

HUMOR

Sissyphobia

The debate continues

I tend to think of myself as a "boy next door" type. But then I'll hear my voice on an answering machine and think, "Sure, if the boy next door is Jack on *Will & Grace*." On the masculinity meter I'd put myself somewhere between Elton John and Bea Arthur.

I was a sissy from birth, but my parents couldn't tell immediately because they gave me a one-syllable name. It's only when your 5-year-old rolls his eyes and says, "Mother, it's *Jonathan*!" that you know for certain he's queer.

Still, despite having a lisp so pronounced I sssounded like I'd sssprung a leak, I was reasonably comfortable with myself, happily lolling away afternoons in my cousin Helen's pink bedroom, coveting her faux Louis XIV canopy bed and playing "Mystery Date."

So you can understand why I am irritated by the backlash against *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*. I truly thought I was done writing about this subject until Ron Cowen, the executive producer of *Queer as Folk*, actually said he found it "discouraging to see gay men presented as frivolous stereotypes." I see—as opposed to those painstakingly realistic characterizations on *Queer as Folk*. (Does no one in Pittsburgh have chest hair?)

And then some bonehead in *Details* magazine came out with a blistering attack on *Entertainment Tonight* fashion correspondent Steven Cojocar ("Is There Such a Thing as Too Gay?" September 2003), calling the over-the-top fashionista "a reprehensible throwback—pre-gay, pre-Stonewall for that matter—a bitchy slap in the face to the dogged, courageous men and women who've fought 30-plus years to be accepted as normal, law-abiding citizens."

The writer, Tony Hendra (who is straight but claims righteous indignation on behalf of gays), goes on to say Cojo is "just what the red-

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARC

by Marc Acito



meat Republicans expect a gay man to be: flirty, lisping, campy, dolled up in ridiculous clothes...in a word *abnormal*."

OK, them's fightin' words. This kind of criticism makes me just want to wave my wand at this Hendra guy and say: "Be gone! Before someone drops a house on you, too."

Increasingly, the gay community seems to be suffering from what writer Tim Bergling calls "Sissyphobia," which is an irrational fear of effeminate behavior and not, as I originally thought, an irrational fear of Sissy Spacek.

Just look at online personals: A swishy fem is about as welcome as genital herpes. Some of the listings are so disparaging of effeminate behavior you'd swear they were written by John Rocker.

But nowhere is this bias more evident than when Hendra snidely reports that Steven Cojocar makes "Paul Lynde look like Colin Farrell."

Why does everyone pick on Paul Lynde? Sure, he was a bitter, self-loathing, closeted queen who told *People* magazine he was glad his following was straight because "gay people killed Judy Garland." (I for one, was not aware of this conspiracy theory, but I suppose it's entirely pos-

sible that a gang of pre-Stonewall party boys stormed Judy's hotel room and force-fed her prescription drugs.)

But what the anti-sissy faction fails to understand is that swishy queens are actually braver than their straight-acting sisters because they fearlessly announce to a hostile society who they are the moment they open their mouths.

For instance, consider some of Lynde's ribald responses on *Hollywood Squares*:

Q: Why do Hell's Angels wear leather?

A: Because chiffon wrinkles too easily.

Q: What do you call a man who gives you diamonds and pearls?

A: I'd call him darling.

Q: According to the old song, "At night, when you're asleep, into your tent I'll creep." Who am I?

A: The Scoutmaster.

This is pretty daring stuff—subversive, really—when you consider it was said during a

time when homosexuality was still considered a mental illness. And Lynde's legacy of lewd one-liners continues today in *Queer Eye*'s Carson Kressley, who, upon watching a straight guy feed a gooey glob of chocolate to his girlfriend, remarked, "See, in our community that's frowned upon—when you have a big brown wad on your finger."

Queer Eye features a group of "fairy godfathers" who are cultured, witty and well-groomed. I don't know about you, but I can live with this stereotype.

Plus it's educational: So far I've learned to shine silver with toothpaste, see if a pair of jeans will fit by wrapping the waist around my neck and (most importantly) always—always—apply hair product from the back.

Gay or straight, men are acculturated to suppress, or even despise, our feminine

sides. And while football-loving, Budweiser-drinking Macho Marys do exist, I contend that those who denigrate finger-snapping fems do so out of their own fear of being perceived as effeminate—a fear as irrational as homophobia itself.

Scaredy-cats. Who are the real sissies here?

And that, my friends, is *The Gospel According to Marc*. ☐

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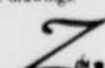
Party before the movie!

Thursday, October 9
A free movie, single women, party, prizes and fun!

All women seeking women are invited to join *Just Out* for a single party at Zeba prior to the Sensory Perceptions Lesbian & Gay Film Festival opening night free screening of *Tipping the Velvet*. Join us for a lesbian singles gathering from 5 to 7 pm at Zeba, 1222 S.W. Salmon. Enjoy appetizers, no-host bar, fun, frivolities and a drawing for free prizes! The film starts 7:30 p.m. at the Guild Theatre, S.W. 9th and Taylor.



"Submission of a free voice personal ad makes you eligible for prize drawings."



Women Seeking Women

More Just Friends personals on page 58!



Standard Abbreviations

- A - ASIAN
- B - BLACK
- BBW - BEAUTIFUL BLACK WOMAN
- C - CHRISTIAN
- DA - DIFFERENTLY ABLED
- F - FEMALE
- FRIENDS FIRST - YEAH, RIGHT!
- G - GAY
- H - HISPANIC
- HERB FRIENDLY - BRING MUNCHIES
- HWP - HEIGHT WEIGHT PROPORTIONATE
- ISO - IN SEARCH OF
- J - JEWISH
- L - LESBIAN
- LTR - LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP
- M - MALE
- N - NATIVE AMERICAN
- PA - POLYAMOROUS
- PH - PERENNIAL HIPSTER
- S - SINGLE
- STD - SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASE
- TS - TRANSSEXUAL
- TV - TRANSVESTITE
- USUAL NONS - NO SMOKING, NO DRUGS, NO STD'S
- W - WHITE
- WALKS ON BEACH - YAWN!
- YO - YEARS OLD

MEN SEEKING MEN

LOOKING FOR 25 TO 50 yo for dating. I am 46 yo. Meet for movie or a drink? HIV-. Like to meet nice stud. Box 5594. (10/17)

OLDER, VINTAGE ITALIAN male. 5'8", 200 lbs., hairy, college graduate, Ph. D. in Social Work, retired. Love to cuddle, kiss. Sensitive, seeks Hispanic/Italian/Jewish man for LTR. Active, good-looking, friendly, faithful. Box 5593. (10/17)

MARRIAGE-MINDED

SGWM, widower, selling house, moving west, looking for LTR. Me: artist/writer, new-age, spiritual with many interests. I am HIV- and healthy, blonde, blue-eyed, 5'10", 185 lbs. and a young 64 yo. Looking for healthy, fun, sensuous, commitment-minded guy. Nonsmoker preferred. Box 5591. (10/17)

FRIENDS/LTR

5'6", 145 lbs., 32 yo, attractive AM. Enjoy travel, dining, movies, outdoors, dancing. Seeking AWPGM. Personality with nice smile a plus. Box 5590. (10/17)

WM, 48 YO, slim, cute, nice physique, conditioned, sincerely seeks the attention, guidance and, if need be, discipline of older men. Box 5589. (10/17)

MIRROR-MIRROR

BiWM seeks submissive GM who enjoys sharing, viewing "activities" in mirrors at my place while we watch gay video/films together. Daytime or early evenings are preferred. Cross-dressers welcome. Box 5449. (10/3)

IS THERE ANYONE out there that can give/receive sensual massage sensual massage without "going all the way"? Can you caress, hug and tease for what feels like hours without the need to "cum"? I can. Are you HWP? I am. Box 5453. (10/3)

GWM, 28 YO, healthy, cute, thin build, 5'9". Interests include music, cooking, hiking, camping, travel and more. Looking for GM, 25-45 yo, with similar interests for friendship, fun and possible LTR. I would also like to experiment with cross-dressing, so please be open to the fun and possibilities we can have. Box 5436. (10/3)

BOYFRIEND-LOVER WANTED

WM seeks feminine GM who is submissive for intimate times at my place, playing "dress-up" for oral activity on your knees while I make video/film of you pleasing me with passion. Box 5445. (10/3)

HANDSOME, VERY HAIRY, blue-eyed, cuddly Teddy bear. 41 yo, avid gardener, romantic, stable,

rural homebody. Non-smoker, animal- and nature-lover, kind, compassionate, monogamous, old-fashioned small town values, seeking friendship, dating, LTR. Let's share coastal getaways, outdoor activities, country drives, picnics, hand-holding and quiet, intimate evenings. Desires similar, masculine top guy. Box 5444. (10/3)

ROMANTIC ITALIAN

Hello, I am 5'8", 200 lbs., grey hair, hairy chest, arms, legs. Educated Ph. D. lives to cuddle, kiss, very oral. Seeking Hispanic, Jewish, Italian, French. Box 5443. (10/3)

DAYTIME LOVER

BiWM seeks feminine GM for afternoon or daytime dates for intimate relationship. Let's enjoy viewing gay videos at my place together. You can wear your feminine lingerie for role-playing, cuddling, fondling, oral loving, passion. I respect your privacy. Box 5440. (10/3)

WELL-ESTABLISHED GAY male couple is looking for spice after 14 years. Both under 40 yo, looking for 18-25 yo submissive boy(s) for weekend encounters. We have play-space, sling, etc...Leather/BDSM a plus! We: 6'2" and 6'0", very masculine, gym-tone bodies. Both of our faces are "easy on the eyes".