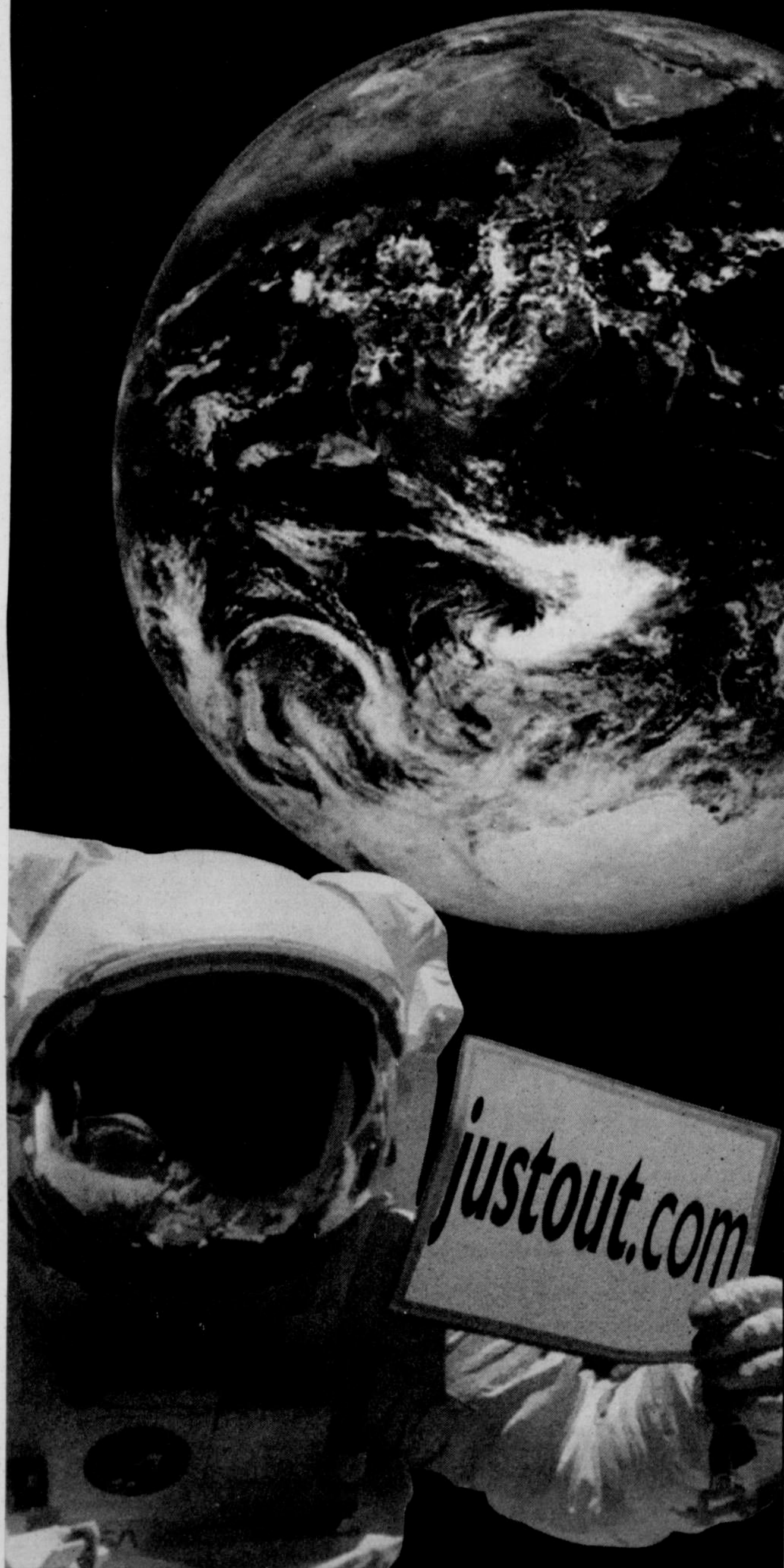


we're showing up everywhere.



'Tis the Sleazon

John Waters decks the halls with boughs of trash

John Waters has a busy month ahead—holiday headaches notwithstanding. American Movie Classics is spotlighting the filmmaker's 1972 cult hit *Pink Flamingos* at 10 p.m. Dec. 30 on *Movies That Shook the World*.

California's Orange County Museum of Art is displaying *Change of Life*, an exhibit of his photographs, sculptures and "little movies," which reduce a whole film to a single still.

The Treatment Action Group is honoring him Dec. 11 in New York City for his AIDS activism.

And he'll be in town Dec. 16 to celebrate *A John Waters Christmas*, a compilation of campy holiday tunes like Roger Christian's "Little Mary Christmas," a politically incorrect tale of a crippled orphan who doesn't get adopted on Christmas morning, and Little Cindy's "Happy Birthday Jesus," which Waters suspects was recorded at a tiny studio in the South with a stage mother hovering over a young girl wearing a torn party dress. You have to hear it to believe it.

Jim Radosta: What do you think of Portland?

John Waters: Oh, it's great. It reminds me of Baltimore in a lot of ways, only you have better book shops—and more famous directors living there.

JR: What's the plan for this show?

JW: I'm going to be talking about my obsession with Christmas—and about Christmas crime and Christmas fashion and Christmas presents and Christmas cards and what you should do with your family and how you deal with depression at Christmas or how you handle all the insanity at this time of year.

JR: I love the Christmas compilation. I've got you sandwiched right between Crystal and Muddy Waters, which somehow seems appropriate.

JW: Oh, good! Well, I think Brenda Lee has the best all-time Christmas record. I could never top her, so I wanted to come in second.... None of these [songs] were made to be ironic. They were done fairly seriously.

JR: Do you find that it's a lot harder today to find musicians who are unaware of their cheese factor? Now we've just got people like Clay Aiken.

JW: Yeah, but even they're aware of it. Basically because of cable and the Internet, everybody's aware of everything. There are no pockets of the country left that aren't plugged in, really.

At the end of *Pecker*, the last line was "To the end of irony!" I remember when 9/11 happened, all the editorials said, "The end of irony" or something. I thought: "Wait a minute! I said that like two years ago. It didn't take 9/11 to figure that out."

JR: You're about to be honored for your AIDS activism alongside a state senator and a Cornell professor. Did you ever think there would come a day?

JW: I guess if you stick around long enough and



Jim's Closet BY JIM RADOSTA

they can't get rid of you, then they've gotta honor you. I'm certainly flattered that they're doing it.

Sometimes it's weird. When I was at the Kennedy Center when *Hairspray* opened [on Broadway] with the Bush Washington crowd and I stood up and I got a standing ovation, [a friend] whispered to me, "If these people knew you, they would *bate* you!"

JR: Speaking of politics, what are your thoughts on same-sex marriage?

JW: I'm for it. I personally have no desire to get married. That's for straight gay people. I'm not one of 'em. I wanna invest in gay divorce and tattoo removal, the growth industries of the next decade.

JR: An upcoming documentary on AMC credits *Pink Flamingos* for inspiring the punk movement, *Jackass* and *Fear Factor*. How do you feel about that?

JW: Certainly.... *Pink Flamingos* was a punk movie. We just didn't know there was a term. I mean, the audience looked like hippies, but they were angry hippies.... *Jackass*—I'm a huge fan of that. Johnny Knoxville was the star of my last movie [*A Dirty Shame*].... *Fear Factor*—I've never seen it, but I get the comparison. I mean, eating shit is basically the kind of thing they do on that show, right? Except without the good outfits!

JR: What are your future projects?

JW: I'm working on a big show that I'm having at [New York City's] Marianne Boesky Gallery in late April called *Unwatchable*. I have a new TV show that comes out Feb. 3 on the Here network called *John Waters Presents Movies That Will Corrupt You*. And I am a regular on a Court TV pilot that we hope

will be ordered up called *Til Death Do Us Part* that is based on true crimes, but acted out with actors, about a bride or a groom that kills one another. Each episode begins with their wedding, and I'm the "Groom Reaper," the time traveler that knows they're gonna kill each other and tells the audience. ☺

The "Pope of Trash" details his groundbreaking career and his influence on films and cult culture during A JOHN WATERS CHRISTMAS COMEDY SPECIAL 9:30 p.m. Dec. 16 at Dante's, 1 S.W. Third Ave. Tickets are \$30 at the door or \$25 in advance from TicketsWest. A \$50 dinner/meet and greet will precede the show at 7.

Arts and Culture Editor JIM RADOSTA needs your feedback. Write to jim@justout.com.

