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HUMOR

Groping mechanism

Getting touchy-feely

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARC

by Marc Acito



In ancient Greece men would swear an oath by grabbing the testicles of the person administering it. No joke—this is where the word “testimony” comes from. Nowadays we just use a Bible, which is yet another example of how Christianity went and spoiled a good thing.

With the exception of doctors doing hernia exams and priests interviewing altar boys, gay men are the only ones left who view grabbing someone's nuts as part of the fabric of daily life. For instance, haven't you ever noticed how quick we are to hug after having just met? Don't think for an instant this has anything to do with the solidarity of our shared brotherhood. It's all about rubbing our dangly bits against one another.

Fondling is the gay version of shaking hands, and nowhere was this phenomenon more in evidence than during my recent night in Prison Camp.

No, that indecent exposure charge hasn't come back to haunt me. (They never proved a thing, I tell you.)

Prison Camp 2002 was simply the bash of the summer here in Portland. It followed last year's Walk Like an Egyptian party, which was also great fun despite it being, like, 45 degrees that night. We were as frigid as Dr. Laura, but I must say our nipples sure looked perky.

This year, however, not only was the weather nicer, but we had more clothing options. As in real prison, felons outnumbered guards, perhaps because it's easier to throw on a denim work shirt, tie a bandanna around your head and call it done. Some opted for classic horizontal stripes, while others went for the simple orange jumpsuit (including one poor soul who had to repair a flat tire on the way home with the words “Federal Penitentiary” emblazoned across his back). Accessories included chains, handcuffs and a surprising amount of soap on a rope.

I, however, was the only one wearing license plates.

Among the advantages of owning a sign shop are the craft opportunities, so Floyd and I fashioned me a skirt made of personalized vanity plates. I spent much of the night twirling around so people could read messages like “JAIL B8,” “WF BTR” and, my personal favorite, “BND OVR.” The latter got me some offers, which just proves it pays to advertise.

Originality could be found elsewhere, too—the guys in the

“Free Martha” tank tops, the boys wearing nothing but a towel and a smile, and the priest who went by the name of Father Foreskin. Instead of a cross around his neck, he hung the Pope on a Soap on a Rope. (I must mention here that Father Foreskin was continuing a phallic theme from last year; at the Egyptian party he simply stuck a picture of Elizabeth Taylor as Cleopatra on his crotch and told everyone he was Liz and Dick.)

But this year all eyes were on the blond hunk dressed as The Policeman Who Forgot His Pants. There are very few of us in this world capable of wearing buttless chaps, but I must say this man is definitely one of them.

Because he was a generous sort of fellow (or perhaps because the drinks were strong), Officer Hottie allowed a goodly number of us to cop a feel (or perhaps I should say feel a cop). His heinie was shiny after being rubbed by so many eager hands.

At midnight a siren went off, and a guard grabbed me and Pretty Boy Floyd from the dance floor and led us away in handcuffs, my license plates clanking like cowbells. Before I could explain about that old morals charge, we were whisked to the top of a building and flown over the party in a helicopter—which, by the way, is every bit as thrilling as it sounds.

But when we returned we discovered that few noticed, their attention fixed steadfastly on the ground—or below the waist, to be more accurate. I'm not even sure they noticed the laser light show above their heads.

Not wanting to be left out, I tried to take part in the fun, but it ain't easy grinding against someone when your crotch is covered in aluminum. I might as well have been wearing a chastity belt.

So instead I hung out on the sidelines, pretending I was an anthropologist studying the mating habits of homosexual men in their native habitat. And I wondered to myself whether the physical freedom we enjoy somehow prevents us from making a more intimate, meaningful connection with one another.

If we're so fixated on grabbing a quick feel, could we be missing out on feeling more? Perhaps our lives are empty, filled only with meaningless diversions like drinking too much, dancing all night and groping sexy strangers.

I can't wait for next year. And that, my friends, is The Gospel According to Marc. [□]

MARC ACITO can be reached at marcacito@attbi.com. For more information on the summer dance parties, visit www.alleyproductions.com.

