

STONEWALL BABY

The queer year

It's 28 SE (Stonewall Era)—just how far have we come?

by Will O'Bryan

Between the time I wrote this and the time you read it, I'll have endured another birthday. Writing in some abstract future-past tense, I'm sure I've spent the day at Peacock in the Park. The events fall on the same day this year, so it will be a perfect fit—just like all those sequined gowns, feather boas and wide pumps.

And since I've turned a year older, it means that so too has the history of Stonewall, considering we share a birthday (give or take a few hours). Traditionally, I devote this anniversary column to assessing the gains made in queendom during the past year. Almost three decades into the modern "Gay Rights Movement," what did its 27th year mean?

For starters, I think somebody dug a grave for the aforementioned term, Gay Rights Movement. I don't recall ever seeing or hearing that phrase during the past 12 months. In retrospect, it sounds very vanilla when compared to our new and exciting "LesBiGayTrans Movement." Finally we've come to recognize bisexuals and transgendered people as assets, not anchors. Many of the most stalwart fighters in our movement have been members of the transgendered community, especially at Stonewall itself. And who cares who

more to the right. Regardless of your politics, you've got to admit it's been a banner year for gay Republicans, at least in Oregon. We may not have gotten as far as we would've liked in the state Legislature, but we've all got Republican Chuck Carpenter to thank for putting his reputation within his party on the line to fight for sexual minority rights. Again, I've been caught completely by surprise: We've got a golden boy in Salem and he belongs to the same party as Pat Robertson. Go figure.

For the boys, this year has been a bit more ambiguous. Granted, Ellen's played a big part in our year, but it was one of the lighter moments in what has been an otherwise anxious year.

Great medical strides have been made in managing HIV. So much so that some men have decided it is manageable. So much so that some men have let their guard down. It's caused quite a stir in our community. *Sexual Ecology: AIDS and the Destiny of Gay Men* by Gabriel Rotello received a mixed reception. His premise that gay men need to settle down into monogamous relationships or suffer new mutated strains of HIV didn't fall on deaf ears, but some of them were hostile. Is he preaching? Is he sounding an alarm we should heed?



JoAnn Loulan is sleeping with? She's still not going to be invited to dinner at Phyllis Schlafly's house, so she shouldn't have to give up her seat at our table.

The new, expanded LesBiGayTrans Movement phraseology sounds like a dance company or what Disney's monorail system might be dubbed on gay day in the Magic Kingdom. But it fits—even better than the wide pumps.

Disney brings me to this year's lesbian hallmark. Twenty years from now when a gray-haired Oprah is doing a show on women raised by lesbians, how many panelists will be named Ellen? Who'd have thought that Mickey would buy out Disney and give us an out and proud lesbian in prime time? Who could've predicted that our movement would climb to a place where Disney, synonymous in our culture with wholesomeness, would become our ally to the chagrin of conservative Baptists?

Katie Couric and Kathie Lee have gone down the stony end, and the country's new sweetheart is a dyke. Maybe the Smithsonian will add Ellen's TV sofa to its American history museum, right next to Archie Bunker's chair.

While a rainbow sits astride the Magic Kingdom, though, our own ranks are looking a bit

Michaelangelo Signorile, arguably the most widely read commentator on gay men's America, has entered the debate alarmed by the related rise in "bareback" sex (casual, unprotected anal sex). On the other hand, letters have been written to editors and conversations have been had in bars and on the Net. Some men are using these forums to scream, "Get off our (bare)backs!" After years of restraint, this year's HIV advances have led some gay men to throw caution to the wind.

Gay men are having a growing pain of sorts, and our half of the movement is pulling in two different directions. Are we to evolve by recapturing an eroticized lifestyle not seen since before the plague, or are we going to domesticate ourselves? This debate is one I'm sure we'll be seeing lots more of. I don't know how it will end, but I'll remember this as the year it started.

In 1968, Stanley Kubrick offered a picture of 2001 in the form of a movie by the same name. Pan Am planes flew to space stations where groovy earthlings wore Nehru jackets in an orbiting Hilton hotel. That prediction has fallen short. A year after 2001, queers started fighting back and a movement was born. In their wildest dreams, could they have predicted that 28 years later we'd be where we are now?

The

Gay Comedy Jam

"Freedom Tour '97"

Shows Will
Be Recorded
For CD
Release

ON
NATIONAL
TOUR!

ALL
NEW
SHOW!

With
Special Guest Host
Bob Smith

Starring
SCOTT KENNEDY



Gay
Stand-Up
Comics
Performing
Gay
Stand-Up Comedy

Starring
KEVIN MAYE



Nationally Recognized Gay Headliners As Featured
In The Advocate And ON HBO Recipients Of The Prestigious
Southwest Airlines Entertainer Awards

**BOTH SHOWS WILL BE RECORDED
FOR NATIONAL CD RELEASE**

ONE NIGHT ONLY - TWO GREAT SHOWS!

**SATURDAY ▼ AUGUST 2
8:00 PM AND 10:30 PM**

\$13 Advance/\$16 Day Of Show ▼ Special Engagement ▼ Advance Ticket Purchase Recommended

Portland Center For The Arts
Winningstad Theatre

1111 SW Broadway

Advance And Day Of Show Tickets Available
At Theatre Box Office And All Fastixx
Outlets Or Charge By Phone

For Ticket And Show Information:

"The Best Seats In the House."

FASTIXX

(503) 224-TIXX

Sales Tax And Service Charge Apply

TICKETS FOR BOTH SHOWS ON SALE NOW!

Sponsored By:

just out