

SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK

Friday, Feb. 15, 8 PM

Arlene
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And the Winner Isn't...

Dubious distinctions you won't be seeing at the Oscars

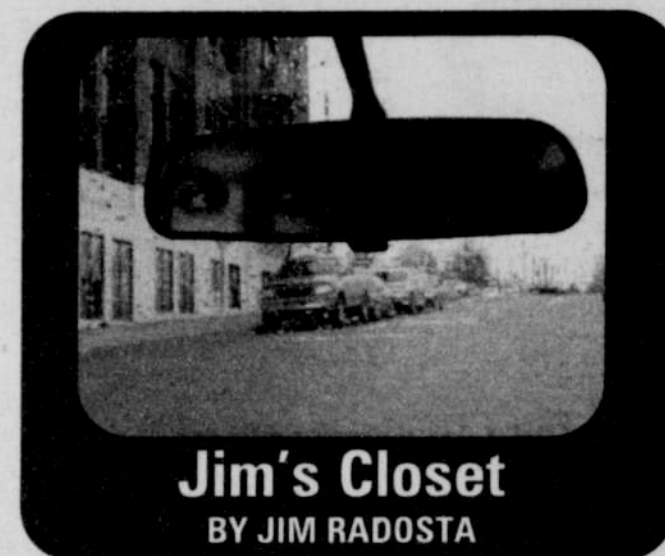
The ongoing writers strike has everyone wondering what will become of the Academy Awards, but at least there are some things you can always count on—like my annual observations of the queerest moments in cinema. Enjoy.

THE BEST OF TIMES, THE WORST OF TIMES

Portland—one of the top 10 places for directors to live, according to the winter edition of *MovieMaker Magazine*—boosted its rep as a film-friendly city by hosting some prominent productions in 2007.

My favorite film of the year, *Into the Wild*, had no queer content, although the protagonist's inner and outer journey should resonate with every earthling—plus you get to see beautiful Emile Hirsch floating down a river au naturel. (Incidentally, director Sean Penn stars as slain gay San Francisco City Supervisor Harvey Milk in Portland auteur Gus Van Sant's highly anticipated biopic, which began production last month in the Bay Area.)

Meanwhile, another thorn in the Rose City's résumé came in the form of *Feast of Love*, a poorly received ensemble romance in which a woman leaves her husband to have an affair with a lesbian on her softball team.



Jim's Closet
BY JIM RADOSTA

THE FABULOUS FOUR

The Beatles musical *Across the Universe* featured a lesbian named Prudence who longingly sings "I Want to Hold Your Hand" to a fellow cheerleader, develops an unrequited crush on a Janis Joplin type and eventually hooks up with a contortionist.

METROSEXUAL HARASSMENT

Two New York City firemen pose as a married gay couple to scam medical benefits in *I Now Pronounce You Chuck & Larry*. An ice skater curls his face in disgust at the thought of touching another man's crotch during a lift in *Blades of Glory*. A butch gay motorcycle cop insists on skinny-dipping with four suburban cyclists in *Wild Hogs*.

Isn't this joke getting stale?

BLASPHEMOUS RUMOURS

Bible bangers boycotted *The Golden Compass* for fear that it would lead children down the perilous path to atheism, but the harmless fantasy film should've been the least of their worries. *There Will Be Blood* ends with a gory climax in which a desperate preacher is fooled into admitting: "I am a false prophet! God is a superstition!" *The Simpsons Movie* poked fun at religion, too: While frantically flipping through the Bible, Homer exclaims, "This book doesn't have any answers!"



Three cheers for *Across the Universe*.

TAKE A DRAG

Oscar nominee Cate Blanchett channeled Bob Dylan in *I'm Not There*, queer Portland writer/director Todd Haynes' nontraditional, nonlinear biopic inspired by the elusive folksinger.

On the flip side, Eddie Murphy cashed in his *Dreamgirls* capital with a Razzie-nominated performance as Rasputia, an obese wife who makes life miserable for *Norbit*.

Also tipping the gender-bending scales was John Travolta, who donned a dress as the fat mama in *Hairspray*, a misguided attempt to bring the 2002 Broadway musical to the big screen. Here's some Divine inspiration: Why not just rent John Waters' 1988 cult classic instead?


STEALING THAT EXTRA BOW

One of 2007's most entertaining documentaries, *ShowBusiness*, traced four Broadway musicals' rocky roads to glory (*Wicked*) and disaster (*Taboo*). The Tony Award, however, went to Coos Bay native Jeff Whitty for writing *Avenue Q*, a raunchy puppet show about finding one's purpose in life. (By the way, mark your calendars for June 24 to 29, when *Avenue Q* comes to Portland. Tickets go on sale May 11 at www.portlandopera.org.)

TITLES WITH GREATEST GAY PORN POTENTIAL

Abonement, *Gaywulf*, *A Mighty Hard-On*, *The Great Masturbators*, *Before the Devil Gives You Head*, *Love in the Time of Chlamydia*, *Charlie Wilson's Whore*, *Mr. Labia Majorum's Wonder Emporium*

TITLES THAT ALREADY SOUND GAY

Pride, *Becoming Jane*, *Daddy Day Camp*, *Mr. Woodcock*, *Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer*, *Why Did I Get Married?* 

The 80th annual ACADEMY AWARDS air 5 p.m. Feb. 24 on ABC.

Hollywood Theatre presents Oregon's only officially sanctioned OSCAR NIGHT AMERICA event featuring "paparazzi" and a Bette Midler impersonator on the red carpet; honorary chairman Sam Adams; hosts *Daria*, *Mitch and Ted of The Buzz 105.1*; vocalist Patrick Lamb; and filmmaker Will Vinton (along with his real Oscar) from 4:30 to 9 p.m. Feb. 24 at 4122 N.E. Sandy Blvd. Tickets are \$80 at the door or \$75 in advance from www.filmaction.org.

Arts and Culture Editor JIM RADOSTA needs your feedback. E-mail him at jim@justout.com.

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