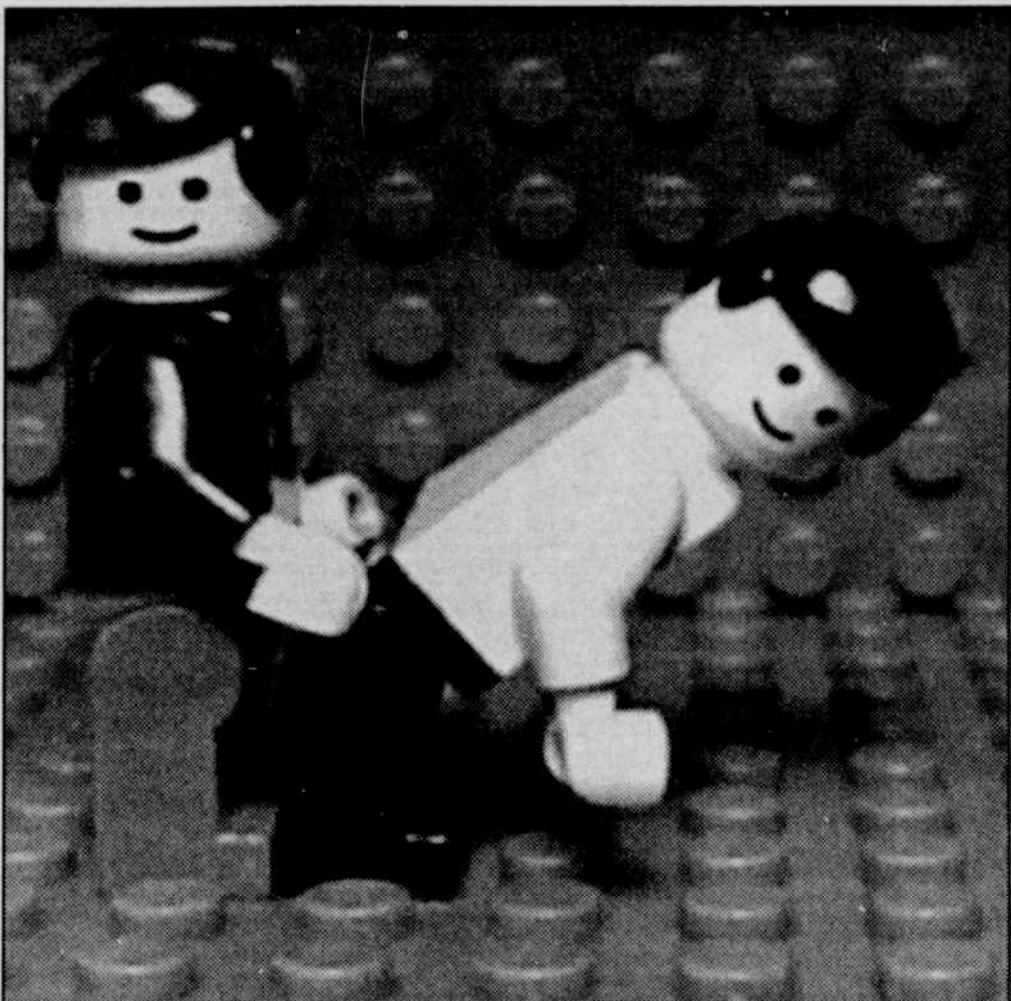




DIVERSIONS

Twist my arm

Spike and Mike's Sick and Twisted Festival of Animation has returned to Portland. Their track record speaks for itself: These are the guys who helped popularize *Beavis and Butt-head*, *South Park* and *Rugrats*.

Among their latest feature-length collection of bizarre, shocking and disturbingly grotesque shorts is one of the favorites from last year's queer film festival, "Rick and Steve: The Happiest Gay Couple in All the World." Director Allan Brocka used stop-motion photography to create this hilarious gem, except his medium is not clay but Legos. Other highlights include "Angry Kid," the latest from Aardman Animation (Wallace and Gromit, *Chicken Run*), and "Rejected" by cult animator Don Hertzfeldt ("Billy's Balloon," "Ah L'Amour").

Remember, these films are described as rude, crude and totally lewd, so the politically correct can stay home and watch *Providence*. You've been warned.

The festival runs daily through Feb. 25 and weekends only through March 24 at Cinema 21, 616 N.W. 21st Ave. Call 503-223-4515 for showtimes.

—Jim Radosta

Punchin' Judy

Judy Davis comes out swinging with both arms in a tour de force performance during the ABC miniseries *Me and My Shadows: Life with Judy Garland*, which airs 9 p.m. Feb. 25 and 26. Both Davis and Tammy Blanchard, who portrays Garland from ages 13 to 22, attack the role like bantam boxers: dodging, weaving, jabbing and eventually delivering a knockout blow that leaves you wondering how the battered belter ever lasted so many rounds.

The number of gay men who identify with Garland's one-two punch of tragic vulnerability followed by soaring triumph dwindles with each passing year, and for that reason alone this film needed to be made and deserves to be seen. Based on the memoir by her daughter Lorna Luft, the film attempts to paint a complete portrait of the woman as well as the performer. The almost unbearably painful dramatic scenes of nervous breakdowns, drug addiction and bankruptcies are balanced with painstakingly re-created musical sequences that are surprisingly effective in capturing Garland's theatrical magic.

The film touches on the bisexuality of her father and two of her husbands, but with the exception of one shot of a queer applauding wildly in the front row, *Me and My Shadows* doesn't explore the intense devotion she inspired in several generations of gay men. According to a recent article in *Atlantic Monthly*, Judy Worship is something of an embarrassment for liberated gays today, and Garland is an icon many would like to put behind us like *Liberace* or Truman Capote. But her persona as the misunderstood outsider struggling for acceptance still resonates with queers who understand that, despite the advances our people have made, we still aren't over the rainbow yet.

—Marc Acito

Run around, get paid

No experience necessary. Northwest Women's Lacrosse is looking for a few good umpires. If you enjoy the great outdoors, running around and whistling into the wind, then this is for you. Here's a chance to run off those extra winter pounds and get paid in the process. Umpires will officiate high school, club and college games. The first clinic for new and used umpires will be held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Feb. 24. You will get to learn the ins and outs of women's lacrosse presented by nationally rated umpire Dorothy Hirsch. The clinic fee is \$15 pre-registered or \$25 at the door. All are welcome, and although this isn't specifically a lesbian group, it is very dyke-friendly, if you get the drift. For more information including directions to the clinic, how to get your hands on a rule book, other fees and fashion tips, call 503-256-6206 or e-mail moca@teleport.com.

—Lynn Thomas

Save this for the cheap seats



Jack Black saves *Silverman*

The trailer hadn't looked overly promising, so as I settled in for the screening of *Saving Silverman*, I wasn't expecting much. After all, a movie about two idiots (chubby Jack Black and weaselly Steve Zahn) trying to stop their best friend (Jason Biggs) from marrying an überbitch (Amanda Peet) so they can keep their Neil Diamond tribute band going...well, let's just say it lived up to my

expectations.

But then, about halfway through, the film takes a turn toward our side of the fence when Black comes to grips with being gay! Throughout the rest of the movie, he blithely proclaims his homosexuality to anyone who will listen. Mostly, the revelation doesn't lead to much consternation among the hetero characters, except for the real Neil Diamond, who has been receiving nude pictures of Black for years.

How refreshing to find a dunderheaded, slacker, dopey movie that isn't using homosexuality as something to be frightened by or shunned. And just when you think the development of the gay character isn't going to progress further, a fourth-quarter surprise results in a man-to-man wedding ceremony and full-on kiss. It isn't great cinema, but it might make a fun cheap-movie-night excursion.

—Andy Mangels



Echo Theatre is no exception. Seattle's David Schneider comes to town with his solo comedy *Straight*. He went undercover at "ex-gay" groups to inform the writing of this piece. But concurrently, he casts a critical eye on the gay community, whose limitations he also exposes. With wit and insight, Schneider faces the tough questions as he gets to the bottom of what it means to be straight. Or not. The show starts 8 p.m. at 1515 S.E.

How straight is Straight?

Howie Baggadonutz continues to bring provocative gay shows to Portland, and his presentation Feb. 24 at the

37th Ave. Tickets are \$18 at the door or \$15 in advance from Gai-Pied, In Other Words or Fastixx. Fire your questions off to 503-203-3305.

Get a jump on this

Calling all dance mavens: White Bird presents one of the world's greatest modern dance companies, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, performing two different programs

Feb. 27 and 28 at the Schnitz.

It's been six years since the company came to town, so don't miss this group of 30 amazing dancers. Performances begin 7:30 p.m. at 1037 S.W. Broadway. Tickets are \$17.50-\$65 from

503-224-8499, Fastixx or

www.whitebird.org.

Jump start yourself

It's almost spring, it's time to wake up your libido! On March 1 and 2, It's My Pleasure is bringing in nationally known sex educator Merryl Sloan to present a workshop called "Great Sex, Secret Desires: Six Steps to the Greatest Sex You Ever Imagined." She instructs the adventurous and the curious in a lot of things you always wanted to know but were afraid to ask. Class starts 7 p.m. at 3106 N.E. 64th Ave. Tuition is \$25. Call 503-280-8080 to preregister.

Let's get classical

Those versatile guys of the Portland Gay Men's Chorus reformat themselves into the subgroups Cascade and eXpress! for the third annual Classical Matinee at the Old Church, 1422 S.W. 11th Ave. If the music of Grieg, Cherubini, Britten and other serious composers rings your chimes, then be there at 2 p.m. Feb. 25 for an intimate afternoon of music. The concert also will feature flutist Mary McCarty. Tickets are \$15 from chorus members, Fastixx or 503-224-8499. Join them afterward at a reception and enjoy wine and cheese.

Eat up these words

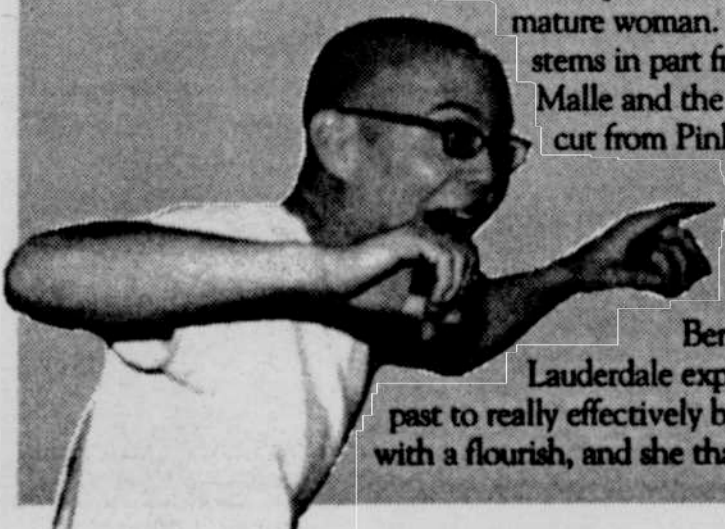
Attention voracious readers—and eaters: In Other Words, Portland's only nonprofit feminist bookstore, is celebrating its eighth anniversary with a fund-raiser Feb. 22, A Literary Feast: Women of the Americas. Show up at Norse Hall, and you'll be treated to a three-course meal with Latin American flavor as well as readings of women's writing. The cuisine will be provided by Flaming Carrot Catering. Tickets are \$50, and you must RSVP by Feb. 18 to 503-232-6003. The festivities begin 6:30 p.m. at 111 N.E. 11th Ave. **JO**

Compiled by
ORIANA
GREEN



A fondness for frenching

What a nice surprise to check in on one of the most literate talk shows on the tube, Candice Bergen's *Exhale* on the Oxygen network, and hear her introduce "my new favorite band, Pink Martini." This was a real coup, as they were, I believe, the first musical group to perform on the program, now in its second season. Bergen gets to make use of her Ivy League education and inquisitive mind with guests you'll rarely see on other shows (except perhaps *Charlie Rose*). She's not afraid of the "F" word (feminist) and clearly has not wasted her post-Murphy Brown years in idle pursuits; she exhibits a keen mind overflowing with the wisdom of a mature woman. Her fondness for Portland's own most urbane band undoubtedly stems in part from the French connection. As the widow of director Louis Malle and the mother of a daughter who is half-French, the esprit of the title cut from Pink Martini's CD *Sympathique* clearly hit home. Bergen chatted up maestro Thomas Lauderdale and revealed she—or her producer—had done her homework when she asked him if he hadn't once aspired to put his Ivy League education to use as mayor of Portland. Lauderdale replied, "That was my plan." When Bergen suggested it wasn't too late, the band erupted in laughter as Lauderdale explained, "I think I've had too many scandalous incidents in my past to really effectively be mayor of Portland." The band then played Bergen's fave song with a flourish, and she thanked them afterward by displaying her fluent French.



Hollywood tidbits for \$1,000

What is Unofficial Queer Night, Alex? On a recent edition of *Celebrity Jeopardy*, Jodie Foster trounced Nathan Lane and Harry Connick Jr. to win \$21,600 for the Hollywood Literacy Project. Lane, who fought a good fight, won \$10,000 for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS.