

All Hail the Queen

Lesbian author embraces her inner oddball

Hillary Carlip crowns herself *Queen of the Oddballs* (Harper Paperbacks, 2006; \$13.95 softcover) in a breezy memoir that recounts memorable moments from her colorful life.

This jill-of-all-trades from Los Angeles has enjoyed brief stints as a stalker (of Carole King in the summer of 1971), starfucker (with a Xanadu dancer and a soap opera actress), rocker (as lead singer of Angel and the Reruns, seen in the 1984 film *Bachelor Party*), screenwriter (*Skirts*, a derailed dance musical that was supposed to star Debbie Gibson) and author (*Girl Power: Young Women Speak Out*, a forum for teenagers to express themselves). Oh, and she can juggle, too.

Paul Reubens, aka Pee-wee Herman, sums it up best on the book jacket: "Hillary Carlip's life will floor you.... Her book should be mandatory reading for anybody contemplating fabulousness."

Jim Radosta: What made you decide to put your life into a book?

Hillary Carlip: I had started writing personal essays and performing them in spoken word venues, and I just saw how people really respond to personal essays, which to me is like a mini memoir. People can see themselves in material that's so intimate and personal. I was really inspired by that whole genre and actually started a literary Web site, FreshYarn.com, and just got really swept up in that whole world and from that I thought, "Ah, it's time to put these stories out there."

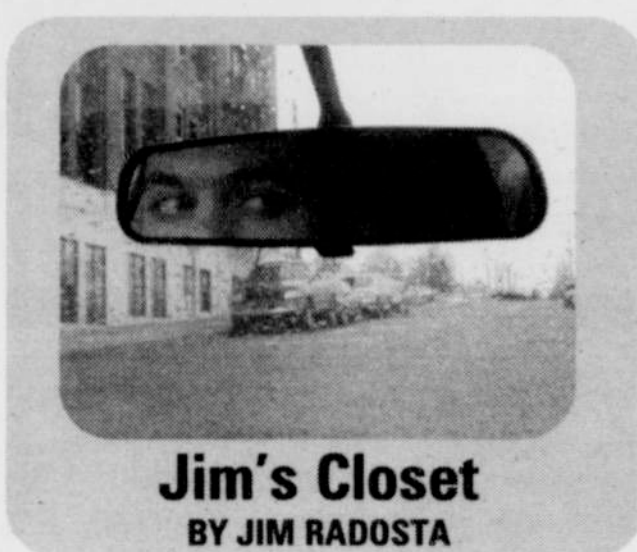
JR: What were some of the stories that especially resonated with audiences?

HC: Well, one of them, which I will be performing in Portland, is the title piece of the book, "Queen of the Oddballs," about my experience winning *The Gong Show*. I'm not only reading the piece in Portland but also performing my *Gong Show*-winning comedy juggling song, live and in person!

JR: I'm curious what it was about your upbringing that allowed you to be such a free spirit from such a young age.

HC: My parents were very supportive...they were lovely, kind, generous people, but they were like that to the mailman, to the neighbor's maid, to everyone. So it was always kind of like, "Hello, what about me?" And I think from early on I just felt like I had to do things to not be invisible. I'd take on these different personas to feel like I was someone interesting enough to be noticed.

The first piece in the book is about me pretending to be Holly Golightly when I was 8 years old and smoking cigarettes on the school playground and getting suspended from the third grade. Besides being sent to a child psychologist, there was some affirmation in that when, shortly afterward, I got picked out of everyone in my school to appear on



Art Linkletter's House Party. So there was some subliminal: "This behavior might be OK. I was rewarded for it!"

JR: A lot of these stories seem almost too good to be true. Especially in light of the James Frey debacle, did you have to prove anything for the fact-checkers?

HC: The great thing was I have all this ephemera and pictures and letters. But also I've kept journals and datebooks for decades, so I could tell you, like, what I've done every day since I was 13. So a lot of material was culled from my journals and things like that.

JR: What are you working on now?

HC: Mostly, I'm just promoting this book full time. I will be doing a Fresh Yarn anthology best-of book. I've been starting to speak a lot of places just to inspire people to take a different path, think "outside the box," as they

say—although that slogan is now so "in the box"—and let their oddballness thrive.

JR: Do you think gay people have an especially hard time with that because they get told that they're abnormal and that it's a bad thing to be abnormal?

HC: I think so. It's really interesting. You know, a lot of people writing the great memoirs are gay authors—David Sedaris, Augusten Burroughs, there is a new book out which is wonderful called *I Am Not Myself These Days* [by Josh Kilmer-Purcell]. Because of the situations we were faced with, we're more likely to go inside and look at these stories that we have to tell. **10**

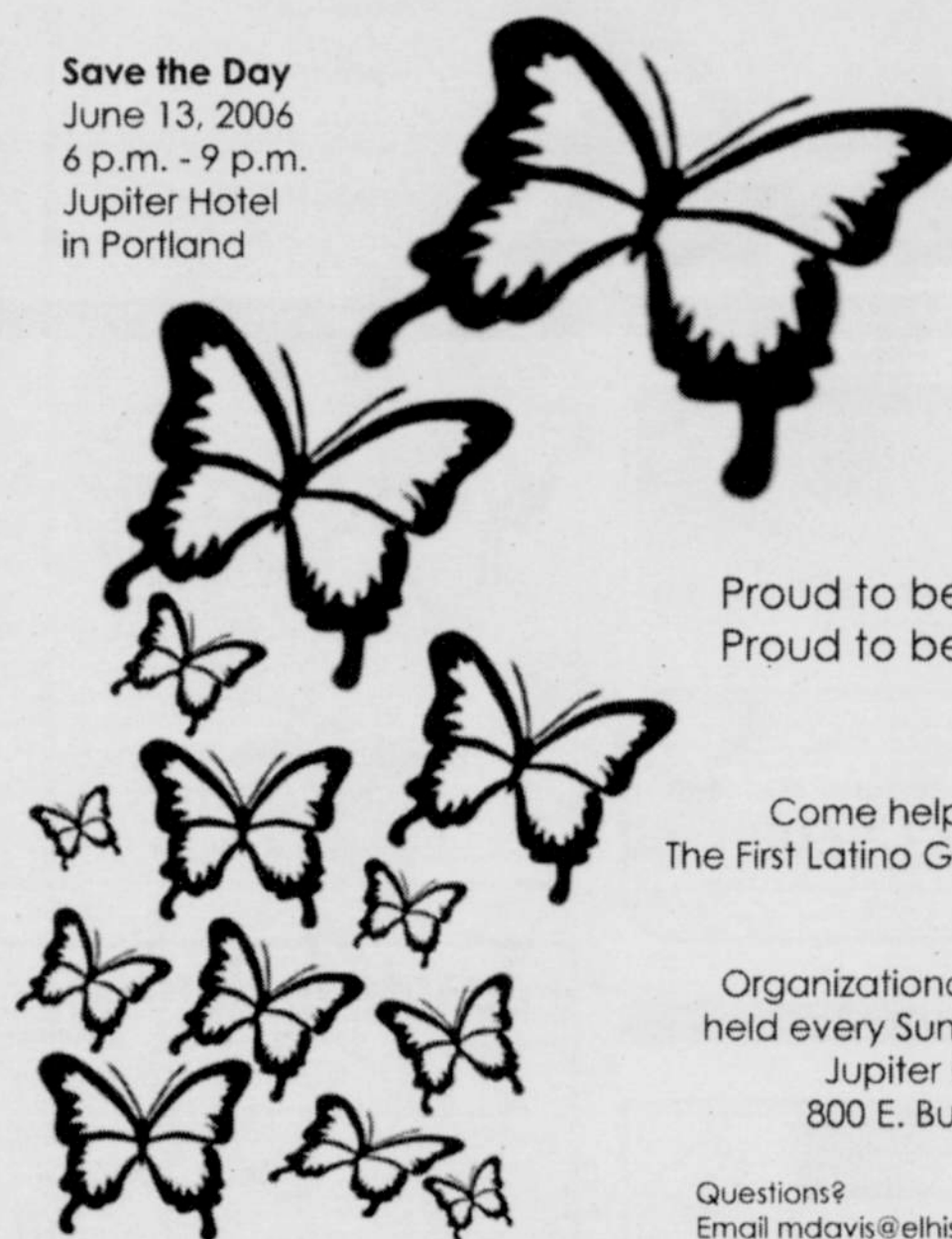
HILLARY CARLIP reads from *Queen of the Oddballs* 7 p.m. May 17 at Barnes & Noble, 708 S.W. Third Ave. She'll also appear on OPB's radio variety show *Live Wire!* 7 p.m. May 18 at Aladdin Theater, 3017 S.E. Milwaukie Ave. Tickets are \$15 at the door or \$12 in advance from the box office or Ticketmaster.

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

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Noche de Familia y Mariposas

Save the Day
June 13, 2006
6 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Jupiter Hotel
in Portland



Proud to be Latino?
Proud to be LGBTQ?

Come help us plan
The First Latino Gay Pride Fiesta

Organizational meetings
held every Sunday 10 a.m.
Jupiter Hotel
800 E. Burnside

Questions?
Email mdavis@elhispanicnews.com
david.martinez@co.multnomah.or.us

Mariposas know NO borders

ASUO Women's Center and UO Cultural Center present

5:3 Gala Opening
5:5 Unveiled
5:5 Best Lesbian Shorts
5:5 Who's the Top?
5:6 Youth Shorts
5:6 Queermation
5:6 Lesbian Tonho
5:7 The Journey
5:7 My Mother Likes Women

Queer Women's Expository Entertainment Film Festival

QWEEFF

May 4 - 7, 2006 PLC 180

May 4 - 6:30 p.m. - Opening Gala in Gerlinger Lounge
www.uoregon.edu/~cultural/queerfilm.html

Queer Women's Music Festival

OUT/LOUD

Saturday, May 13, 2006

EMU East Lawn - 12 noon to 10 p.m.

www.uoregon.edu/~women/Out_Loud.html
www.myspace.com/outloudfestival

All Events Free
Kid-Friendly Activities
Local Vendors

This event is wheelchair accessible. If any accommodations are needed due to disability, please contact the Women's Center by May 1, 2006. AA/TDE/ADA

Katastrope
Gina Young
Androgene
Scream Club
Ms. Sa'ad
Emily Herring
Homo 2
Vermillion Lies
Annie Vergnatti
Kye Mann
Stefani Crabtree
Nicole Barrett Sangsoree
Demimonde Slumber Party