

pridefiles

glad I went back when I did and had that family time. And now I get to have this dykey haircut."

Eventually the allure of Portland brought Brooks back. "I desperately missed walking around Portland streets in the summer smelling people's front yard gardens," she says.

Brooks considers herself primarily a communicator: "My job has been and will always be expressing ideas using media."

She started writing in the fourth grade; her favorite authors include Flannery O'Connor, Lorrie Moore and Philip Roth. "My teacher plucked a few of us out of class to produce a school paper and I was hooked," Brooks shares. "My first piece of arts criticism was a review of the movie *Meatballs* (thumbs up!), which is still one of my faves."

—WAYNE BUND

From *Idol* to Portland

Justin Buckles brings reality to Red Cap/Boxxes

If you've spent any amount of time near the Red Cap/Boxxes compound, you've probably noticed Justin Buckles. As the manager of both clubs, Buckles is a Stark Street staple, and not simply because he runs a tight ship and is easy on the eyes. He's helped hatch some of the venues' more successful ventures, like Portland Idol, and coordinates weekly fundraisers for resources including Q Center. He also adds some Hollywood flair to Portland's nightlife—yes, Buckles arrived here by way of Tinseltown, where he had an intriguing career in reality programming.

Buckles made his trek down south after growing up in Coos Bay, Ore. "I was driven to move to L.A. after having some success with a screenplay that I wrote while in high school," he explains. "It drew interest from Flower Films [Drew Barrymore's production company] and Harpo Films. I was close to closing a deal with another production company, but it fell through. This, though, inspired me to move." Shortly after arriving in Los Angeles, E! Entertainment hired Buckles, which led to a gig on *American Idol*. After *Idol*, he worked on both *So You Think You Can Dance* and *Gene Simmons' Family Jewels*.

Idol, though, prompted Buckles' most intense creative endeavor—*American Idol Exposed*, a behind-the-scenes tell-all of the smash series. In February 2011 he published the scathing, personal account of his life during seasons two through five. "I was hired as a

production assistant," Buckles says. "I quickly moved to production coordinator, eventually

production manager. I was daily in the heart of the show. I dealt with [host Ryan] Seacrest and the judges regularly. At the end of the day, I was one of just a few people responsible for putting every single live show together."

Writing the 357-page book hasn't come without struggle. According to Buckles, his non-disclosure agreements have expired, but the backlash hasn't. "I've gotten tons of flack from former coworkers on the show," Buckles claims. "I have had threats of lawsuits, other threats of 'tracking me down and taking care of me.' I'm simply sharing my personal experiences while working on the show. No one owns those but me." And to find out exactly what it was like working with Paula, Simon and company—from Buckles' perspective, at least—one need only make a quick jaunt to Amazon.com.

—DANIEL BORDEN



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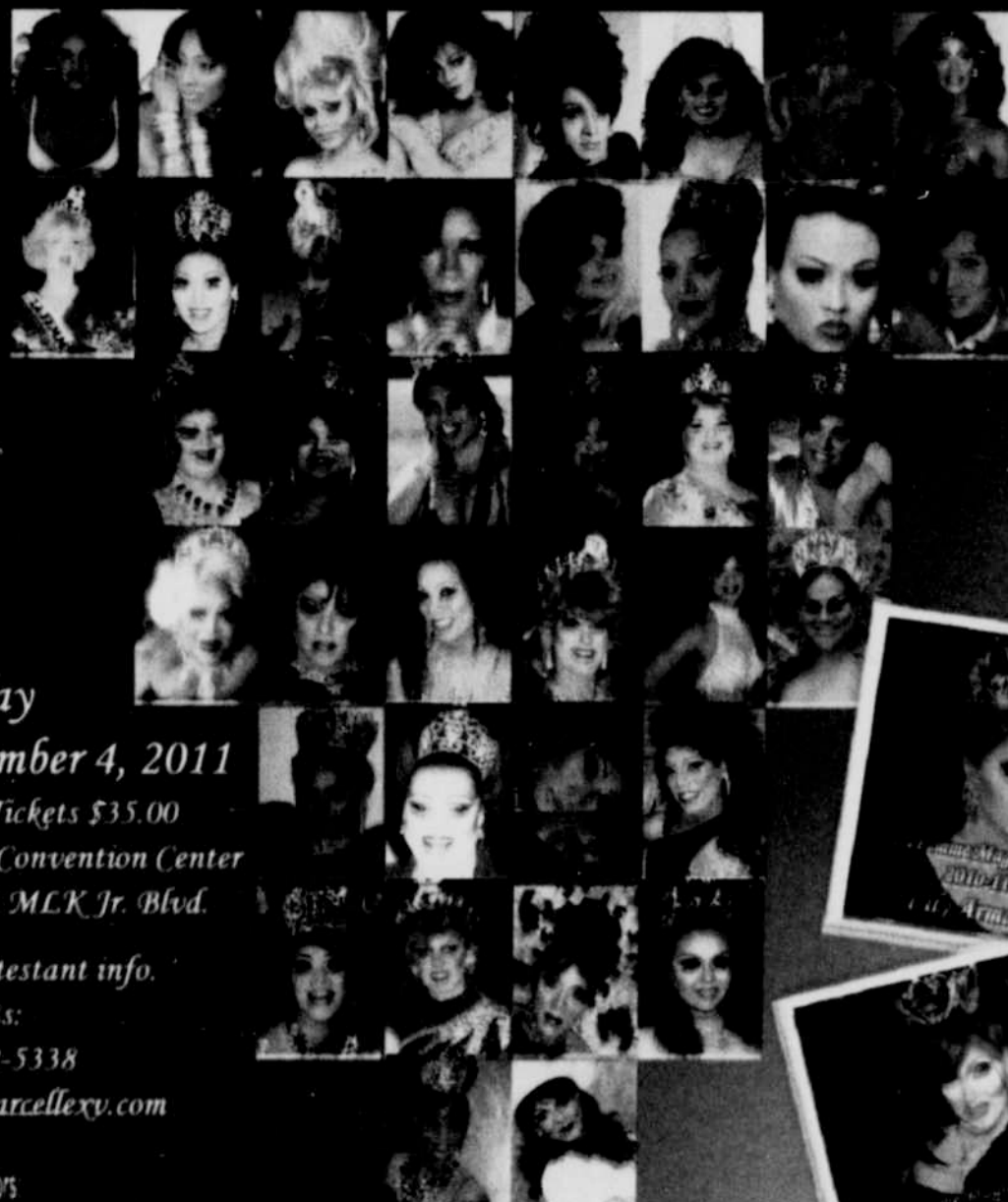
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