

DIVERSIONS

Out With It!



by Lisa Bradshaw

I gave at the office

Does anyone love Pride more than me? Every year, I start to get giddy the weekend before Pride. I hang a little rainbow flag on my apartment door, I paint my nails rainbow colors, I smile unexpectedly for no reason. Once it comes, I work multiple booths, I eat the food, I visit all the vendors, I cheer at the stages, I gawk at naked girls in the Dyke March (shut up, I march, too), I party, I carry some banner or other in the parade, I go to all the vendors again.

Does anyone love Pride more than me? I don't think so. But I hate Bud Light. Every year, I try to hang out in the beer garden after the Dyke March. I want to be there so badly, mingling, talking, drinking. But there's nothing to drink. Why does Pride only ever serve Bud Light? I call Jack Keegan, president of Pride Northwest. "The person who does our beer garden says that Bud Light is by far the largest-selling beer that he sells, which is one of the reasons," he politely informs me. Also, he notes, Budweiser has an exclusivity contract with Pride Northwest.

Aha! Corporations are ruining my beer garden experience. "With the beverage vendors, that's fairly standard," Keegan patiently explains. "Like, if you go to Rose Festival, you'll see that Pepsi is their sponsor, so Pepsi is the only stuff served there.... If you have that corporate sponsorship, they're not going to want to compete."

Most corporate sponsors who take part in Portland Pride do not have exclusive contracts and are just a presence with everybody else. Like, say, Interactive Male—or *Just Out* for that matter. We give Pride Northwest money, we get a booth and our logo on their materials.

What concerns me is those exclusivity contracts, and not just because of my taste Buds. (Buds, get it?)

Instinct magazine and *Elbow Grease* lubricant both have exclusivity contracts with Pride Northwest this year. *Instinct's* says that no other specifically gay male magazine may be present at the festival. *Elbow Grease's* says that no other lube may be available. This means that if *Gai-Pied* has a booth, they can't bring any magazines except *Instinct*. It's *My Pleasure* may sell no other lube but *Elbow Grease*.

Pardon my language: That sucks. "The magazine and the lube is kind of new," says Keegan. "It's something that has more ramifications."

So should we all make angry calls to Pride Northwest? Absolutely not. Where do you think they get the money to throw this big queer party every year?

"Once when I was feeling especially bitter after spending a Sunday evening at the end of Pride picking up cigarette butts on my hands and knees for three hours," relates Keegan. "I went through in my head and started adding up how much came in in the buckets with how many people showed up. I think it was about 9 cents per person."

So last year a \$3 donation at the gate was put into place, but even though approximately 25,000 people came through, Pride got only \$32,000 in gate revenue. And, according to Keegan, those bucket donations max at about \$5,000.

"Asking for donations at the gate is a new variable that we're definitely going to have to take into consideration," Keegan says. Which means those exclusivity contracts could be a thing of the past. But only if they can make up those funds from me and you.

Pride costs more than \$92,000 to produce. If you give \$3 at the gate and there are 25,000 of you, that's \$75,000. Even if you're a vendor, you should pony up your \$3. Really, that's pretty cheap for 48 hours of kick-ass queer fun.

Here's what I still don't get: How come Budweiser can't serve just plain old Budweiser? I would drink that. ☐

A rose by any other name

Ah, once again, the annual Rose Festival is taking over our fair city. If you think it's all just so much white-trash, hetero hogwash, then you haven't kicked back to watch the Grand Floral Parade as seen through the eyes of a drag queen diva.

With her combination of wit and white gloves (remember, white gloves, not kid gloves), Rose Empress XXXVIII Misha Rockafeller plays host to her annual Grand Floral Parade Party from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. June 7 at the corner of Southwest 10th Avenue and Stark Street.

For once you'll enjoy waiting for the parade when members of the Imperial Sovereign Rose Court and the city's reigning titleholders perform atop Panorama beginning at 10 a.m. The infamous bloody mary bar will be serving up liquid sustenance while you try your hand at decorating your own parade glove.

Then at noon, the incomparable Misha offers her queenly quips on the seemingly pansy-less parade. "The whole idea was that we just don't see any queer representation in the Rose Festival," says Misha, aka Michael Kennedy. "It's meant to be fun, catty and basically give us an opportunity to get our community recognized and represented, too."

As host of an official Rose Festival site, Misha sees the floats and reads the "official" descriptions ahead of time. "I don't follow their script, of course—I have to gayify it," she assures. "It's not boring when you're in our corner."



It still makes one stare in awe: Seattle writer David Schmader plays host to a very special *Showgirls* screening June 6

Showgirls doesn't need any defense. This overripe ode to the Las Vegas trash 'n' flash lifestyle is one of the masterpieces of the '90s. So much unforgettable imagery: a greased-up, aerobized Elizabeth Berkley pole-humping her way to glory; the iconization of Gina Gershon's vast, quivering, pre-Botox lips; Kyle McLachlan's hum job and swimming pool screw; Berkley again, dressed like a killer amazon, beating the shit out of the sleazy hipster who raped her galpal.

All that powerful sisterhood and lesbian tongue-swapping and those befeathered drag queens and glitter hos duking it out on stage. There really are too many wonderful things in *Showgirls* to enumerate.

But how to alter rather than repeat the singular experience of watching the film? For a one-night showing at 8 p.m. June 6, Clinton Street Theater is importing Seattle homo monologist David Schmader to offer a running comic commentary on the film—a sort of queer version of *Mystery Science Theatre 3000*.

Schmader is the writer who brought you the one-man show *Straight*, and this *Showgirls* gig sold out 800-seat venues in Seattle recently—so grab that boa, ice

those nipples and get there early for a front-row seat.

Extra-special bonus: Clinton Street shows *Flashdance* June 13 to 19.

"The end of the world" is near

It's hard to hear the music over our own heartbeat as we wait for Peter, Mike and especially queer lead man

Michael's Stumptown stop on their first North American tour since 1999.

With a new album set for a late October release, maybe R.E.M. will offer a taste of what's to come when they play an 8 p.m. show Sept. 3 at Clark County Amphitheater in Ridgefield, Wash. Tickets are on sale now for \$37.50-\$67.50 from Ticketmaster.

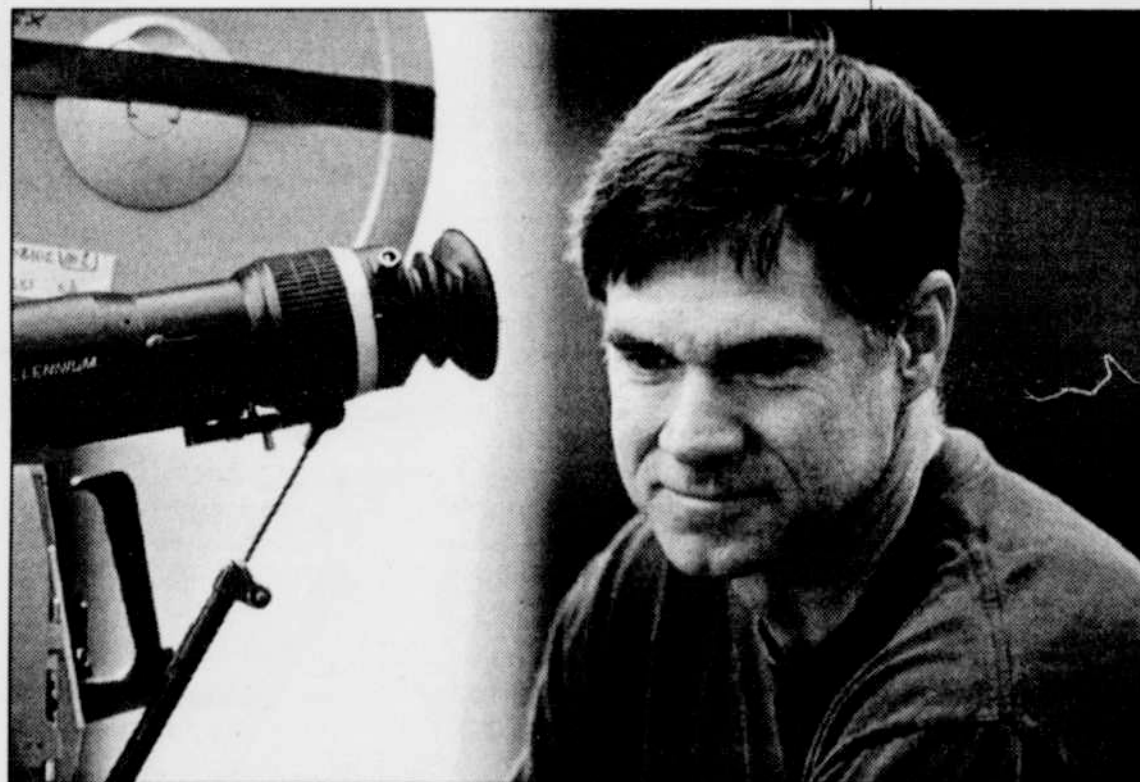


The band that sold alternative rock to the masses: R.E.M. returns to the Northwest

Queer Point of View

This month PBS will show two documentaries with queer themes as part of its P.O.V. series. *Flag Wars*, about affluent, white, gay men moving into a Columbus, Ohio, African American neighborhood, airs at 11 p.m. June 17. *Georgie Girl*, about New Zealander Georgina Beyer, the first transsexual elected to any parliament in the world, airs at 11 p.m. June 20. ☐

Compiled by LISA BRADSHAW, TIMOTHY KRAUSE and GARY MORRIS



Portland's Gus Van Sant wins a rare double prize at Cannes

Van Sant wins big at Cannes

Portland's own gay cinema stud Gus Van Sant brought home the goods from the Cannes Film Festival last month, winning the celebrated *Palme d'Or* (best film) and *Best Director* awards.

Elephant, a fictionalized (yet risky) reconstruction of the 1999 Columbine High School rampage, features two homo kids planning to knock off teachers and fellow students. The title refers in part to the adage about an elephant in the middle of the room that everyone ignores—in this case, the rise of gun violence in the United States.

The double award was doubly special because an exception was made to the festival's rule restricting one prize per film. Furthermore, the cast consists of student no-names from Portland, and the film was shot locally at the abandoned Whitaker Middle School.

The nod to *Elephant*, slated to open in November, was also a bit of an upset, pitting critics on both sides of the aisle. For example, *Variety* says "gross and exploitive," while *The Washington Post* describes the flick as an "understated, sensitive drama that takes no sides, only sympathy for everyone."

At a news conference following the French ceremony, Van Sant said: "I don't think it is a film against America but as a musing about school violence...it's made from the viewpoint of my own life in America. It's about the structure of society and the relationships between students."

Showgirls even better? But how?

Recent news has it that eight "intellectuals" have taken up the defense of Paul Verhoeven's *Showgirls* in the academic magazine *Film Quarterly*. They needn't have bothered.