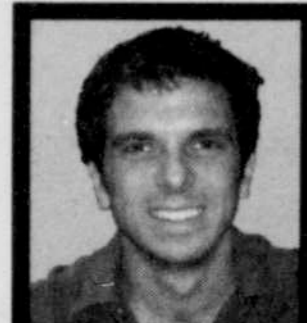


In Madonna's Reinvention tour, the Artist Currently Known as Esther does yoga, lectures on Kabbalah and tells us war is a bad thing. And, like pilgrims to a shrine, loyal gay fans gather from all over to worship their Madonna. Meanwhile, Cher continues to roll along like Ol' Man River as she stretches out a farewell tour destined to last longer than the Crusades.

What's notably absent from these extravaganzas, though, is any mention of the biggest issue facing the majority of either diva's audience: marriage equality. It's particularly galling when you consider that both have gay family members. I mean, if I wanted to see someone deny a queer relative, I'd go to a Dick Cheney rally.



**The Gospel According to Marc**  
by Marc Acito

I suppose I care too much about my gay icons (I'm still pissed Judy Garland didn't win an Oscar for *A Star Is Born*), but after all the money we've spent on them, you'd think they'd do more for us than lip-sync their greatest hits.

The next generation isn't doing any better. Neither J-Lo nor Britney have said a word on the subject, perhaps because they're doing their part to preserve the sanctity of marriage.

Still, not all divas are struck dumb. Some were dumb to begin with, like Miss Spears. So I was pleased to see that my secret birth mother, Liza Minnelli, spoke up at a recent gala for the Human Rights Campaign. "If two people love each other, and they want to be together, they

## Consenting adultery

Gay divas and marriage

should be allowed to be together," she said—or more likely slurred, but it's the thought that counts. Of course, I'm not surprised. Liza's had a few gay marriages of her own.

And then there's Barbra Streisand, the honoree at the HRC gala, who also wins the Marco Award for Best Diva-crat by a nose. "When two people form a deep bond," she said, "there is usually a soul connection, and the soul has no gender."

I LOVE that. I'm going to embroider it onto a pillow.

What a contrast to that other Jewish princess in the queer kingdom, Bette Midler, who recently stammered to *The Advocate* that she hadn't "done enough research or reading on it to have an informed opinion."

Research? Reading? Does this woman live in a bubble? I'm not sure what bugs me more—that it isn't an automatic no-brainer for her or that she hasn't bothered to get informed. Don't forget, Miss M: Queers made you, and we can destroy you. Remember Donna Summer?

Bette's been on my hit list ever since she made this enlightened comment on *Larry King Live*: "Gay men, they like to—you know—move around.... That's part of the fun of being a gay man. So if they're married, does that mean they're not going to cheat?"

Ah, the old promiscuity argument. Lately we've gotten so respectable I was beginning to miss it.

What Midler fails to understand is that focusing on monogamy sexualizes the debate.

Straight people have screwed around (with and without their spouse's permission) for as long as marriage has existed, so the hets have no moral authority on this one. In fact, if monogamy were a prerequisite for marriage, most of the Senate would be single today.

Where gay men differ is in their honesty. Like the guy I know who went ballistic when his partner emerged from a back room with semen on his sweater. "I thought you were OK with my going in there," the partner said.

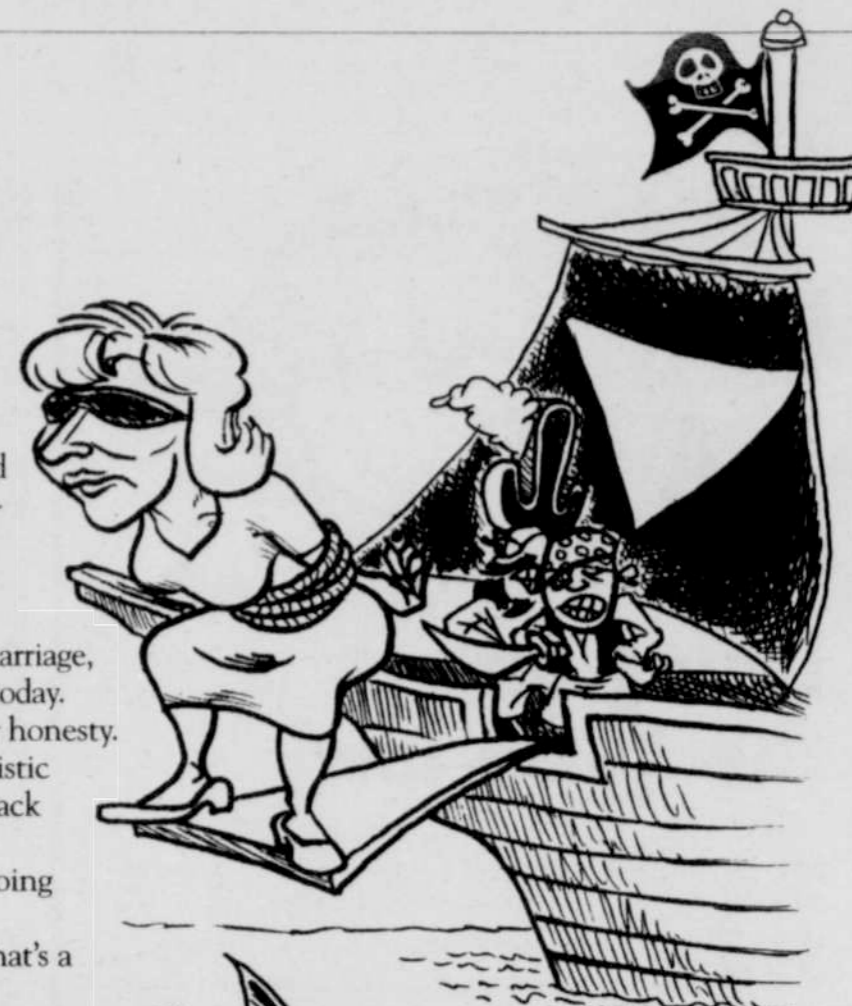
"I am," replied my friend. "But that's a cashmere sweater."

(Sort of gives a whole new meaning to the phrase, "Here comes the bride," doesn't it?)

Or how about the first male couple to be married in the Netherlands, who, when asked whether they were monogamous, responded that they were committed to "fidelity," which is another way of saying they fiddle around—or, as the Dutch call it, "huntincock."

Barbra Streisand said that the "law cannot legislate matters of the heart." I'd add that it cannot legislate matters of the hard-on, either.

Twenty years ago, the Divisive Miss M married an avant-garde performance artist she had dated for just two months. The ceremony was performed in Las Vegas at 2 in the morning by an Elvis impersonator. Also wed that same weekend were Sally Field and Olivia Newton-John, though not to each other. Their girl-



next-door Gidget and Sandy reputations caused the tabloids to predict that the quickie, campy marriage of a

foul-mouthed performer who got her start in sex clubs would be the first to fall apart.

But it turns out that Sally's husband hated her, he really hated her, and Olivia's hubby wasn't hopelessly devoted. Like Cher's face-lift, though, Bathhouse Bette's marriage endures.

It's time her fans had the same chance.

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

MARC ACITO's novel, *How I Paid for College*, will be published in September. Write him at [marc@marcacito.com](mailto:marc@marcacito.com).

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