

Center featuring handmade items from creative artisans: pottery, jewelry, home décor, glassware, woodcrafts, birdhouses, toys, teddy bears, candles, soap, quilts and dog treats! (5-9 pm Friday, 10 am-6 pm Saturday, 10 am-3 pm Sunday, 415 First Ave.)

The Oregon Bears throw their monthly **Double X Dance** at C.C. Slaughters. (9 pm-1 am, 219 NW Davis St. \$2.)

SAT • NOV. 25

Deaf & Hearing Out Reach presents its monthly queer social at 3 Friends Coffeehouse. Come hang out with old friends and make new ones. All sign levels welcome! (6-9 pm, 201 SE 12th Ave. www.dhor.org.)

The **Oregon Symphony** highlights unforgettable music during *Broadway Romance* through Nov. 27 at Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall. Conductor Gregory Vajda will lead the Pops performance of showtunes including "Tonight" from *West Side Story*, "All That Jazz" from *Chicago*, "I Could Have Danced All Night" from *My Fair Lady* and "Wonderful Guy" from *South Pacific*. Guest vocalists include Hugh Panaro, who recently starred in the title role of Elton John's *Lestat*. (7:30 pm Saturday and Monday, 3 pm Sunday, 1037 SW Broadway. \$29-\$80 from box office or Ticketmaster.)

GO OUT The Capitol Forum presents the sixth annual **Connie's Holiday Show for the Charities** at Salem's Best Western Black Bear Inn featuring an auction, raffles and MCs Daphne Bertha Storm and Diva Simone of the SheBang Girls. Proceeds benefit LifeLine AIDS Project and Home Youth and Resource Center. (8 pm, 1600 Motor Court NE. \$5 donation, 503-363-0006.)

Hey, what's your vice? Holocene presents **Double Down**, the fab queer party where the player always wins, every fourth Saturday. (8 pm, 1001 SE Morrison St. \$5.)

The Eagle presents Portland's dirtiest dance party, **Jack**, with DJs Grant, Stormy and Jimmie Jamma throwin' down ninja style! (9 pm-2:30 am, 1300 W Burnside. \$3.)

SUN • NOV. 26

The **Adventure Group** takes a four-mile hike at Chenoweth Table, a small but beautiful natural area that includes a view from Eagle Cliffs overlooking The Dalles. Meet in Starbucks at Hollywood Fred Meyer. (9 am, 3030 NE Weidler St. Jeff 503-234-4800. jeffbrichard@yahoo.com.)

GO OUT **Queer Knitting** meets every other Sunday at Mabel's Cafe and Knittery for crafting, conversation and camaraderie. All genders, sexualities and knitting/crocheting experience levels welcome. (4-7 pm, 3041 SE Division St. starstealinggirl@gmail.com.)

Triangle Trifecta

Portland's queerest theater company, Triangle, recently scaled back from full seasons to one production a year. Not anymore.

Artistic director **Don Horn** is back with three shows this fall, each a bit different:

- The Northwest premiere of *Plaid Tidings*, the "Christmas" version of the ever-popular *Forever Plaid*. "It has some old songs, some new songs, songs for the holidays, songs to make you smile again," Horn says. "It's the perfect show to lift your spirits and melt your hearts." It will play from Nov. 24 to Dec. 23 at Brunish Hall, 1111 S.W. Broadway. Tickets are \$22-\$28 from Ticketmaster.

- The Northwest premiere of *Sister's Christmas Catechism*, the holiday sequel to *Latenite Catechism*, which ran for more than two years in Portland. It will play from Nov. 24 to Dec. 23 at First Unitarian Church, 1011 S.W. 12th Ave. Tickets are \$20-\$35 at the door or \$20-\$30 in advance from www.sisterschristmaspdx.com; opening weekend is \$20 for everyone.

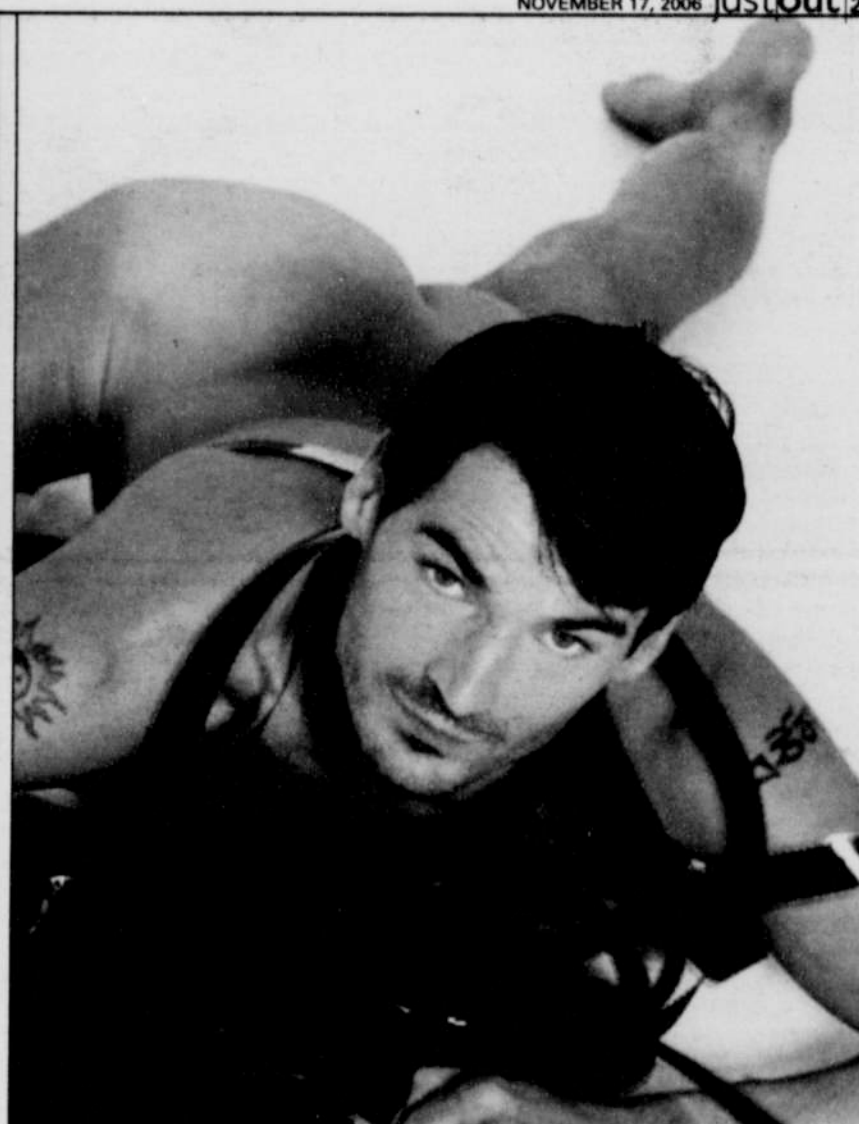
- The revival of *Pageant*: The hilarious spoof on beauty pageants returns with Kevin Cook, aka Poison Waters, Pepe Rafael of Pepe and the Bottle Blondes as well as the rest of the gang (Timm McBride, Joshua Ryan, Rick Lewis, Shaun Hennessey and Joe Healy) fighting—no, clawing—their way to become Miss Glamorous 2007! It will play from Dec. 1 to 23 at Firehouse Theatre, 1416 S.W. Montgomery St. Tickets are \$25 at the door or \$20 in advance from 503-239-5919 or www.tripro.org.

Horn has also been busy caring for his son, Nate, who was in a near-fatal car accident Feb. 14 in Guam but "is now walking with crutches! He still doesn't have feelings in his legs, but he's walking. What a year it has been."

—Jim Radosta



Candye Kane supports Esther's Pantry on Dec. 3 at Starky's.



Porn star Luca Dicoso celebrates *Freshman* magazine's 15th anniversary Nov. 18 at Steam.

Zaytoon screens *Monkey Rider*, a motorcycle movie by Joah Keller about her cross-country road trip from Portland to the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. With most of the film shot with a camcorder tied to her 650 purple Suzuki, Keller offers a raw picture exploring the roads of America and Canada. On the road and at the campsite, she reflects on her love relations, her transition into adulthood and the political climate we are living in. (8 pm, 2236 NE Alberta St.)

Doug Fir Lounge presents *Christmas in the Northwest* featuring performances by Ashleigh Flynn, Rye Hollow, Aaron Meyer, Tara Ward, Brenda White and special

The Not-So-Great American Christmas

Produced by the makers of *Laguna Beach*, *The Great American Christmas* is a reality TV show presented as a happy ode to diversity, with six very different real-life families working toward a "Christmas miracle."

As miracles go, these are pretty mundane. A straight guy drives from New York to Los Angeles to move in with his girlfriend. Will he make it? How dramatic is that?

Inexplicably, for a show supposedly about the holiday dreams of ordinary people, *Christmas* features one of America's wealthiest religious hucksters, Robert Schuller, and his white-bred family from Orange County's famed Crystal Cathedral. Schuller's "miracle" is probably the hope that the Internal Revenue Service won't audit his books.

The queer story—by far the most interesting of the six here—comes from a thirtysomething couple, **Ted Trent** and **Drew Panico**, who decide to leave their big-city life and supportive friends in L.A. to spend Christmas with Trent's right-wing, homophobic relatives in rural Illinois. A friend warns them, "Book a hotel!" And Trent ups the anxiety factor by mentioning that his dad called begging him, "Don't bring Drew!" and that his mom "doesn't accept our lifestyle but tolerates it." But Trent still yearns for his family's acceptance, and no amount of degradation is too much to try to get it.

Christmas bounces back and forth between the various families, so we get Trent and Panico's story in fits and starts. They're a surprisingly timid pair who carefully avoid visible affection, obsequiously accept separate bedrooms in Trent's mother's house and grasp at the crumbs of emotion handed them. Trent's father refuses to see them at all. His mother tries, but the strain is evident in the silences during the visit. Trent's brother Bobby, a grim hetero in the Cro-Magnon mold, tries to shelter his kids from Uncle Ted as if he were a pariah, clearly mortified at his gayness but also fighting to resist his natural feelings of caring for his brother. (Bobby's kids seem much less conflicted, affectionately jumping on Trent and asking him wistfully, "Leaving already?")

Howie Mandel narrates the show in a shtick-drenched, idiotically upbeat manner: "Will Ted get his Christmas miracle?" Mandel says yes: "Even though he'd only come a few miles, Bobby had actually come a long way for Christmas!" This is hard to reconcile with scenes of Bobby tearfully wailing that seeing Trent and Panico together was "way too hard for me to handle!" Poor baby. This clueless "special" is ultimately anything but, with the gay segment an unintentionally creepy look into pre-Stonewall homophobia, apparently alive and well in 2006 in the ironically named "heartland."

The Great American Christmas premieres 9 p.m. Nov. 28 on the USA Network.

—Gary Morris



A nun employs techniques from her favorite television show, *Forensic Files*, to discover the whereabouts of the Magi's Gold in *Sister's Christmas Catechism*.



Drew Panico (left) and Ted Trent grasp at crumbs of emotion from homophobic relatives in *The Great American Christmas*.