

2006 *Just Out* AMATEUR PHOTO CONTEST



For 2006 the categories are
PETS, PEOPLE AND NATURE

ALL CONTESTS HAVE RULES. Here are ours.

1. Each person may send in as many entries as they choose. However, all entries become the property of Just Out and no entries will be returned.

2. Each and every photo must be clearly marked with the entrant's name, address, phone number and contest category.

3. All entries must be an 8" x 10" print or smaller. **No electronic submissions will be accepted.** Entries may be color, B & W, or lavender.

4. All entries must be received by May 31st.

Mail your entries to:
Just Out
P.O. Box 14400
Portland, Oregon 97293-0400

or drop them off at:
123 N.E. Third Ave., Suite 465

Winning entries will be published in the June 16 Pride Edition of Just Out.

There will be one knocked-our-socks-off grand prize winner as well as first-place winners from each category. In addition, prizes will be awarded to staff favorites. Finally, there will be a special prize awarded to the best picture of Portland City Commissioner Sam Adams *with his eyes open*. Good luck, amateur photographers.

The value of the prizes will range from \$25 to \$250.

**Deadline for entries
is now May 31st.**

All winning entries will be published in the June 16 Pride Edition of Just Out

books

Something for Everyone

Recent releases feature bitchy queens, questioning teens, hustling hunks and queer punks

My Lucky Star

by Joe Keenan; Little, Brown and Company, 2006; \$24.95 hardcover

Joe Keenan's *My Lucky Star* is a brilliant sitcom disguised as a novel.

Free from the hassle of commercial interruptions, the Emmy-winning writer and producer for *Frasier* fills 357 pages with catty characters, convoluted plot twists and, best of all, impossibly witty banter. Hollywood phonies are an easy target, but seldom have they been skewered with such giddy delight.

My Lucky Star follows *Blue Heaven* and *Putting on the Ritz* in Keenan's series of books about gay songwriter and playwright Philip Cavanaugh and his pals Gilbert and Claire. You don't need to read the first two entries in the Cavanaugh chronicles to reap the pleasures of *My Lucky Star* since Keenan generously fills us in on the back story.

Combining the plucky intrigue of a Nancy Drew mystery, the biting satire of *Sunset Blvd.* and raunchy gay sex, Keenan peels back Hollywood's sunny façade to reveal the arrogance, vanity and idiocy that lurk just barely beneath the surface. At the outset of the story, Philip works as a lowly courier in Manhattan because his plays keep on flopping. Enter his friend and ex-boyfriend Gilbert, who cooks up a scheme to bring Philip and his writing partner, Claire, out to Hollywood to write a screenplay.

The good news is that Philip and Claire get to adapt a novel (albeit a terrible one) for an Oscar-winning Hollywood diva and her closeted superstar son, Stephen. But due to Gilbert's inept wheeling and dealing, Philip must also go undercover to ghostwrite the memoirs of the diva's despised sister.

Screwball scandal erupts when Stephen gets caught up in a lurid incident involving a happy-ending masseur, a hustler dressed like an Oscar statuette, video cameras and copious amounts of anal sex.

When Stephen tries to dodge blame for his indiscretion, Gilbert zings back, "You're the one who decided to throw an open house in his ass!" Very few pages go by without this sort of exquisitely bitchy dialogue.

The novel disappoints in the final 50 pages, where the ridiculous and tedious plot twists make *Three's Company* look subtle. Otherwise you couldn't ask for a funnier or more enjoyable read.

—Stephen Blair

The Boys and the Bees

by Joe Babcock; Carroll & Graf, 2005; \$12.95 softcover

I would have killed for a book like *The Boys and the Bees* when I was 12.

The year was 1986. I was a regular on the honor roll, a right halfback on the school soccer team, a huge Madonna fan and—you guessed it—a total homo. I avoided detection by feigning eagerness at my friend Jennifer's "Spin the Bottle" parties.

To my delight and occasional shame, I had a boyfriend on the sly. My neighbor Johnny Singer was a budding sexual misfit, too, and it didn't take long for our play sessions to escalate into a naked romp we called "Capture the Prisoner."

Johnny knew that I was gay and I knew that Johnny was gay, but we never said the word out

loud because it sounded like a prison sentence. I had no one to talk to about my sexuality at home or at school, and in all my reading I never came across a book that broached the topic of queer kids.

The best praise I can give the new young adult novel *The Boys and the Bees* is that it's exactly the kind of book that would have made me feel less alone and scared when I was 12. It's written by 26-year-old Minneapolis author Joe Babcock, a Lambda Award winner for his first novel, *The Tragedy of Miss Geneva Flowers*.

Narrated by a closeted sixth-grader named

Andy, *The Boys and the Bees* is a short, funny and generally realistic novel that's ideal for any middle school-aged child questioning his or her sexuality. The book is also a great resource for parents who want to discuss sexual identity issues with kids in this age group.

The plot concerns a love triangle between three boys. Andy, an aspiring writer, attends a Catholic school with his best friend, James. Andy loves to fool around with James during sleepovers,

but he keeps his distance from James at school for fear that the popular clique will think he's gay. Mark, a handsome basketball player who may or may not be queer, completes the triangle.

The plot might lack ingenuity, but Babcock's writing is lively and enjoyable. Best of all, his prose is life-affirming, transmitting the powerful signal that being gay is nothing to be ashamed of.

—SB

