For those who want to know: This month the Sun and Mars in Capricorn will be sextilling the scorpion energy. What a sextile does is generates a complimentary energy between the 2 signs. What this means for us right now is that foundational changes are being changed behind the scenes and we won't find out the full picture of these changes until later. ▼

Monthly horoscopes by Jacqueline. She is at B&A Flea Market in Stuart every weekend from 10 to 2. For more information on Astrology or for private readings or parties call: 772.286.2720

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Kelli Randell
hosts



Jan. 9 & 16

Shelita Cox
hosts



Jan. 2 & 23

Temptation & Mizz Micki



Jan. 2

Valerie Dior & Tiffany McCray



Jan. 9

Myesha & Rianna LeNore



Jan. 16

Velvet LeNore & Mizz Micki



Jan. 23

Melissa St. Jon hosts
Velocity Xtreme & Rianna LeNore

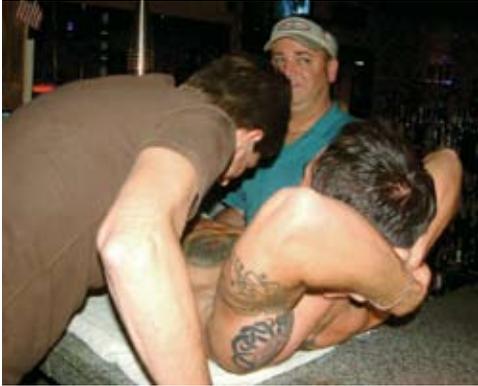


Jan. 30

Tea Time

with Miss T

Where to start – we are a bit, um, tired, yeah tired, from all the holiday parties. Production week started off with the PFLAG Vero beach Christmas dinner, a group we've been a member of for seven years, forcing us to miss the PFLAG Melbourne and Space Coast Business Guild dinners the same evening. Then we missed the **REBAR** customer appreciation party on Thursday due to a commitment to meet people at The Living Room coffee clutch in Melbourne. Hopefully next year the events will be spread out a bit more because we'd really like to support everyone and be with all our friends (not to mention all that food and drink).



Body shots at REBAR! Kenny looks amused and distracted at the same time!

We ended the week with a marathon of house parties starting with Hugh, Jason and Brian's on Friday, then three on Saturday starting with Richard and Carl's in Vero, a brief cameo at Moose's annual not-to-be missed soiree in Port St. John; finishing up with some good friends at Jeffry and Michael's in Palm Bay. Then we topped off the weekend at Trish and Lisa's for brunch. So if this column is a little hazy, you'll understand that my poor old brain is a little fried!

And there's no rest on the horizon with **Cold Keg's** party, The Living Room's

board meeting, Space Coast Pride Committee meeting, NOW social, Cocoa and Melbourne Coffee Clutch and magazine distribution all happening before the Boys of Thunder show up at **Cold Keg** on Friday. It's no wonder that by the time the holidays actually arrive we find ourselves a little let down.

The Living Room's Melbourne Coffee Clutch is no let down! Meeting every Thursday at 7:30 PM, at the Sun Shoppe in downtown Melbourne has been growing and growing. There are men and women, young and old totaling up to 20 or 30 folks hanging out, meeting and talking. When The Living Room teamed up with Space Coast Business Guild to start a coffee night in Cocoa Village, 63 people showed up at the Ultra Lounge! The Cocoa event is on every other Tuesday at 6:30 PM so the final one of this year will be on December 30. Check out one or both and enjoy friends new and old while our community builds and grows.

The area PFLAGs are growing, too. Lexi and Lisa have gotten PFLAG Melbourne up and running through trials and tribulations and now Carole Benowitz (the state coordinator) is starting one in Port St. Lucie. The initial meeting will be on Sunday, January 4, at 2 PM at St. Julian of Norwich Old Catholic Parish 7664 South Federal Hwy (US 1). That's next to McDonalds, 1 block south of Prima Vista. Enter next to doctor's office and go all the way to the house in the very back. You can reach Carole with questions or comments at pflag@pobox.com. Will we see you there? Come meet the wonderful people from St. Julian's and you never know who will show up but, based on my experience in Vero and Melbourne, you can be sure they'll be nice and supportive and friendly and well worth knowing.

continued on page 15

Promoting understanding,
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Bryan Adams

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Gershwin Sings Gershwin

Tuesday, Jan 20, 8 pm



The Temptations & The Four Tops

Thursday, Jan 22, 8 pm



Lewis Black

Friday, Jan 23, 8 pm



David Copperfield

Wed, Jan 28, 5:30/8:30 pm



 kingcenter.com

Spiritually Speaking

I wonder what I would have heard had I been there that first Christmas night. Would I have heard the choirs of angels singing or simply the sounds of barnyard animals shifting around? Would I have seen the star in the sky that night or simply been blinded by the darkness? Would I have understood the hushed silence of the divine presence, or simply the chill of a cold east wind. Would I have understood the significance of God's love-gift to humanity wrapped in swaddling clothes, or would the cosmic implications of that evening have passed me by?

I am convinced that had two people been there that night in Bethlehem it is quite possible that they could have heard and seen two entirely different scenes. I believe this because all of life is this way. God is never presented in revelation in a manner to which we are forced to believe. We are always left with an option, for that is God's way. Thus, one person can say "It's a miracle;" while another says "It's a coincidence."

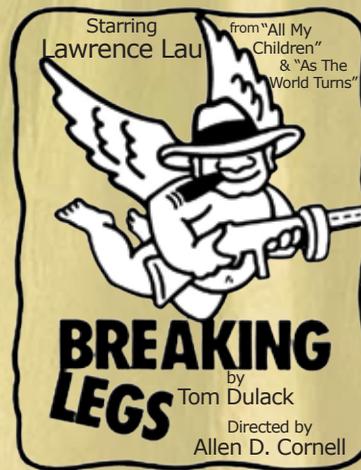
"Ho, ho, ho"... "Joy to the world"... etc... not everyone sees the joy this season! The JOY of the season is in the perception. Consider the Virgin Mary: she had irritating attitudes and finger-pointing to deal with, but she triumphed over them and became NOT Woman of Insinuation, but Woman of the Promise....Remember Mary's visit by the Archangel Gabriel? Mary, a virgin, engaged to Joseph, is informed that she has been chosen to bear a son, a special child, the promised Messiah, the One of whose kingdom there would be no end. Now, let's get real. Mary could not have been immediately overjoyed at this announcement. How is she going

explain her pregnancy to Joseph, to whom she was engaged, and especially to all those wagging tongues?

A virgin birth? Uh huh... In the Christian faith we believe in the virgin birth of Jesus. There has been a trend in liberal circles to re-interpret the doctrine of the virgin birth and to explain it away. It is interesting to note, that in Islam, a cousin faith to Christianity, Muslims are taught in the Koran about the virgin birth of Jesus. That is one thing we have in common. In Judaism, the other cousin faith of Christianity, the virgin birth is looked upon with scorn and ridicule. I mean, can't you just hear Joseph's colleagues trying to get him through this pickle:

"Yossef, bubela, snap out of it. Your woman is pregnant, you didn't sleep with her, and now you want to blame God? Here's a number for ya' to call now: 444-shrink...oy veh..."

Mary, as Joseph, had much to consider in accepting this divine plan. In ancient times, one would be literally cut off from society and in some cases suffer stoning out of wedlock. Yeah, great news Gabriel—joy, wonderful joy! Yet, in this story we must not miss the key that will give us hope and joy in our predicaments of life. With God nothing is impossible, Mary is told. God's promise to Mary was like a seed planted within her. Her pregnancy, this mysterious working of the Holy Spirit, was welcomed by Mary, as she surrendered to the promise. She says to Gabriel: "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said." Mary, Woman of the Promise, was faithful to the Word with her. And she bore God's



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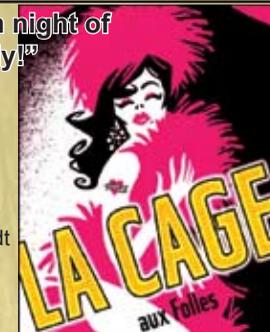
Mild mannered playwright and professor, Terrence, needs backers to produce his new play. Fortunately, one of his former students has not only a thing for the professor, but also a family that might provide the money he needs. Unfortunately, her family is the "family" and his future investors are really "connected," if you know what we mean.

"A Lovely and lavish night of musical comedy!"

- The New York Times

Feb. 13 -
Mar. 8, 2009

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Book by Harvey Fierstein
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wondrous plan, the Word that would become flesh and dwell among us...

When we learn surrender and commitment to God, glorious possibilities are planted within our soul. God has promised us so much! As Mary, we must remain faithful to God and only then will God's promise to us come to pass and be born through us. Think of all the wonderful possibilities that can be birthed through our lives! What joy! Adela Rogers St. Johns, American Author and Journalist wrote:

"Joy seems to me a step beyond happiness—

Happiness is a sort of atmosphere you can live in sometimes when you're lucky.

Joy is a light that fills you with hope and faith and love."

My prayer for our readers in this holiday season and for the coming year of

2009, is that the joy's light will fill us with new possibilities and satisfy us with these gifts: **Hope** that learns to see the breathtaking world God has created; **Love** that respects each other, affirms, believes in, and perfects each other; **Faith** to believe in the impossible; and for **Peace** to prevail in every corner of our planet... May it be so...Amen.



The Reverend Gregory L. Denton is Pastor of New Hope First Community Church, "A church built on love where everyone is welcome," an independent growing congregation that believes in God's all-inclusive love. New Hope, celebrating its 12th year in the Palm Beaches, is located at 2929A South Seacrest Blvd. in Boynton Beach, FL. Sunday services are 10:30 am. Discussion Group/Bible Study Thursdays at 7:30 pm. On the web at: www.newhopefla.org

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If you're looking for something worth your while on Christmas Eve, East Coast Christian Community will be having 2 Christmas Eve services again this year – one in Port St Lucie at 6 p.m. and one in Melbourne at 10 p.m.

Family of God in Cocoa's service is at 9 pm on Christmas Eve. There will be NO service on Christmas day but there will be a potluck and prayer service 8:00 p.m. in the Chapel on New Year's Eve. This gathering will end at or before 10:00 p.m. No alcohol permitted-



Vero Beach PFLAG had their Christmas Pot Luck and collected gifts for Youth Guidance of Indian River county as well as money to buy presents for the AIDS impacted family they adopted. Last month they donated a significant amount of food to Homeless Assistance Center of Indian River County and, of course they donated \$500 from their World AIDS Day fund to local families impacted by HIV/AIDS.



Fellowship into the New Year with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Please RSVP before Christmas if you plan on attending.

Doc Holiday's in Cape Canaveral braved the freezing weather to attend the Sawmill's Holiday Shopping Spree Weekend and although the weather was too cold the deals were hot and the few campers that turned up walked away with loads of bargain priced loot. If you live beachside and haven't stopped in, you really should check the place out.

And which party will you be checking out New Year's Eve? **REBAR's** giving away more cash and prizes but you can party two hours longer at **Cold Keg**. I suppose most people will be partying near their home town to avoid the traffic stops – but check out the away club and you might find a place to stay over.

And if you girls are looking for something special for NYE, run on over to **GiGi's Attic and Thrift Shop** at 240 S Wickham in Melbourne. Gayle will help you find an amazing outfit whether fancy or intimate. She got new and gently used women's clothes from toddler to plus so you're sure to find just what you're looking for.

Gay Rights Tidbit: PFLAG Launches First-of-its-Kind Safe Schools Initiative

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) launched a comprehensive, community-based safe schools program today to address a growing epidemic of anti-lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) animus in the nation's schools. The program, entitled Cultivating Respect, includes training seminars for local parents and allies, empowering PFLAG supporters at the local level to work directly with their community leaders and school administrators to protect LGBT students. PFLAG plans trainings across the country in 2009, following initial training sessions held earlier this year in Ohio and Tennessee.

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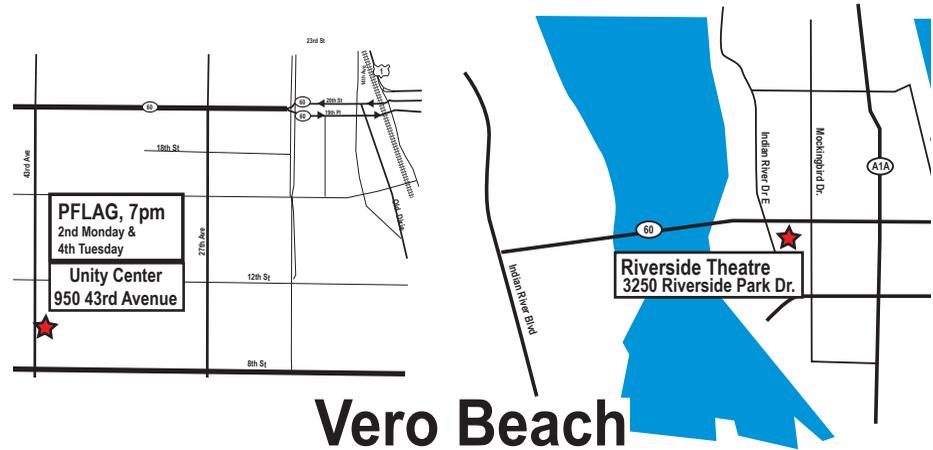
Space Coast

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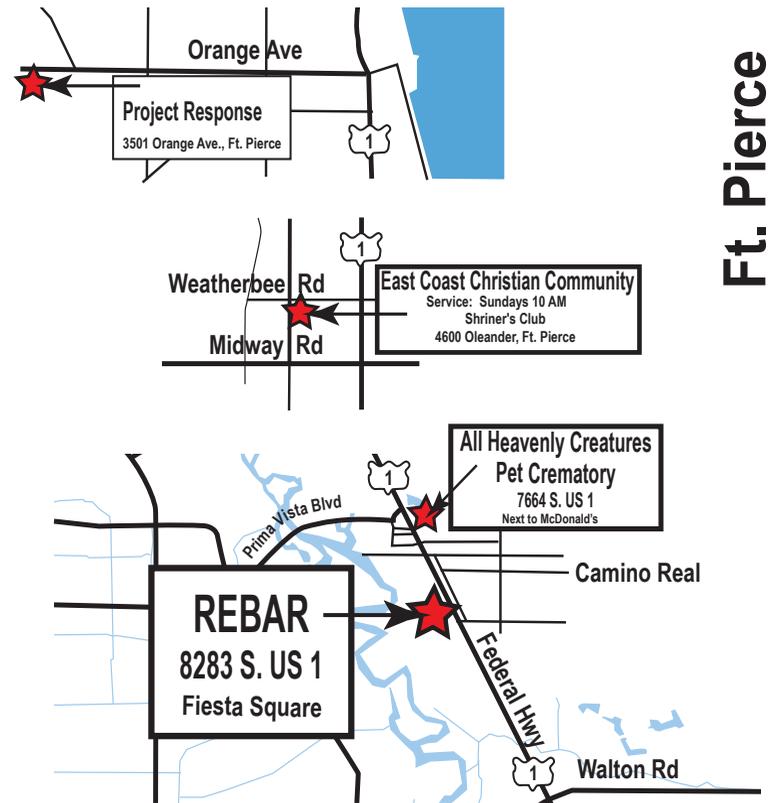


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photos: Lee & Phillip



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“Too many students attend school in fear, and too few school administrators and leaders understand just how damaging a hostile learning environment can be for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people,” said Jody M. Huckaby, PFLAG’s executive director. “Cultivating Respect is the very first program designed to identify and mobilize a grassroots network of parents and allies to take an active role in combating anti-gay behavior, policies, information and environments in their local schools. When children do not feel safe, they cannot learn, and their school experience becomes fraught with the long-lasting effects of unchecked hostility. By working with local parents and local administrators, Cultivating Respect addresses community and school-specific concerns. This is a significant step forward in making our classrooms, hallways and locker rooms safer for every student.”

The PFLAG training, which builds on the organization’s prior work in schools across the country, includes insights on fostering on-going dialogues with local school leaders; approaching administrators about implementing safe schools policies; skills building seminars on language, policy and problem solving in schools; identifying and leveraging access points within the school community; and training on three specific programs that can be implemented in local schools. The program is also designed to counter harmful, anti-gay campaigns by conservative advocacy groups, including attempts to infiltrate libraries with anti-gay literature and information on so-called “reparative therapy” practices, which have been condemned by medical experts. A workbook on LGBT school issues, titled *The Top 10 Ways to Make Schools Safer for All Students*, was also released today in conjunction with the training and outreach program.

“It is critically important that students, teachers, parents and administrators have accurate, inclusive information and materials about sexual orientation and gender identity,” said Huckaby. “Anti-family advocates are pushing an extreme, anti-gay agenda that seeks to

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IN THE NEWS

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

TAMPA—The Tampa Bay Tribune reported on November 19: “It wasn’t exactly Obama at Grant Park, but observers agreed Tuesday’s swearing in of Kevin Beckner as Hillsborough County’s first openly gay county commissioner was historic and precedent-setting.

“It’s a new day,” said county circuit court Clerk Pat Frank, a former commissioner who attended the morning ceremony with hundreds of others.

“It’s people opening their minds,” Frank said. “They’re welcoming change, so it is Obama-like.”

Beckner, 37, took the oath of office alongside his partner, Gil Sainz, a sergeant and 23-year veteran of the county sheriff’s office. Circuit Judge Caroline Tesche administered the oath to Beckner.

Observers said it was the largest crowd they’d ever seen for a commission investiture ceremony and most attributed it to the excitement over Beckner, a Democrat who defeated Republican incumbent Brian Blair. The commission chamber was standing-room only, and other attendees filled seats in the County Center lobby and a television-equipped overflow room on the 26th floor.

MIAMI—A Miami-Dade Circuit Judge Cindy Lederman has declared Florida’s 50-year-old ban on gay adoptions unconstitutional -- a ruling state lawyers immediately said they would challenge.

The ruling sets the stage for Frank Gill, a gay man from North Miami, to adopt two foster children he has raised since 2004.

In a 53-page ruling, Judge Lederman said, “It is clear that sexual orientation is not a predictor of a person’s ability to parent.”

Two lawyers from the Florida Attorney General’s Office said they would file an appeal.

“We respect the court’s decision,” said Assistant Attorney General Valerie Martin. “Based upon the wishes of our client, the Department of Children & Families, we will file an appeal.”

Gill, who is raising the half-brothers, ages 4 and 8, said he was “elated” by the ruling and “I cried tears of joy for the first time in my life.”

PALM BEACH GARDENS—(Palm Beach Gardens, Florida) At tomorrow’s Benefits Fair, Seacoast Utility Authority (“SUA”) will inform employees with domestic partners that they will soon be eligible for all of the same family benefits that married employees have long received.

SUA, which furnishes water and sewer service to the City of Palm Beach Gardens, the Village of North Palm Beach, the Towns of Lake Park and Juno Beach, as well as to portions of unincorporated Palm Beach County, has 130 full time employees.

“Once again, informed managers have recognized the importance of providing family health care coverage and other benefits to to employees with domestic partners,” said Rand Hoch, President of the Palm Beach County Human Rights Council.

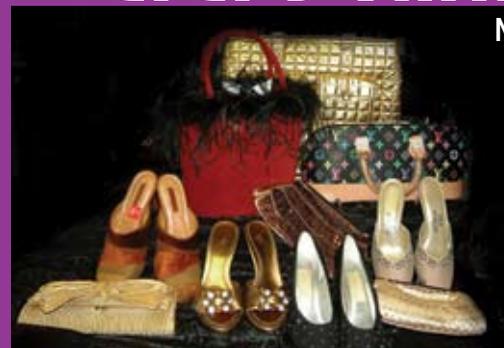
The Council is a local non-profit organization dedicated to ending discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. Over the years, the Council has assisted numerous employers throughout Palm Beach County with the implementation of domestic partner benefits.

Of the 48 public and quasi-public employers throughout Florida which provide domestic partner benefits, one-third are located in Palm Beach County.

HOLLYWOOD, CA—Wanda Sykes Comes Out (For Prop 8, too) And she didn’t even need the cover of People to do it.

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Having never publicly discussed her sexual orientation — but having made light of it on stage and on *The New Adventures of Old Christine*, where her character remains married to Julia Louis-Dreyfus — comedian Wanda Sykes surprised Las Vegas Prop 8 protesters by announcing she is gay and married her wife on Oct. 25. Why speak up now? Because of Prop 8’s passage. “I felt like I was being attacked, personally attacked — our community was attacked. ... Now, I gotta get in their face. ... I’m proud to be a woman. I’m proud to be a black woman, and I’m proud to be gay. ... Instead of having gay marriage in California — no — we’re going to get it across the country.”

NATIONWIDE—From an article on Queerty: Over 100,000 protesters across the country and across the globe attended rallies and marched on Saturday, November 15, in protest of California’s Proposition 8, which outlawed same-sex marriage. From Fairbanks, Alaska, where 32 people stood with signs in 6 degree weather as snow fell to San Diego, where 25,000 people marched on an unseasonably hot autumn day that reached into the 90s, supporters of civil

rights demanded equality. “This is the first time in U.S. history that the majority voted to strip the rights of a minority. Who will be next?” asked Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Center CEO Lori Jean, who also credited young people as the driving force of the movement, saying “We now pass the torch to you!”

CHICAGO, IL—Queerty reports that seven openly gay people have been assigned to head transition panels that will review federal agencies and departments by incoming President Barack Obama. They are among the 300 people who are serving in similar roles before January’s inauguration.

They are businessman Fred P. Hochberg, former San Francisco Supervisor Roberta Achtenberg, and labor attorney Elaine Kaplan, Rick Stamberger, president and CEO of SmartBrief, Inc., Brad Kiley, member of the Center for American Progress, Thomas Soto an investment fund manager focusing on “clean technologies” and former Romanian Ambassador Michael Guest. According to a statement on transition team websites: “The Agency Review Teams for

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the Obama-Biden Transition will complete a thorough review of key departments, agencies and commissions of the United States government as well as the White House...[and will] provide the president-elect, the vice president-elect, and key advisors with information needed to make strategic policy, budgetary, and personnel decisions prior to the inauguration”

Traditionally, these transition team posts are translated into mid or high level position within the administration once the President is sworn in.

SACRAMENTO, CA—The Supreme Court of California has agreed to rule on whether Proposition 8 -- the ballot initiative voters passed to ban same-sex marriage in California -- will be allowed to stand.

Specifically, the Court will address:

Whether Proposition 8 constitutes an amendment to or a revision of the California Constitution. (In California, constitutional revisions are required to be passed by the state legislature before they can be placed on the ballot);

Whether Proposition 8 violates the separation of powers doctrine in the California Constitution ; and,

What effect, if any, Proposition 8 would have on same-sex couples who were married in the state prior to the election on November 4, 2008.

CARRBORO, NC—Carrboro, North Carolina (pop 19,000) is probably not your “normal” North Carolina town either.

This formerly sleepy little farm community now is the home to a growing number of artists and musicians. It likes to call itself “The Paris of the Piedmont” and is considered one of the most liberal in the South.

Carrboro has had a long history of being gay-friendly. It was one of the first communities in North Carolina to offer health benefits to the same-sex partners of municipal workers. Openly gay former Mayor Mike Nelson served five terms and is now an Orange County commissioner.

So it did not really surprise many in this state when the other day the Carrboro

city council has passed a resolution supporting gay marriage and sent copies of it off to the state and federal government.

Alderwoman Jacqui Gist introduced the motion just after California voters passed Proposition 8 that amended their state's constitution to block same-sex marriage.

The resolution said: “Whereas, the denial of such benefits has been demonstrated to have significant psychological and social impact on the physical, social, and economic well-being of gay and lesbian couples and their families; and whereas the U.S. Supreme Court recognizes marriage as one of the ‘basic civil rights of man’ fundamental to our very existence and survival” and “one of the vital personal rights essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness by free men ... [be it resolved] that civil marriage for same-sex couples must include all the benefits commonly bestowed upon opposite-sex couples, including, among other rights, healthcare coverage and related decision-making, privileges under immigration and naturalization law, survivor benefits, inheritance rights, and child custody.”

The measure had the support of Mayor Mark Chilton who signed it.

North Carolina law does prohibit gay marriage here, but GOP attempts to enshrine it in the state constitution have so far failed.

But despite this ban on same-sex marriage in North Carolina, hospitals in this state revised the Patients’ Bill of Rights in April to ensure patients can receive the visitors who matter most to them regardless of the legal status of their relationship.

DES MOINES, IA—According to a New York Times article published on December 9, n a case that could make Iowa the first Midwestern state to legalize same-sex marriage, the Iowa Supreme Court on Tuesday pressed lawyers for both sides with sharp questions on topics like the 4,000-year-old history of marriage and whether a ruling favoring gay couples would open the door to polygamy.

The legal core of the case, Varnum v. Brien, is whether the state's 10-year-old law defining a “valid” marriage as only “between a male and female” violates the Iowa Constitution's

guarantees of equal treatment and due process.

A trial court judge ruled last year that the law was unconstitutional and that a dozen gay men and lesbians had been wrongly denied marriage licenses in Polk County, which includes the state capital, Des Moines. The state appealed the ruling.

But the technical details of the law and the Constitution were only part of a free-wheeling discussion lasting nearly two hours in which the seven justices repeatedly interrupted the lawyers, demanding that they parse and defend their positions.

Where was the line, they asked, between religious and governmental interests in definitions of marriage? How did the state's defense of the law defining marriage differ from the way it might have once defended now-defunct laws barring interracial marriage? Would allowing same-sex marriage encourage more gay couples to adopt, and was there anything wrong with that?

An assistant attorney for Polk County, Roger J. Kuhle, said the core of marriage, historically, was about children and creating stable systems for procreation.

“The essential factor of marriage, which is procreation, which is raising children, which is replenishing society, has never changed,” Mr. Kuhle told the court.

Justice David S. Wiggins then pointed out that society's notion of what was acceptable in marriage had evolved over time.

“Thirty years ago you couldn't have interracial marriage — I mean things are just changing,” Justice Wiggins said. “Is marriage, as you call it, a static relationship?”

But the panel was equally tough in pressing Dennis W. Johnson, the lawyer for the gay couples, led by Katherine and Patricia Varnum of Cedar Rapids. At one point several justices asked Mr. Johnson whether opening the door to same-sex marriage by striking down the state's law defining marriage might allow marriages of more than two people.

It would not, he responded, because the body of law that has evolved around the

institution of marriage is premised on two consenting adults. Gender, he said, is irrelevant to that institutional framework.

When asked whether recognizing same-sex marriage would not in fact change the institution itself, Mr. Johnson responded: “We're not suggesting a new institution. We're suggesting that everyone be able to participate equally.”

In his lower-court ruling, which found for the gay plaintiffs, Judge Robert B. Hanson of the Fifth Judicial District was sweeping in his dismissal of the state's claims that heterosexual marriage was bolstered by an exclusionary definition.

“The law is extremely over-inclusive in its attempt to strengthen heterosexual marriage and procreation by preventing an entire distinct group of individuals — homosexuals — from marrying,” Judge Hanson wrote.

Judge Hanson said that Iowa law already allowed gay couples to adopt children, and that of the more than 5,800 same-sex couples in the state, 37 percent were raising children under age 18.

WASHINGTON, DC—In keeping with its commitment to hold inaugural events that celebrate our common values and reflects the diversity and history of our great nation, President-elect Barack Obama and Vice President-elect Joe Biden's Inaugural Committee officially extended an offer to the Lesbian and Gay Band Association to march in the 56th Inaugural Parade.

Members of that group will join representatives from across the country and our Armed Forces in the historic parade down Pennsylvania Avenue following President-elect Obama's swearing-in ceremony on the steps of the Capitol.

This marks the first time that an openly LGBT group has been invited to participate in an Inaugural Parade.

“I am honored to invite these talented groups and individuals to participate in the Inaugural Parade,” said President-elect Obama. “These organizations embody the best of our nation's history, diversity and commitment to service. Vice President-elect Biden and I are proud to have them join us in the parade.”

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Organizations wishing to participate in the parade submitted an application to the Armed Forces Inaugural Committee (AFIC), which then assisted the Presidential Inaugural Committee in reviewing all of the groups' applications. All told, 1,382 organizations applied to participate, setting a new standard for interest in marching in the parade.

The Lesbian and Gay Band Association is a musical organization comprised of concert and marching bands from cities across America that provides a network of lesbian and gay bands.

The Presidential Inaugural Committee was assisted in its selection process by a group of experienced military musicians, who utilized their expertise to help assess the presentation skills of marching bands, musical acts and drill teams.

All participants in the Inaugural Parade are responsible for paying for their own lodging and transportation to and from Washington, D.C. The Committee has been working closely with area governments and civic organizations to facilitate access to affordable accommodations and would like to encourage citizens from across the country to reach out and help the Lesbian and Gay Band Association raise the necessary resources to participate in this historic event.

If you are interested in finding out more about supporting the Lesbian and Gay Band Association and their participation in the 56th Inaugural Parade, please visit www.gaybands.org.

WASHINGTON, DC—According to an AP report President-elect Barack Obama has selected a deputy mayor of Los Angeles to lead the White House Council on Environmental Quality, transition officials said Wednesday. Nancy Sutley is the first prominent member of the gay and lesbian community to earn a senior role in the Democrat's new administration.

CLEVELAND, OH—Cleveland City Council approved a domestic partner registry for gay and straight couples at its Monday, December 8, session.

Passage of the registry was difficult in a state

where voters passed one of the toughest gay marriage bans in the country four years ago.

The non-binding registry lacks the serious muscle of marriage or even civil unions; any benefits extended to couples would be strictly voluntary. But gay rights groups contend that in a state like Ohio, where city leaders have been hobbled by a broad constitutional amendment that forbids extending any marriage-like benefits to gay couples, it is a good compromise.

Sue Doerfer, executive director of the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Community Center of Greater Cleveland, told Cleveland's Plain Dealer that the registry gives couples a sense of legitimacy when seeking out rights and benefits.

"It sends out a message that Cleveland is welcome to them," Doerfer said.

Opposition to the registry came mostly from social conservatives. Several council members said they were being pressured by church groups to oppose the legislation. Councilman Kevin Conwell said that he received "more than 70 calls over the weekend."

City leaders say the registry is an attempt to bolster Cleveland's image as a gay-friendly town as it bids to host the 2014 Gay Games, an international gay and lesbian sporting event. Other American cities included in the running are Boston and Miami. Chicago, which hosted the event in 2006, estimates it attracted 140,000 visitors to its Lake Michigan shores with an overall economic impact of \$50-to-\$80 million. Cologne, Germany has been selected to host the 2010 games.

The legislation, introduced by Councilman Joe Cimperman, passed with a vote of 13-7. Voting against the legislation were Democrats Phyllis Cleveland, Roosevelt Coats, Kenneth Johnson, Sabra Pierce Scott, Terrell Pruitt, Zack Reed and TJ Dow.

Mayor Frank Jackson has said he would sign the registry into law.

TRENTON, NJ—On December 10, Human Rights Day, The New Jersey Civil Unions Review Commission, created by the legislature to analyze the effects of civil unions within the state, found that civil

unions are separate and unequal and have noted many instances where same-sex couples and their children are being treated unfairly due to this second-class citizen law.

The commissions report recommends the governor and legislature act quickly to enact full marriage equality for the state of New Jersey.

SOME FAR RIGHT CHRISTIAN BASTION, USA—An outspoken and polarizing voice in conservative Christian politics resigned effective Thursday from the National Association of Evangelicals after a radio interview in which he voiced support for same-sex civil unions and said he is "shifting" on gay marriage.

The Rev. Richard Cizik's comments — made on a Dec. 2 "Fresh Air" broadcast on National Public Radio — triggered an uproar that led to his stepping down as NAE vice president of governmental affairs.

A fixture in Washington for nearly three decades, Cizik has played a key role in bringing evangelical Christian concerns to the political table. But in recent years, he earned enemies in the movement for pushing to broaden the evangelical agenda. His strongest focus was on "creation care," arguing that evangelicals have a biblical responsibility to the environment that includes combatting global warming.

The Rev. Leith Anderson, a Minneapolis-area pastor who serves as NAE president, said Thursday the group is not backing away from its environmental stances. Cizik's resignation was necessary, he said, because some of his answers in the radio interview did not reflect NAE values and convictions.

"Any organizations that speak to controversial issues are going to have critics," Anderson said. "What was different this time was our individuals and organizations felt there was a loss of credibility for him clearly espousing our positions and values. When you lose that, it's very difficult to re-establish."

Cizik did not immediately respond to requests for comment. The NAE said in a statement that Cizik had expressed regret, apologized and "affirmed our values."

The NAE is an umbrella group for tens of

thousands of churches and organizations.

Anderson said a "combination of things" Cizik said in the interview led to his downfall, including this comment on gay marriage: "I'm shifting, I have to admit. In other words, I would willingly say I believe in civil unions. I don't officially support redefining marriage from its traditional definition, I don't think."

Coming off the passage last month of amendments barring gay marriage in three states, some evangelicals took that as a slap in the face, said David Neff, editor of Christianity Today magazine and a member of the NAE executive committee.

"He seemed to be abandoning the one thing where evangelical activists felt they had actually made a difference this time around," Neff said.

One of Cizik's fiercest critics has been Focus on the Family, the Colorado Springs, Colo.-based evangelical group founded by James Dobson. Last year, Dobson and other Christian conservatives unsuccessfully pressured the NAE to silence Cizik about global warming.

"It was time for him to go," Tom Minnery, a Focus on the Family senior vice president, said Thursday. "He no longer represents the view of evangelicalism. He has not represented those views for some time."

More tradition-minded evangelical activists believe an environmental focus distracts attention from abortion and gay marriage, or they don't believe in global warming or that human activity causes it.

NEPAL—According to a November 17 article in PinkNews.co.uk: A Nepali MP has said his "eyes were filled with tears" when he read the full written decision of the country's Supreme Court on a writ petition from four organisations representing lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people.

A summary decision was issued in December 2007, when the court issued directive orders to the Nepal government to ensure the right to life according to their own identities and introduce laws providing equal rights to LGBTIs and amend all the discriminatory laws.

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The final judgement was issued today.

It reiterates that all LGBTIs are defined as a “natural person” and their physical growth as well as sexual orientation, gender identity, expression are all part of natural growing process. Thus equal rights, identity and expression must be ensured regardless of their sex at birth.

The writ petition was filed by Blue Diamond Society and other 3 LGBTI organisations in Nepal demanding the protection and defence of the equal rights of sexual and gender minorities.

“Reading this decision my eyes were filled with tears and I felt we are the most proud LGBTI citizens of Nepal in the world,” said Sunit Pant, Nepal’s only gay MP.

“A legal note of point has been raised for the new constitution of Nepal while ensuring the equal rights to individuals, like the bill of rights from South Africa, and non-discrimination provisions on the grounds of sexual orientations and gender identities must be introduced.”

The Court has also issued a directive order to form a seven-member committee, with a doctor appointed by Health Ministry, one representative from National Human rights commission, the Law Ministry, one socialist appointed by government of Nepal, a representative from the Nepal police, a representative from Ministry of Population and Environment and one advocate as a representative from the LGBTI community, to conduct a study into the other countries’ practice on same-sex marriage.

Based on its recommendation the government

will introduce a same-sex marriage bill.

Mr Pant, founder of Blue Diamond Society, was named in May as one of five representatives of the Communist Party of Nepal-United in the 601 member new constituent assembly.

The Maoists are the largest party with 220 seats.

Maoist insurgents, who fought a ten-year guerrilla war against monarchist forces at a cost of over 12,000 lives, finally signed a peace agreement with the new democratic government in November 2006.

LGBT people joined the Maoist rebels and others to protest in a democracy movement against the king, demanding a freely elected, secular government.

King Gyanendra eventually relinquished sovereign power to the civilian government and elections were finally held for a new assembly on 10th April.

Gays and lesbians in the Himalayan kingdom previously suffered persistent persecution from security forces during the absolutist rule of King Gyanendra. The harassment of lesbian, gay and trans people continued at the hands of Maoist rebels.

The assembly will draft a new constitution, decide the fate of the monarchy and govern Nepal for the next two years.

Mr Pant is a hero to many gay activists across the world. On a visit to India last week he said: “We have moved from being a marginalised and persecuted lot who were thrown out of homes, schools and jobs to people who have human rights and are now protected by the police, the same people who once harassed us. ▼

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According to statistics compiled by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), 73.6% of LGBT students hears derogatory remarks such as “faggot” or “dyke” frequently or often at school. More than half (60.8%) reported feeling unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation, and more than a third (38.4%) felt unsafe because of their gender expression. An overwhelming 86.2% of students reported being verbally harassed.

“Hostile classrooms and campuses impact every member of the school community.” Huckaby concluded, “From LGBT students, to those perceived to be, and even young people who are denied the opportunity to learn because of the distractions presented by anti-gay behavior, the consequences of not dealing with these issues reach far and wide. Now, at last, parents have the tools they need to work directly with their local leaders to stand up for every young person, including those who are LGBT or are impacted by these behaviors.”

For more information on Cultivating Respect, including .pdf copies of The Top 10 Ways to Make Schools Safer for All Students, visit www.pflag.org.

PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons, their families and friends through: support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights. Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.



Susan Whitney had her last performance in Florida at the Cold Keg December 6 prior to her move to New York City.

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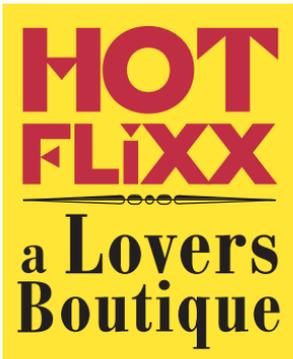
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