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AND THE
DANCERS FROM
DIVAS LAS VEGAS

Transformations

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AND THE LIVES OF DRAG ENTERTAINERS IN LAS VEGAS

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Writer Mark Adams introduces you to Denise, Jane, Jude and Cassandra, four interesting transgender individuals who are actively involved in the community.

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30 FINDING YOUR WAY

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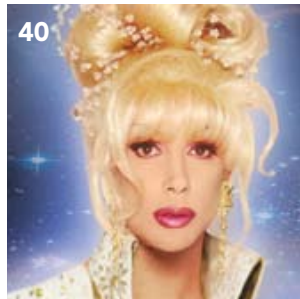
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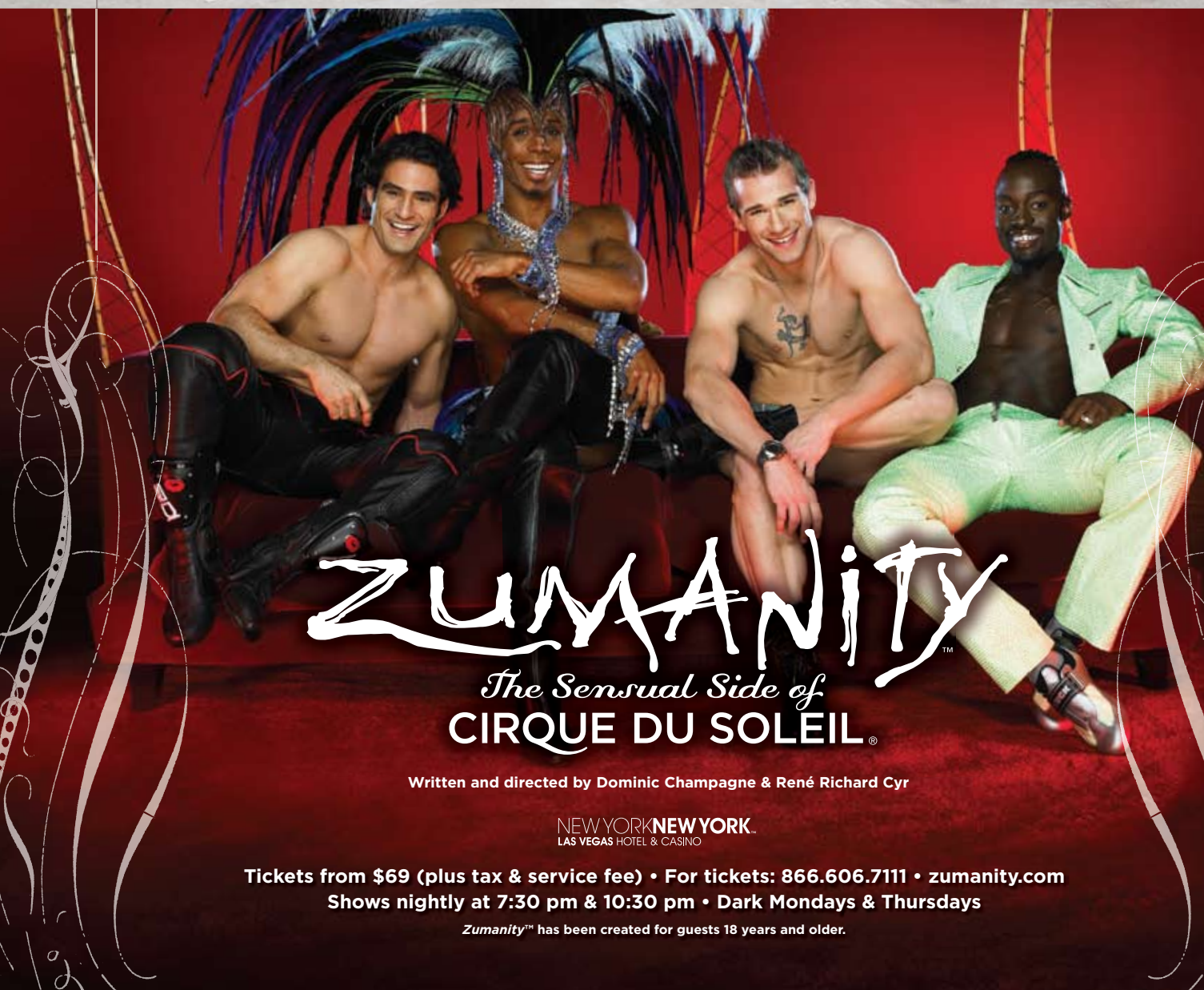
Drag personalities Syren Vaughan, Shawn M, DeShannon and JewDi Vine have all made an impact on the community through their performances and charity participation.

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Better late than never, they say, right? I'm proud to say that we finally did what we should have done years ago: devoted nearly an entire issue to the transgender community!

Originally conceived by Earl, our assistant publisher, our first-ever "Transformation Issue" is in your hands right now, and we hope it will allow our readers to become educated on a segment of our population we often overlook (especially in the fight for equality) and many of us just don't fully understand and appreciate without being in their shoes.

I'll admit, I personally have not been friends with many transgender individuals, yet of course I've been exposed to quite a few both here in Vegas and in my previous cities of residence. So, perhaps needless to say, this issue was certainly not the easiest I've had the pleasure of putting together. Yet I'm pretty happy with what we've printed, from the profiles of four noteworthy transgender individuals to the glossary of accepted trans-terminology, and I hope it meets with the approval of our transgender readers, who number far more than I ever expected.

As this is an issue devoted to transformations of all types — from portraying the opposite sex for entertainment purposes to embarking on a journey to transition to the sex opposite that which was assigned at birth — you'll notice we've also dedicated a portion to Las Vegas drag performers. On our cover is the

ever-popular Frank Marino. If you've lived in Vegas for long, you've seen him on billboards, ads and the covers of every major magazine. But do you know the rest of the talented cast of his newest show on the Strip? You will after reading this issue! Plus, we've profiled four additional drag queens from all sides of town whom we thought you should know.

I can just hear it now: "Why did you omit [insert name here] and how dare you not write about [insert name or topic here]?" Trust me, it would require a publication the size of an encyclopedia set to include every noteworthy person and topic related to the transgender community in Las Vegas. It is for that very reason that I hope to make the Transformation Issue an annual part of our editorial calendar. I invite you to e-mail me your ideas for next year's issue.

On that note, since it is the new year after all, I hope many of our readers will make a resolution to become more welcoming and accepting of transgender persons, and we feel confident you will walk away from this issue with an understanding and appreciate you may not have had before today.

M. Cory Burgess
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WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK

Do you have something on your mind? Do you have something to say about an article in QVegas or any topic of interest to our readers? Do you have an idea for a future story? We want to hear from you! Simply send an e-mail to Editor@QVegas.com. Letters to the Editor may be printed in a future issue if signed.



Hello, my name is 6pak. Well, my name is really Andrew but most know me as 6pak the entertainer, so we will go with that. I'm not quite sure what I'm going to write but I feel compelled to write something as I am a bit of mouthpiece for trans men.

I guess my transition would be a good place to start. Once I knew who I was, a man born in a female body, my life got very rough for awhile. First was the coming out to my parents, who have always been supportive throughout my life. They did support me but not without some pain, confusion and feelings of loss. Communication was key with my family; we did a lot of talking, telling each other what we were feeling. No matter how much it hurt, no matter how uncomfortable, we talked it out. I could only educate them so much; they did the rest. They made their way past acceptance and into understanding. I am grateful.

Then came facing the world knowing I am a man inside but the world sees a female. Some call this "in the middle." I believe this is the most painful time in transitioning, for me. I didn't know if I would ever be able to afford all that has to be taken care of to one day be legally male and seen by the world as such. Surgery is just one piece. Letters from therapists and doctors, blood work, other medical tests, name change, gender change on documents... not only does this take a lot of time, but each step takes money; most will not be covered by insurance.

Ok, so there I was: a man inside, with immense fear that I never would be on the outside. The next person that called me "ma'am" I was gonna knock out! But that's what they saw. I don't have the words to describe what it feels like to be in the wrong body, but I can say this: life felt like it had no quality. I was able to get what I needed for a testosterone prescription; within one month my voice was dropping. I felt "right" inside, but no facial hair. *Dang!* With each day, changes began happening. It seems there was a time where my wife or I found a new hair, muscle, a deeper voice or vein. These were times of celebration, elation — my outside was starting to match up. This strange feeling started seeping into my soul, something I never knew in my life: *peace*.

Then an Angel was sent to me and asked, "Can I help pay for your surgery?" I was in awe. All I could do at first is cry, then I said *yes!* This Angel knew I would never have the means to have this surgery. She knew my pain, she felt my pain, and she knew this was the answer to making this man whole: a loving, selfless act that gave me quality of life. I am now the man I'm supposed to be.

There are many people who were there for me, supported me and loved me. I am one fortunate man. I communicate with a lot of teen trans men and transitioning men via YouTube, e-mail, MySpace, and phone. I want to be there for those who aren't as fortunate as I have been, those with no family, no friends that understand, living in towns that have no resources, don't know where to turn, can't get answers. At least they know there is someone out here who understands how they feel and can answer most question for them. The goal is to educate and pay it forward.

One love,

Andrew Citino (aka 6pak)
thesixpak@yahoo.com



Where to begin? First to say congratulations to *QVegas* on your first TG issue. And secondly, to say you blew it. Because of a shortage of space you couldn't profile "yours truly" — the quintessential nightclubbing, socialite, militant, hanger and promotor of the "T" in GLBT lifestyle.

In 225 words I cannot begin to tell the public how ultra-lame, not ultra-lounge, the Las Vegas T-Girl scene is. Nor can I illustrate in photos (space will not allow) how good T-Girls can look in photographs (I have them).

Nor can I effectively explain and lobby how I want the TG [community] to be accepted and recognized as who and what we are — trans-men and trans-women, not real men and real women when we can never truly be either of these. How I want to see laws changed to list gender classifications on driver's licenses and job applications to say Male-Female-

Transgender.

A group of people, especially controversial people, can never be accepted, respected and recognized if we base our world on hiding, deception, denial, fear and ambiguity.

Not enough print or story space? Perhaps *QVegas* should print at least two Transformation issues per year?

If anyone is interested, if there is anyone out there who is unapathetic and would like to hear more about this activism and communicate on any of this, please get in touch.

Tracy St. James/James Bresnahan

Dear LGBTQ... community and an often unfair world,

My name is Amber LaMay and I am indeed a TS woman in our community here in Las Vegas. My journey into my "true" spirit as a young woman started out as a child like so many but not always as a general road map within the Transgendered community and society as a whole. As a young child I felt the female spirit of myself often shunned and or exhausted by society around me and my feelings of being hurt and not accepted were felt from just about direction I looked. With this negative energy I was consuming from others around me, I became more aware of why I felt shame and fear in being me, just a girl! I am reminded to this day as to why it's extremely difficult just to be accepted. I'm certainly not looking to point fingers or accuse the world often for being hurtful or unfair, but I would like to see the future of the status quo towards and certainly within the LGBTQ... community shift to a status quo-ante; the state of affairs that existed previously.

Within a majority society I sit within a community often left out and not treated fairly. A community shunned from rights of marriage, healthcare and equal treatment given to one person but not another solely on sexual preference or identity. I then sit within that often beat down community by the masses

Continued on Page 31 ►





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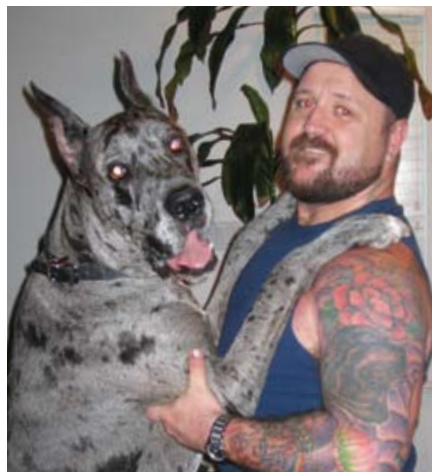
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Welcome back, Joshua!

The Center is proud to announce a new addition to its staff as of Dec. 1. Joshua Montgomery, a former employee of The Center, left two years ago to work as a drug and alcohol counselor at Westcare and pursue his studies in social work. Joshua has returned and taken the position of HIV Prevention Coordinator. He will be primarily responsible for running the Vegas Mpowerment Project, which focuses on HIV prevention for gay and bisexual men in their 20s. Please stop by and welcome Joshua back to our team!



Holiday Bliss for LGBT Teens

Thank you to the many donors who contributed gift cards and other items to The Center's "Adopt an LGBT Teen for the Holidays" drive in December. The response to our request was overwhelming, and over \$1,000 in goods was donated. As a result, on the evening of Dec. 17, over 50 youth enjoyed a special holiday party complete with gift bags, catered treats and a raffle. Despite the hard financial times that many LGBT individuals, groups and families experienced in 2009, many folks went the extra mile to take care of The Center's young clients, and we thank you very much for your generosity.

Special thanks go out to Jennifer Bolton, Dawn Christensen and Ron Quinn for their incredible efforts to make The Center's annual youth holiday party an amazingly memorable experience.

Give a Day (to The Center). Get a Disney Day.

In 2010, Disney Parks wants to inspire one million people to volunteer a day of service through the "Give A Day. Get A Disney Day." program that celebrates good works by giving each qualified volunteer one day admission to a theme park at Disneyland® Resort or Walt Disney World® Resort, free. As a member of CenterLink, the national community of LGBT centers, The Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Southern Nevada is eligible to participate in this exciting program.

If you are interested in volunteering with The Center to earn a free one day admission to your favorite Disneyland® or Walt Disney World® theme park, please visit www.disney.com and click the "Give A Day. Get A Disney Day." banner to search for The Center's current volunteer opportunities. Although this program is slated to run throughout 2010, it is anticipated that the one million tickets available will go fast, so please sign up to volunteer as soon as possible. Individuals wishing to participate in this program through The Center must be at least 18 years of age. Please contact Mel Goodwin at mel@thecenterlv.com or (702) 733-9800 with questions about this special opportunity.

Note: For all you sports-loving volunteers out there, please consider volunteering with The Center to sell concessions at the Sin City Shootout, a national LGBT softball tournament, which will take place Jan. 16-17. All proceeds collected at this event will benefit programs and services offered at The Center (and you get a free Disney day out of it!). ●

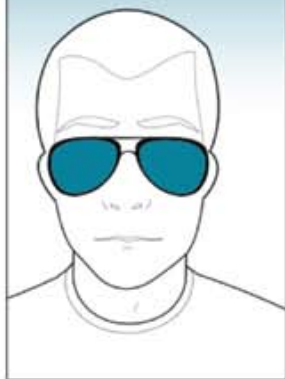
ABOUT THE CENTER

The Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Southern Nevada, serving our LGBT population for more than 15 years, is conveniently located in Commercial Center at 953 E. Sahara Ave., Ste. B-31. To learn more about The Center and its many services, visit www.thecenterlv.com or call 702-733-9800.

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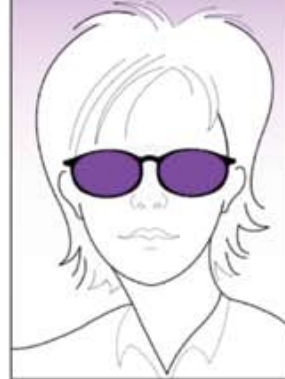
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HRC to hold smart estate and financial planning seminar

The Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender civil rights organization, will hold a free life and estate planning seminar on Jan. 19 in Las Vegas. The seminar is part of a national effort to help protect LGBT relationships and educate individuals on various estate and financial planning issues including drafting of wills, durable power of attorney for health care and finances, domestic partnership, and the Pension Protection Act. Local financial and estate planning professionals will also be on hand for questions and answers.

"Recent events profoundly demonstrate the paramount importance for individuals to have a sound estate plan in place," said Timothy Mahoney, HRC's Director for Estate Planning. "Whether dealing with a loved one's medical care decisions or protecting the family's relationship and fruits of their life's work, ensuring now that one's wishes will be carried out in the future is a wonderful gift

to the individual, the family, the friends and the community."

The Human Rights Campaign Equality Circle, in partnership with HRC's Las Vegas

Steering Committee, is committed to educating the community on the importance of proper estate planning and how it affects your future. The HRC Equality Circle Estate Planning Seminar was developed as one method of fulfilling that mission through the Office of Estate Planning.

"Understanding the importance of estate and financial planning for the LGBT community is critical and we are excited to provide this opportunity to our community," said Gwen Migita, Co-Chair Las Vegas HRC Steering Committee.

The free seminar will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 19, 6-7:30 p.m. at the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce located at 6671 Las Vegas Blvd. S., Ste. 300. For more information on the event, visit lasvegas.hrc.org. Register by emailing estateplanning@hrc.org or by calling (202) 216-1563. ●

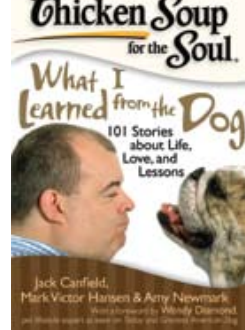


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Vegas author published in *Chicken Soup for the Soul*

Local author Gregory Kompes is featured in the new *Chicken Soup for the Soul: What I Learned from the Dog* collection.

Kompes' story "An Open Heart" is about learning that love is an open heart, open to both sorrow and to joy. Once he and his dog Aristotle started bonding, Aristotle got so sick that not even the doctors knew what was wrong. Scared because he had never loved another before, Kompes was heartbroken. Aristotle got better, leaving the doctors puzzled; but Kompes knew what the problem was, him. The ordeal proved his worthiness to deserve a companion and that he could in fact love another.



Kompes is also an accomplished author, having published his *50 Fabulous Gay-Friendly Places to Live*, which was hailed by *The Advocate* as a "Super-Helpful Resource." He is editor of *The Fabulist Flash*, a newsletter for writers. Along with Tena Beth Thompson, Gregory is co-founder of the Patchwork Path book series and co-host of the Writer's Pen and Grill, a social evening for writers held monthly in Las Vegas. And, along with Leslie E. Hoffman, he is co-founder of Laudably Tarnished: A Poetry Workshop.

Visit him online at www.kompes.com. ●

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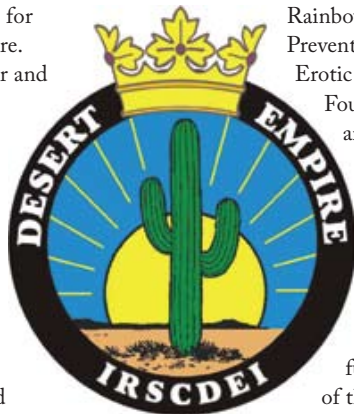
Imperial Royal Sovereign Court invites community to events

Jason Dyer, the Twelfth Elected Emperor of All of Southern Nevada, and Bootsy Carmichael, the Twelfth Elected Empress of All of Southern Nevada, are proud to invite Southern Nevada to the Investiture for Reign 12 of the Desert Empire.

At Investiture, the Emperor and Empress of the Court of the Desert Empire announce the members of their "royal family." The evening promises to be a whole lot of fun, as the theme of this year's reign is "Sentenced to a Year of Community Service" and Jason and Bootsy will be "Sentencing the Royal Line!" Investiture will be held Jan. 1 at Badlands Saloon, with the doors opening at 8 p.m. and the show beginning at 9 p.m. All are welcome.

Christopher Reynolds, Emperor 11 of All of Southern Nevada, and Ginger Grant, Empress 11 of All of Southern Nevada, also cordially invite the community to the Divestiture of Reign 11 of the Desert Empire. Divestiture is another important event in the life of the

Desert Empire; at this year's divestiture, the organizations receiving funds at Badlands Saloon on Jan. 30 beginning at 9 p.m. are the St. Therese Center, Street Teens, Golden Rainbow, the Nevada Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Erotic Heritage Museum, the Delphi



Foundation, the Matthew Shepard Foundation, the Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Southern Nevada, the Sin City Sisters, the TNT Scholarship Fund, and the IRSCEI Benevolent Fund. Join the Court for this outstanding evening of fun and fundraising and be there as all of these deserving not-for-profit organizations receive funds, too!

The Imperial Royal Sovereign Court of the Desert Empire is a 501(c)(3) organization whose primary goal is to raise funds for other not-for-profits in the Southern Nevada area; part of the International Court system, the Court was designed for "camp" fun and fundraising and to help those in the area in need of assistance. Learn more at www.desertempire.org. ●

NGRA announces Royalty Competition and IGRA University

The Nevada Gay Rodeo Association proudly invites the Las Vegas community to Charlie's on Friday, Jan. 15 for the 2010 Royalty Competition to select Mister and Miss Nevada Gay Rodeo Association 2010. The selected candidates will represent Southern Nevada on the gay rodeo circuit throughout the year. The competition begins at 8 p.m.

NGRA also plays host to the International Gay Rodeo Association cowboys and cowgirls as they come to IGRA University over Martin Luther King Day weekend. The weekend kicks off on Thursday, Jan. 14 with a Back to School Bash, with lots of entertainment and fun. Plus, it's time for the community to Meet the Candidates for the NGRA Royalty Competition. IGRA University begins in earnest on Friday afternoon, Jan. 15, at the Tuscany Suites and Casino.



For the second year, in conjunction with IGRA University, IGRA will again offering classes for line dancing and couples dance for beginners and the more experienced alike on Saturday; and on Saturday night, contestants from across the country will show you their best, in a fun evening that's a perfect break from the university curriculum. There will also be ample time for your own time for two-step and line dance that evening, as well.

For more information about IGRA University, visit www.igra.com/university. All those interested in rodeo, rodeo production, and/or fundraising are welcome and invited to register!

For more information about NGRA, the NGRA Royalty Competition and IGRA University, visit www.ngra.com. ●

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Rush Tower lobby

Golden Nugget debuts elegant and luxurious Rush Tower addition

Spectacular, contemporary luxury and elegance now embraces guests of the highly anticipated Rush Tower, the newest addition to the legendary Golden Nugget Las Vegas. The \$150-million development will enhance the historic property's already unrivaled hotel, gaming and dining options, and firmly establish the resort as the preferred destination on the Fremont Street Experience, located in the heart of downtown Las Vegas.

"Rush Tower will now define the ultimate Las Vegas experience providing exceptional accommodations as well as add to the already supreme dining opportunities and exceed the unparalleled customer service already delivered to our guests," said Tilman Fertitta, Chairman of the Board, President and Chief Executive Officer of Landry's Restaurants, Inc., which owns the property. "The tower is the latest in our ongoing renovation and expansion projects at the Golden Nugget, which now total more than \$300-million, and which will certainly up the ante for other properties in Las Vegas."

Guests arriving at Rush Tower will immediately be taken back by the impressive porté cochère which is accented by a new, million dollar landscaped entrance at First Street and Carson Street. As visitors enter the spacious lobby, they will be captivated by the posh furnishings and brilliant, custom-designed lighting which combine to create an inviting and sophisticated ambiance. Guests will then be greeted by the distinctive, floating reservation desk offering private check-in service for Rush Tower with a magnificent 75,000-gallon tropical aquarium fish tank as its backdrop.

After check-in, guests will be escorted to one of the tower's more than 500 well-appointed guestrooms. The guestrooms are 20 percent larger than the Golden Nugget's current North and South standard rooms and offer exceptional room selections for any occasion. The tower also includes four Penthouse Suites and 70 Junior Corner Suites, which provide incredible views of the Las Vegas Strip or of the famous Golden Nugget pool. Guestrooms are furnished with contemporary and sleek décor and complemented by stylish and fiery hues. Standard features include upgraded pillow-top mattresses, feather down comforters and 42-inch plasma televisions.

During their stay, guests can take full advantage of the warm Las Vegas sun as they relax and enjoy a refreshing cocktail by The Hideout, the tower's two-level, infinity-edge pool. Surrounded by six plush cabanas and covered lounging areas, complete with day beds, this pool area creates the perfect desert oasis. The pool adjoins the third floor of The Tank, a year round outdoor swimming pool complete with 200,000-gallon, live shark aquarium, which was voted one of the "Top Ten Pools in the World" by Forbes Traveler.

Guests will enjoy the convenience of the casino located in the lobby of Rush Tower, which expands the Golden Nugget's dynamic gaming features by adding popular slot and video poker machines as well as more table games.

The Golden Nugget is currently taking reservations for Rush Tower. For more information on the Golden Nugget, or to book a stay, visit www.goldennugget.com or call (800) 634-3454. ●

Winters to perform at Suncoast

Popular Las Vegas entertainer Wes Winters will debut his new show, *Las Vegas Saturday Night*, at the Suncoast Showroom, Jan. 30-31.

In *Las Vegas Saturday Night*, the show named after Winters' most recent recording, a variety of musical styles will be performed, bringing the vibe of "vintage Vegas" to the Suncoast Showroom. Winters will showcase his trademark boogie-woogie, fast-paced piano playing along with his vocals and talents for playing other musical instruments.

An award-winning musician, Winters may be best known in Las Vegas for *A Musical Tribute to Liberace*, an act he conceived, wrote, produced and starred in for five years at the Liberace Museum, as well as an engagement at Planet Hollywood. His signature one-man nightclub act, *Wes*

Winters Live, also ran for five years at Liberace's Carluccio's Tivoli Gardens Piano Lounge to sold-out audiences.

With an extensive background in musical theater, the self-taught pianist has performed in cities throughout the United States, Canada, Europe and South America for more than 20 years. In addition to *Las Vegas Saturday Night*, Winters has six additional solo recordings, including *Piano Favorites*, *Wes Winters Live*, *Send Down an Angel*, *Wes Winters Christmas*, *Light the Lights* and *Curtain Up*.

Tickets are now available starting from \$19.95, plus tax. Showtime is 7:30 p.m. on Saturday and 4 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets can be purchased by calling (702) 636-7075 or visiting www.suncoast-casino.com. ●



The King of Rock 'n' Roll is honored with new show at CityCenter

Cirque du Soleil, in partnership with Elvis Presley Enterprises, recently unveiled its latest resident show *Viva ELVIS*, at ARIA Resort & Casino at CityCenter in Las Vegas. Preview performances for *Viva ELVIS* began Dec. 18. The premiere will be held Friday, Feb. 19, 2010.

Viva ELVIS, a harmonious fusion of dance, acrobatics and live music, is a tribute to the life and music of Elvis Presley. Nostalgia, modernity and raw emotion provide the backdrop for his immortal voice and the exhilaration and beauty of his music. Created in the image of The King of Rock 'n' Roll — powerful, sexy, whimsical, truly unique and larger than life — the show highlights an American icon who transformed popular music and whose image embodies the freedom, excitement and turbulence of his era.

To reserve tickets, call 877-253-5847 or 702-531-2031, buy online at www.cirquedusoleil.com/vivaelvis or visit any MGM MIRAGE box office in Las Vegas. ●

USN to hold Taste of the Arts

The Las Vegas community is invited to indulge their senses with fine wines, enticing cocktails, mouth-watering hors d'oeuvres and spectacular art at University of Southern Nevada's Taste of the Arts. The epicurean event takes place 2-4 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 31 at Veloce Cibo, atop The M Resort, (12300 Las Vegas Boulevard S.).

A special event benefitting USN's community outreach projects, Taste of the Arts features exquisite culinary delights and delectable wine blending accompanied by an art show featuring

the works of famed local artists.

The M Resort's resident sommelier will treat guests to the art of wine blending, offering both wine connoisseurs and novices an opportunity to experience the winemaking artistry that creates a wine that is ultimately more interesting and flavorful than each individual element.

Tickets are \$85.00 per person or \$160 for two. For more information or to make reservations, please call (702) 968-2055 or e-mail bwood@usn.edu. ●

Recent Research Reveals Devastating Link Between Gum Disease & Heart Disease!

The American Heart Association, the "Journal of the American Medical Association" and the "New England Journal of Medicine" have documented a link Between Heart Disease, Stroke and Gum Infection. If you haven't had your teeth cleaned for six months or longer you could be at risk of infection from the same BONE and GUM ERODING germs that cause gum disease. **WARNING: Gum disease has no symptoms in its early and middle stages. Most people are unaware until it's too late.**

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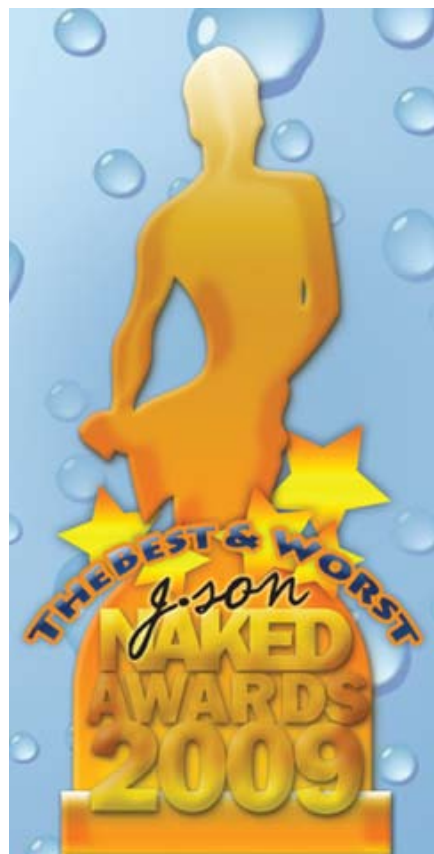
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BY J.SON

NAKED BOY NEWS



The winners are...

Happy New Year! It's January and 2010 is here... We have a full year ahead of us, but let's look back at the best and worst of 2009. This is the first-ever "J.Son Naked Awards" where I look back at 2009 and give my opinion on the best and worst of the year that just passed.

Best Dressed

(and would love to see naked)

Local—Jason Baca. This VIP superstar with "Closet Sundays" is one sexy dresser, but who wouldn't want to see him naked?

National—Anderson Cooper. CNN's hottest anchor Anderson Cooper is always well dressed but you know everyone is dying to see him naked.

Worst Dressed

Local—J.Son. As I seem to never have clothes on, how could I be Best Dressed? And to be quite honest, I am so colorblind I call myself "color-retarded." So if I was to wear clothes, I'm sure I'd be named "Worst Dressed."

National—Lady Gaga. I know what

you're all thinking "Lady Gaga is *hot!*" and she just may be the hottest thing out there right now, but she is a hot mess when it comes to fashion.

Most Naked

(The person who lives their life naked and never hides behind a mask)

Local—Nolan

Christopher. Not only is he a member of *Naked Boys Singing*, the musical, he is a genuine person and you always know where he stands.

National—Kathy

Griffin. She is the true meaning of naked. With Kathy you get the naked truth all the time. If she has something to say you better watch out, cause she'll say it and give it to you naked!



Photo supplied by Nolan Christopher

Least Naked

(The person who would never be caught dead naked!)

Local—Anthony

David. Las Vegas style guru...naked? Why would he be?! This bitch has far too many designer items in his closet to ever fear a Paris or Britney or J.Son moment. To be honest, I'm not sure if he has ever come out of the closet.

National—

Michael Kors. I interviewed the fashion

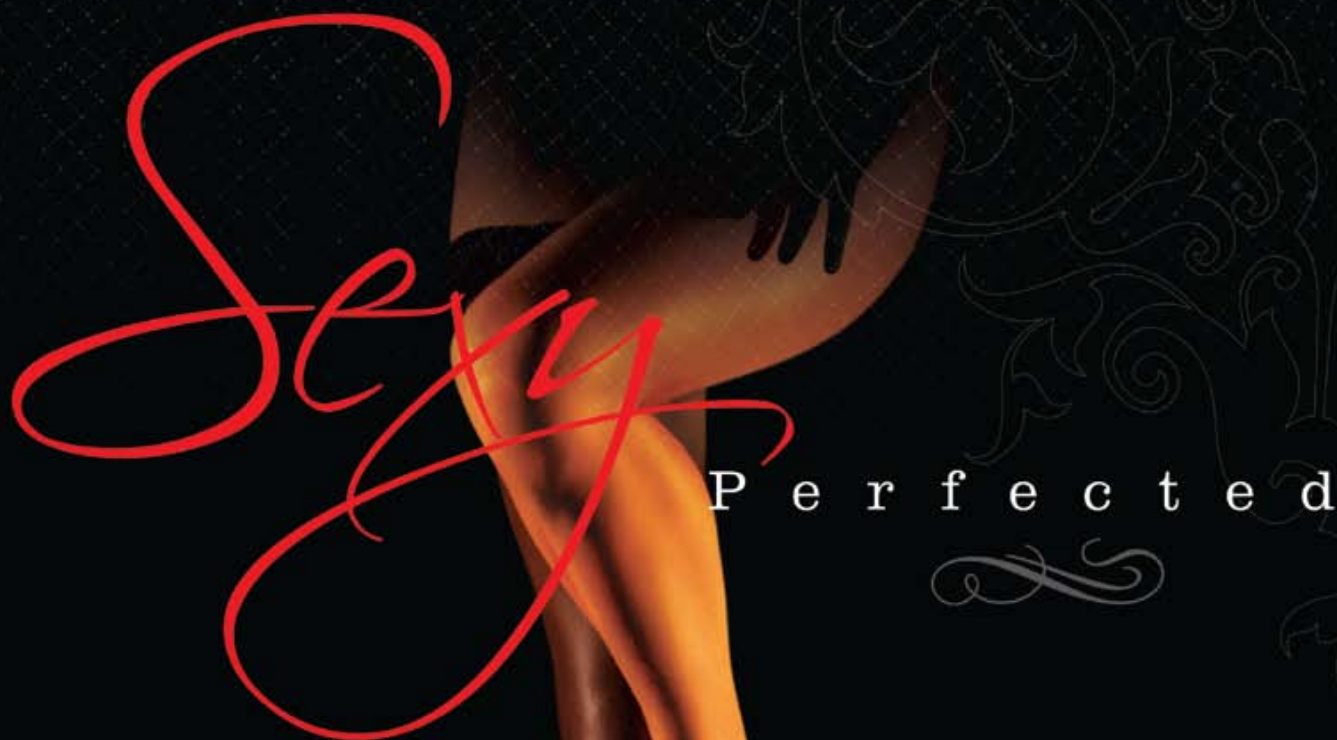


Photo by Cristina Stefan

designer in NYC and asked him if he would rather go naked or wear clothes. I thought he was about to die as he replied "Fashion is my life! I would never be caught dead naked." Someone that intense about clothes has to be the Least Naked person!

To see a full list of Naked Award winners and more photos of the best and worst that 2009 had to offer, check out the Awards page on www.NakedBoyNews.com ●

J.Son is the host of the popular web series *Naked Boy News* and has been seen on CNN, A&E and MTV. For the latest *Naked Boy News* visit www.NakedBoyNews.com



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FIREFLY TAPAS KITCHEN & BAR BEST RESTAURANT

■ Locals simply love Firefly, as evidenced by the overwhelming response on Qrific Award ballots cast this year. This famous tapas kitchen and bar is best known for its original location on Paradise Road just a few blocks from the Fruit Loop, open late every night for a little dining and a bit more drinking after partying down the street. A new location was recently opened downtown at The Plaza, right at the end of the Fremont Street Experience. Mmm.... I'm hungry now just thinking about it.

TOWN SQUARE BEST SHOPPING

■ Originally debuting in late 2007 with only a fraction of its shops open for business, Town Square was largely a ghost town. By Spring 2008, the outdoor shopping mecca had become a boom town and continues to grow in popularity, staying busy year-round. It doesn't hurt that arguably the best movie theater in Las Vegas (with all-digital projection and sound) anchors its west end. Most stores at Town Square are on the affordable end of things, which lures a wider spectrum of shoppers than the upscale malls mid-Strip.

THE FRUIT LOOP BEST CRUISE SPOT

■ With four gay-focused clubs and bars, along with a bookstore, all in one small area, it's no wonder the legendary Fruit Loop (located on Paradise Rd. at Naples St.) was chosen as this year's best cruising spot. Where else in Las Vegas would you find as many locals and tourists from the LGBT community in a one-block radius on a Friday or Saturday night?

EROTIC HERITAGE MUSEUM BEST MUSEUM

■ On Dean Martin Drive, behind Fashion Show, in a building formerly occupied (in part) by Deja Vu Love Boutique, sits a museum unlike any other this city has ever seen. Erotic Heritage Museum, which opened in 2008, encompasses more than 17,000 square feet of permanent and featured exhibits designed to preserve wonders of the erotic imagination as depicted through the artistic expression of acts of sex and love. The museum has graciously been home to several events and fund-raisers for organizations in our community as well.

LAS VEGAS ATHLETIC CLUB



AS CHOSEN BY QVEGAS READERS AND ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKING FRIENDS

BEST GYM

■ This chain of gyms, with its abundance of hardbody clientele for your inspiration and titillation, seems to be a perennial winner in this category. Las Vegas Athletic Clubs (LVAC) now has six locations throughout the valley, the newest of which is on West Flamingo Road at the 215 Beltway. Last year, LVAC also won the Qrific Award for Best Cruising Spot. Naughty gays!

STARBUCKS

BEST COFFEE SHOP

■ Until someone opens another coffee shop geared toward the LGBT community (we still miss Pride Factory), Starbucks will almost certainly be the coffee of choice among our readers. This world-famous chain nearly has a monopoly on coffee in this town, with a Coffee Bean or Java Detour placed sporadically here and there to thwart its total dominance. Chances are, there's a Starbucks within 100 yards of you at all times, or so it would seem.

WYNN LAS VEGAS & ENCORE

BEST CASINO/GAMBLING

■ When Steve Wynn opened his brown-glassed, curve-topped hotel a few years back near the north end of the Strip, everyone knew

it would be opulent and over the top in every way. From the Esplanade with its high-priced shops up front, to the golf course in back, Steve sure knows how to create the ultimate resort experience. Next door, he opened Encore Las Vegas in 2008, continuing the breathtaking interior décor by renowned designer Roger Thomas (see our cover story, Feb. 2009). These sister resorts together hold more *Forbes* five-star awards than any other casino-resort in the world.

NAKED BOYS SINGING AND PEEP SHOW (TIE)

BEST VEGAS SHOW

■ Boy, our readers must enjoy a bit of nudity, since we had a tie in the Best Vegas Show category between a small group of male vocalists who sing songs in the buff and a show chock full of topless beauties in a twisted fairy tale. *Naked Boys Singing* is enjoying an extended run at the Onyx Theatre in Commercial Center while *Peep Show* at the Planet Hollywood Resort is keeping audiences entertained by the "talents" of Holly Madison and Aubrey O'Day. Be sure to check them both out before they're gone.

FRANK MARINO'S DIVAS LAS VEGAS BEST DRAG SHOW

■ Old queens never die; they simply move to another Strip property. After a quarter-century at the Riviera, Frank Marino and several of his former cast-mates from *An Evening at La Cage* moved just a few blocks south and settled in for a year-long run (after a successful Labor Day weekend trial) at Imperial Palace. Check out our cover story in this month's issue and get to know the talented cast that makes *Divas Las Vegas* our readers' choice for Best Drag Show in town.

DJ AXIS

BEST DJ

■ Axis is an independent dance music producer and enthusiast, music editor and mixer. Chances are, you've seen him spinning at any one of the numerous community events at which he shares his talents. His philosophy is that "music is essential and secondary at the same time. It should be heard and felt. The volume can be high or low. The source should be connected to the listener and vice versa. Sound should evoke emotion and memory. Music takes us on a journey through time and space."

6PAK

BEST ENTERTAINER

■ Andrew Citino, a transgender male relatively new to the Las Vegas area, performs under the stage name of 6pak and is most known for his spot-on impersonations of Kid Rock and Frank Sinatra. Perhaps you've seen him on stage at Goodtimes or performing at our National Coming Out Day Street Festival. To learn more about him, check out his QPeople profile in our Sept. 2009 issue and read his letter in the current issue on page 11.

DAVID PARKS

BEST COMMUNITY LEADER

■ Many people have made a tremendous impact on our LGBT community in various ways this past year, but perhaps the most notable in 2009 was Senator David Parks, the primary sponsor of Senate Bill 283, which opened doors for couples in Nevada (both same-sex and opposite-sex) to register as domestic partners. Of course, he couldn't have done this alone, and we're certain he'd like to share this honor with the thousands of persons throughout the state who urged their legislators to help pass this bill. It's certainly not marriage, and that's a fight to fight another day, but it's a promising step toward equality and we are all grateful to Senator Parks for his vision and dedication.

SINCITYQSOCIALS

BEST SOCIAL GROUP

■ Once again, gay socialite Terry Hernandez and his SinCityQSocials network for gay professionals and friends has been honored with this Qrific Award. The group, which hosts Trendy Tuesdays at venues all throughout the valley, is dedicated to helping gay and lesbian professionals meet others of their kind through innovate events. This summer, SinCityQSocials hosted a monthly pool party at Green Valley Ranch, and the group has recently launched a VIP program so members can drink free at the weekly events, among other perks.

AID FOR AIDS OF NEVADA (AFAN) AND THE GAY & LESBIAN COMMUNITY CENTER OF SOUTHERN NEVADA (TIE)

BEST NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

■ AFAN and The Center, two of Gay Vegas' best known non-profits, tied for this honor. AFAN provides support and advocacy for adults and children living with, and affected by, HIV/AIDS in southern Nevada. The group holds two major fund-raisers each year, an AIDS walk in the spring and the Black & White Party in the fall. The Center, on the other hand, supports and promotes activities directed at furthering the well-being, positive image and human rights of the LGBT community and its allies. For good reason, both organizations are deserving of this recognition.

NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY STREET FESTIVAL AND LAS VEGAS PRIDE (TIE)

BEST GAY EVENT

■ Las Vegas' two largest festivals for our gay community tied for the Best Gay Event winner this year, with a portion of our readers preferring a daytime event and the other half enjoying a later festival. Neither event competes with the other, as they occur in different seasons and the hosts of each actively participate in the other's event. Las Vegas Pride was bigger and better than ever in 2009 and promises to have even bigger name main stage entertainment in 2010. The NCOD Street Festival (produced by QVegas Foundation and The Center) was moved to a bit earlier time this year so as to help avoid the cold, late-night October temperatures and allow attendees to carry the celebration onward throughout the night at area clubs.

GLEE

BEST GAY TV SERIES

■ Sure, a lot of shows have LGBT characters

these days, and old favorite *Will & Grace* is still running in syndication, but perhaps the most popular TV series in our community right now is Fox's new musical hit, *Glee*. We weren't really surprised by the massive number of votes *Glee* received on the Qrific ballot, since we've also become full-fledged Gleeeks who can't resist discussing each week's new songs and situations among our friends for days after each viewing. What really stinks is that the series is on a hiatus for the next several months while *American Idol* goes through another season (now featuring Ellen Degeneres as a judge... woohoo!), but at least we have two soundtracks of their catchy cover tunes to tide us over until the spring.

FREEZONE, CHARLIE'S LAS VEGAS AND KRAVE LAS VEGAS (3-WAY TIE)

BEST GAY NIGHTCLUB

■ Wow, a three-way tie! Each located in a distinctly different area of town, FreeZone (in the Fruit Loop), Charlie's (on the west side) and Krave (on the Strip at Harmon Ave.) all have distinctly different atmospheres as well. The oldest of these three Qrific winners is FreeZone, which is known for its relaxed vibe, entertaining drag shows and ladies night. Charlie's (part of the well-known chain) is popular among the local cowboy community yet fills up to the brim with every type of LGBT personality imaginable during its famous beer and liquor busts. Krave is popular among the younger crowd and many tourists due to its big-city feel, larger size, well-known DJs and location close to all the major casino resorts.

"BAD ROMANCE" BY LADY GAGA

BEST GAY DANCE SINGLE

■ For the second year in a row, 23-year-old New Yorker Lady Gaga (real name: Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta) has charmed us with a catchy hit single. Last year, when "Just Dance" won the Qrific Award for Best Gay Dance Single, Gaga was relatively new on the scene. This year, she's become world-famous, been nominated for every major music award (and won many of them), and has embarked on an amazing concert tour full of the over-the-top costumes and stagings she's become known for. She's even recorded two songs with Beyonce (whose "Single Ladies" was the second place winner in this category). But it's the catchy "Rah-rah-ah-ah-ah / Roma, Roma-ma / GaGa, ooh la la" that makes "Bad Romance" the undisputed hit dance single of 2009 among our readers. ●

I am who I am.

The tale of four transgender Las Vegans

Profiles by Mark Adams

Denise

Can volunteers be selfish? According to Denise Jay, they can.

Jay was recently honored as Volunteer of the Year by The Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Southern Nevada. She describes the motives behind her efforts as “selfish.”

“My motivation for being involved is that through these organizations I gather strength and courage for myself,” Jay commented.

Even if these motives are selfish, does the fact that Jay has selflessly lent a hand to the LGBT community on more than one occasion not cancel those motives out?

Jay recently worked on some transgender-specific issues, but stated the majority of her work is for the umbrella that is the LGBT community.

The awarded volunteer stated the volunteerism she is most proud of is the work she did for Equality Days.

“It was the only one I participated in that was successful,” said Jay. She added, “We all went up to Carson City



during the legislative session. It was a proud moment.”

Jay’s work also includes attending rallies and writing to Nevada’s representatives in Washington.

She maintains professional relations with Rep. Dina Titus, Sen. Harry Reid, the Human Rights Campaign and local government officials in Las Vegas to promote the issues she wants addressed.

Jay explained she wishes she had more time to devote to volunteering. She was recently laid off due to the country’s economic situation and picked up a night job in place that restricts her time to devote to volunteering.

“In my pursuit for trying to find fresh employment I am constantly running into the issue of ENDA, or transgender discrimination, and it makes me very angry,” Jay stated.

ENDA is the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, and although she is facing these problems, she maintains a positive attitude and continues to volunteer for the community.

She stated, “Get involved. Work for change. Complaining about it doesn’t do anything.” ●

Jane

The city of Las Vegas is often thought of as a progressive and open-minded place. Is this true or does the city present a mirage of some sort? According to Jane Heenan, a transgender woman and marriage and family therapist in the

Las Vegas valley, it is.

“A lot of people come here because they think it’s somewhere you can go to be open. But it’s not,” Heenan stated.

The therapist advocates for the transgender community. She often participates in activism events around the valley.

Heenan states one of the biggest chal-

lenges facing transgender people in Nevada is a basic need: health care.

“Finding a doctor who can provide culturally competent care is near impossible,” Heenan states in reference to the physicians practicing in Las Vegas.

This is one of the reasons Heenan recently organized the first Transgender Health Fair at the LGBT Center. The

event was held on Oct. 31.

Heenan also works to have more inclusive legislation passed in Nevada to protect transgender people from discrimination of any kind.

"In the last year we got the first legislation in the state of Nevada that was inclusive of gender identity and expression introduced into the assembly," said Heenan. She added, "As a consequence more work is going to happen."

Heenan stated that she and a group of her associates recently decided to align with Equality Nevada, a non-partisan and non-profit organization in the state.

The activist stated the organization is in the formative stages of their work and is focusing on education issues.

"It's one thing to pass a law. It's another thing to educate the people it's supposed to protect and support," said Heenan.

The therapist stated the organization will be working on campaigns to have more progressive legislators elected in 2010. They are also already planning the second Transgender Health Fair for next fall.

"There's always a lot of work to do," said Heenan. She added, "I am happy to be a part of it." ●



Jude

The movement for equal rights has been and continues to be a long and hard fought battle. Great strides have been made in the direction of social equality.

Jude Cox stated he believes the efforts of the equal rights movement has enabled our society to make another step towards social progress: equality for transgender people.

Cox states that it is "more acceptable to talk about issues surrounding sexual orientation." He added, "the next step that follows is to talk about gender identity issues."

The 31 year-old commented that the media is covering transgender issues in a more positive light recently, stating the attitude is more like "hey, we want to learn about it."

"It's gone more from the Maury show to Oprah, as far as media classes go. It's being treated in a more respectable way when it comes to the media," said Cox.

Cox is a lawyer and is currently engaged in a two year fellowship with the American Civil Liberties Union. He is a transgender man.

The ACLU fellow moved to the Las Vegas valley in 2005 to pursue a law degree at the UNLV William S. Boyd School of Law.



During his time at the ACLU, Cox has worked on transgender specific issues.

"We've recently created a brochure specifically addressing how to go about getting a legal name change on birth certificate or drivers license," said Cox.

Cox also mentioned that the ACLU is working to have gender identity and expression included in the State Public Accommodation Anti-Discrimination Statute in the State of Nevada.

"We want to be as inclusive as possible is the bottom line," Cox stated.

The Boyd Law graduate plans to continue his work of fighting for equal rights after his time at the ACLU is over as an attorney for a transgender advocacy group. ●

Cassandra

Your alarm goes off. You jump out of bed and start to get ready for the day ahead of you. Showering, deciding what clothing to wear — it is all part of the routine many of us are very used to.

Cassandra Keenan made the brave decision to switch up this routine just around two years ago. Keenan, a copy editor at the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, is a transgender woman.

The decision she made was a simple one: instead of donning a pair of pants, she reached for a skirt.

"I was panic stricken," Keenan commented in reference to her first day at work in her new attire. She added, "I wanted to do it so much that I didn't care."

Keenan conquered her fears and now lives the life she always wanted to live. "I always aspired to be the woman I knew I was," she stated.

The 43-year old copy editor stated that her transition is late in comparison to other transgender people. It was only two years ago that she took her first dosage of hormones.

Continued on Page 25 ►

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Dr. Rachel
McConnell



I am who I am.

◀Continued from Page 23

Keenan made the decision to transition on the job, but believes it is easier to move away and start over.

"It's less terrifying when you don't have the people who know you all around you watching. For me it was hard," she stated.

Although she holds this belief, she still walks into work each day wearing whatever she wants and being who she wants to be.

Keenan stated many of her coworkers at work are very supportive of her, but states that it is "a mixed bag."

This mixed bag includes discrimination, opposition, and hate. Whenever Keenan faces one of these hurdles, she jumps over them.

"When people say hateful stuff, ignorant stuff, I'm a big believer in the fact that they need to be called out on it," Keenan stated. She added, "Don't ever let it just slip by."

Keenan is also an active blogger (meta-physicalbombshell.blogger.com) and contributor to The Bilerico Project (www.bilerico.com/contributors/cassandra). ●



Editor's note: We realize this is just a tiny sampling of the transgender community in Southern Nevada whose profiles are also worth sharing within our pages. If you know someone who's active in our community and whose story would be an inspiration for our readers, e-mail editor@qvegas.com and tell us why. We will consider him or her for inclusion in another issue during 2009 or in 2010's Transformation Issue.

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SLEEK SIMPLE SEXY

Hi, My Name is Edmund.

Getting people to call her Edmund instead of Heather may be one of the hardest parts of the transformation, but it is nowhere near the scariest for 25 year old Heather Costello.

"It's a difficult transition for me. I've been Heather for 25 years, and now I'm going to be Edmund," she said. "I've started writing it. I'll write Edmund under my own name so I can see it. And eventually I'll stop writing Heather and start writing Edmund."

And the name is just the small step. Eddie, as she is currently being called, has felt like she is the wrong gender since she was a small child. She can even remember arguing with her mother when she was 7, strong in her belief that the doctors had filled out the birth certificate wrong; she was a boy!

While she has thought about transformation since she was 21, she had only seriously considered taking the steps in the past six months. The first step, calling the counselor to set up an appointment, was one of the hardest she had ever taken.

But one of the scariest steps was actually telling the people in her life. Her girlfriend was the first reveal, and one of the hardest. Both of them shed a few tears during that talk.

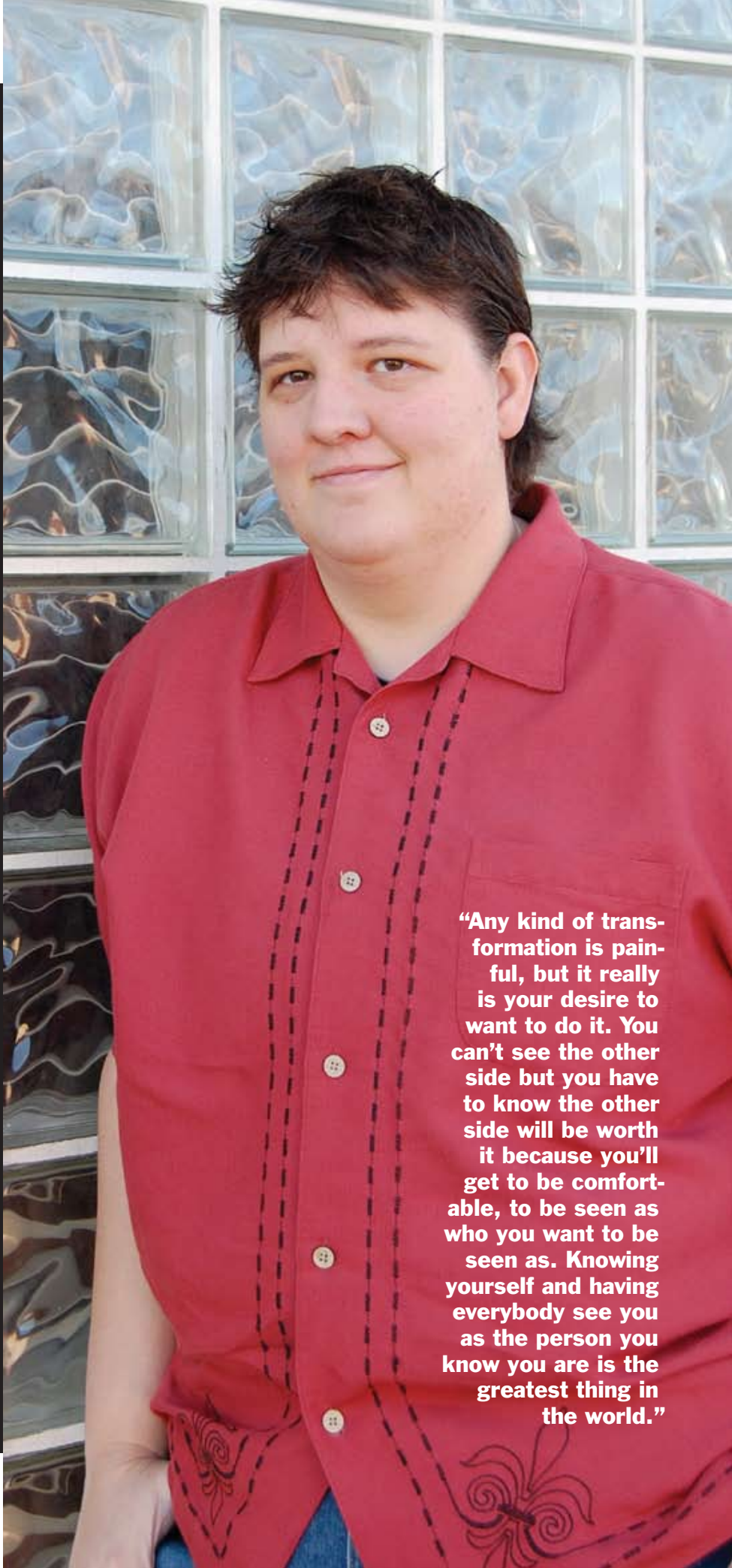
"It's a big change. I'm still going to be me, but there are some personality changes. We don't know how drastic that's going to be," she said. "She was afraid of losing me, who I am. It's the person she's in love with, not the body. She's afraid of losing that person."

Her girlfriend has since adjusted to the idea, and her mother was in her court all along. Friends and co-workers have been supportive, if somewhat confused and tentative. Some are even afraid for her, as the transformation can be painful.

After the counselor writes the necessary letters, saying the procedure is necessary, Eddie will then have the top surgery and the hormones, which will continue for the rest of her life. The bottom surgery is still far in the future, if she chooses to do it at all.

But along with the nervous reveals and the hard surgeries comes the chance to live a new life. Eddie says she would not give that up for the world.

"Any kind of transformation is painful, but it really is your desire to want to do it. You can't see the other side but you have to know the other side will be worth it because you'll get to be comfortable, to be seen as who you want to be seen as. Knowing yourself and having everybody see you as the person you know you are is the greatest thing in the world." ● BY JESSICA TRIPP



"Any kind of transformation is painful, but it really is your desire to want to do it. You can't see the other side but you have to know the other side will be worth it because you'll get to be comfortable, to be seen as who you want to be seen as. Knowing yourself and having everybody see you as the person you know you are is the greatest thing in the world."

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CONTACT INFORMATION

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He? She? It?

A GLOSSARY OF ACCEPTABLE TRANSGENDER TERMINOLOGY

First, let's say that **NO** human being should be referred to as an "it" under any circumstances (do you refer to your pets that way? probably not), and we strongly oppose using such outdated, derogatory terms as **he-she**, **she-male**, **tranny** and **transvestite**. Please use the guide below to educate yourself on today's accepted terminology regarding the transgender community as well as the LGBT community as a whole.

Transgender: This is an all-encompassing term for people whose gender identity, expression or behavior differs from their birth sex. The term is quite broad and is the preferred term for non-transgender people to use.

Gender Identity: Not necessarily visible to others, gender identity is an individual's internal sense of being female, male or something else.

Gender Expression: This is how a person outwardly expresses one's gender identity, through clothing, hairstyle, voice, behavior or physical characteristics.

Transsexual: A person whose gender identity differs from one's birth sex, often coupled with a desire to alter the body through hormones or surgery to match gender identity.

Cross-dresser: One who dresses in clothing typically worn by the opposite sex but generally has no intent to live full-time as that gender.

Queer: A term that can be used to refer to any LGBT person, often used instead of "gay" since it does not convey a sense of gender. Depending on the user, the term may be considered derogatory and should generally be avoided except when used in reference to a person to self-identifies as such.

Genderqueer: An individual who neither identifies as entirely male nor entirely female.

Gender Non-conforming: Gender expression that is different from societal expectations.

Bi-gendered: A person whose gender identity encompasses both genders, male and female.

FTM: Also known as a transgender man, FTM refers to a person who transitions from "female-to-male," born female at birth but identifies and lives as a male.

MTF: Also known as a transgender woman, MTF

refers to a person who transitions from "male-to-female," born male at birth but identifies and lives as a female.

Passing: A term used by transgender people to mean the public generally views them as the gender with which they identify.

Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS): The phrase is singular, but SRS encompasses a multitude of procedures to change one's body so it conforms with gender identity. Top surgery involves breast augmentation or removal, whereas bottom surgery is the alteration of genitals. Avoid the outdated, derogatory phrase, "Sex change surgery."

Sexual Orientation: A person's attraction to members of the same or opposite sex, usually classified as either lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual. Avoid the term "sexual preference," which is offensive in the way it implies being gay or lesbian is a choice and is "curable."

Transition: The period when a person begins living as their new gender, which may include changes of name and legal documents, the taking of hormones or having sex reassignment surgery. Avoid using "pre-operative" or "post-operative," as they imply SRS is mandatory for a transgender person.

Intersex: People who are born with chromosomes, internal reproductive systems or external genitalia not normally associated with the male and female standards. An outdated, stigmatizing and misleading word for intersex is "hermaphrodite."

Drag Queen: A man who dresses as a woman for entertainment purposes, generally at night-clubs, bars or events. Some use this derogatorily to refer to all transgender women.

Drag King: A woman who dresses as a woman for entertainment purposes, generally at night-clubs, bars or events. ●



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A Transgender Resource Guide

FINDING YOUR WAY

If you type into Google, "transgender support group Las Vegas," you'll stumble upon broken links, meetings with the wrong times and changed locations or just online forums that can be filled with misinformation. In Las Vegas it may be difficult at times to find the resources that you need. This guide is meant to ease those difficulties. Included below are resources for information on counseling and support groups, doctors (everything from hormone therapy to skin care and surgery), housing support and retail shopping.

First things first, what's going on inside that head of yours? If you're feeling anxious or depressed or just need someone to talk to about making this biggest change in your life, that's completely expected and normal. Don't fret; there are plenty of professionals in the Las Vegas area who can assist in your transition.

Debbie Barbaroussis-Goot, Dr. of Naturopathy, MFT of Las Vegas has experience helping people in transgender transitions and specializes in relationship issues, fear and anxiety and substance abuse. Dr. Barbaroussis-Goot is located at 8760 Maryland Pkwy., Las Vegas, NV 89123, by phone at (702) 635-6171 or at www.truetherapy.com.

If you don't have insurance or your policy doesn't cover mental health issues then a support group may be a healthy alternative to therapy. The **Community Counseling Center** offers a transgender group on Monday nights, 6:30-8:00 p.m. There you can receive one-on-one counseling and sex reassignment surgery paperwork. The Community Counseling Center is located at 1120 Almond Tree Lane. Call (702) 369-8700 for more information. The Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Southern Nevada (953 E. Sahara Ave., Ste. B-31) also holds a **Trans.lation** social and discussion group meeting every Friday at 5:30 p.m.

For primary care, **Dr. Maddie Deutsch** at the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center offers what her staff calls "general primary care

with a trans-twist." That twist encompasses hormone monitoring, pelvic exams, mammograms, prostate exams, and other trans-sensitive health issues. The clinic offers a pharmacy and a blood work lab on-site. To find out more information call Lisa at (323) 993-7518.

Surgeons in the Las Vegas area are more difficult to come by. You may be forced to do some traveling, but if you travel to **Dr. Michael Brownstein** in San Francisco you'll be in the hands of one of the leading surgeons in the field. Dr. Brownstein has been performing FTM top surgeries for over 30 years now and routinely does 250 of these surgeries per year. Call (877) 255-2081 for more information.

Skin! It's all over you and if you want to take care of it in extreme comfort try the **Weiland Group** in Las Vegas. They have a nationally certified operating facility and are extremely confidential. Some of the services they offer are Botox and injectable filler treatments as well as the full spectrum of cosmetic surgery care. To request a consultation call (702) 254-0500.

For retail selections in the area look no further than **The Rack** located at 953 E. Sahara Ave., Ste. 16B in Las Vegas. There you'll find a helpful staff and sizes that range up to 3 and 4X sans the "dumpy or frumpy" look. For hours call (702) 732-7225. Just down the street is **Glamour Boutique 2**, a popular store among cross-dressers. Amy and her helpful "Just You" staff will assist in transformations from make-up to attire and are available for outings, role play and photographs. Stop by 714 E. Sahara Ave., Ste. 104 or call (702) 697-1800 for an appointment.

And last but certainly not least, if you're having trouble finding affordable housing, call **New Genesis** at (702) 384-8007. They can help you find a shared or single unit apartment in the Las Vegas area for up to two years.

If you need a more comprehensive guide to transgender issues in the Las Vegas area contact Mel Goodwin at **The Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Southern Nevada** at (702) 733-9800 or by e-mail at mel@thecenterlv.com. ●

BY ANN FEISTER

Reader Letters

◀Continued from Page 11

(the LGBTQ community) and yet again left out with whom will stand up with and next to me saying I'm deserving of fair and equal treatment as well when I am clearly not given such respect. I often am told and feel less deserving and unimportant of basic civil rights. We all are striving for *respect*, fair treatment as a human being. I can't speak for the entire LGBTQ community as a whole, for that would be unfair of me, but I do have voice to speak especially with what simply happened in this last election for supporting the transgendered community with basic protection from my society I contribute as a citizen; protection in the workplace and an inclusive bill saying to employers that I can't be discriminated against for being me, a transgendered human soul.

Protection for basic public accommodations would be nice wouldn't they? I mean we all have to use the bathroom don't we? I also have a fear that as I pass un-spooked to the majority of society my drivers license at the moment still will not be read F=female as my identity and as my transition from almost two years ago is irreversible (As I finally once in my life feel whole and complete within my brain, body and soul) and I walk, talk and contribute as a female. I am a female walking among you and another chance at being discriminated against or unaccepted is clearly on my gender marker on my driver's license. Eyebrows and discrimination heightens when you're looking at one gender in an interview, ID checking at a store, bank, etc. and the gender marker states another and not by choice but my someone telling me I am not who I am and I will not be granted such a right as to feel euphoric within my identity.

I was present in my own energy and fear of what could happen to me for being myself on Nov. 21, transgendered Day of Remembrance, where 163 Trans men or women names were read out loud this year whom had been brutally murdered in hate crimes and perhaps because basic rights and accommodations were not offered to them just to survive. It's sad... It's even sadder when I hear members within my own community whispering or turning their backs on me as well when I ask for a civil right you ask for and have worked so hard in proving you were worthy enough as human. We are all worthy of being treated fair in society, for we are all human. We Transgendered are not asking for different rights but the same rights, respect and treatment without discrimination and hate.

If I can say one thing to society and to my community it would be this: I would like to be treated, protected and given the same civil rights under my identity and my sexuality as it is deserving and offered to anyone else. I am me, and I am much happier being "true to myself, transgendered" than not being genuine under fear of acceptance, discrimination and hate. This isn't the easiest path to walk down when your being pushed down by the masses around you but it fits within my brain and soul and I will fight for my fair treatment and freedom until my last breathe leaves my lips ... a refreshing sigh of relief in just being respected and in being true to myself and my identity! Please, I offer you to walk a day in my heart, in my brain, in my shoes and as my friend. Walk with me, I welcome you and I'd walk with you.

All my best and positive energy ahead,

Amber Shaelyn LaMay

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Do most transgender people have sex-reassignment surgery?

No. Most transgender people do not undergo surgery, primarily for health or financial reasons [although some health plans do cover it]. Female-to-male surgery is imperfect, requiring many surgeries at a cost of \$50,000 to \$200,000. [This may include a hysterectomy, radical mastectomy and chest contouring.] Male-to-female surgery is far better developed and easier. One surgery may be all that is needed, at a cost of \$17,000 to \$35,000.

— Debra Davis
Executive Director, Gender Education Center

**Did you
know?**

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— National Center for
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Lights, camera, action! The short skirts are on, the overdone makeup has been applied and the divas are warmed up in preparation for their performance. The crowd roars at the sound of their name being announced. They are the final act and the audience has been anticipating their repeat performance.

This isn't the Spice Girls Reunion Tour, it's the Rebel Variety Show. And the divas discussed are in fact the boys of Fabulicious, UNLV's first student drag performance group!

The four divas met on campus in various fashions though the ensemble was not formed right away. Marketing junior Andy Tyler Fanara, 20, and nursing senior Joe Vergara, 24, are the co-founders of Fabulicious. The group has added members along the way, changing the name a few times as well.

"We were originally, just Andy and I, Boylicious...and then when we added Andre and Mikey it was Fabulosity," stated Vergara. "And combined it's Fabulicious," Fanara piped in.

The two latest performers added to the ensemble are Andre Escamilla, 20, and Michael "Mikey" Coleman, 21.

Coleman brings experience to the group as a sophomore dance major at the university. Escamilla studies art and is in his junior year at UNLV. The majority of the group is not pursuing the performing arts in their academic endeavors. Though this is true, they all stated they love to perform.

"I just like to entertain people and put on a show," Fanara commented. He added that his intention for forming the group was that he "just wanted to have fun."

Fabulicious all started when Fanara and Vergara began to record their performances to trendy pop tunes. The entire world was their audience — on YouTube. Their video, an imita-

"We need an excuse to wear skimpy outfits and makeup,"

tion of Beyoncé's "Single Ladies" music video, has received over 5,000 hits.

"We're kind of local celebrities. We get noticed at places like the Forum Shops," Vergara stated.

The UNLV Dining Commons and campus were also mentioned as potential Fabulicious sightings. The group members jested bathhouses and locker rooms were also particular hotspots where Las Vegas Fabulicious fans can eye them closely, or from afar.

And a fan base is definitely something that this group has. Many students attending the annual UNLV Homecoming Rebel Variety Show



stuck around after the show to let their favorite boys in heels know what they thought about the performance.

"It's really very cool that we see so much actual support from the campus community. We didn't expect people to be this accepting of four dudes in drag," Escamilla stated.

"The talent show is full of fraternities and it's so stereotypical for them to hate gays," Vergara stated.

"And they don't," Escamilla stated. He also commented, "There's so many like frat dudes bros that were like you guys were great."

Whether UNLV's campus community is becoming more open to gay culture is still in question. It is fact, however, that the dancing divas of Fabulicious took first prize in the university's campus-wide talent show last May.

The boys were hoping to maintain their title as supreme UNLV performers at the recent variety show. They were unfortunately not successful in this but did receive another prize: a ballroom full of screaming and applauding fans.

"I knew we didn't win because there wasn't as much screaming as there was last year...last year I couldn't even hear the music," Vergara stated.

"We had a drag queen...what else are we supposed to do," Fanara joked, referring to their introduction by professional drag queen Syren Vaughn.

Coleman added his frustrations and jested, "I was wearing heels...I wore heels for Christ's sake!"

When asked if the group would be performing again, they all stated they were up for the idea.

"We need an excuse to wear skimpy outfits and makeup," Escamilla stated as reason for a reprise performance.

Coleman is ready to don the heels again. He confirmed the group "would love to perform."

The group members are all friends when they aren't busy with dance routines in little black dresses and not-so-sensible heels.

"I really like shopping with the group and I like how we work together," Coleman stated. He added, "We're a team."

Escamilla also stated he enjoys how well the group works with each other. He commented, "We'll just like rehearse something but we'll be so stupid and have so much fun with it."

Vergara shared that performing with each other is something fun they all have to do in the midst of their hectic agendas.

"We all have busy schedules and we all make time and when we get there we're very supportive and I just love four friends dancing to amazing music," Vergara commented.

So what is next for the performance ensemble? Certainly not *America's Got Talent*, according to Fabulicious.

"David Hasselhoff would X my ass so fast," Fanara shared.

Escamilla is not closed to the idea at reality television stardom. He shared, "I don't think we're that big yet. First *QVegas*, then the RJ, and then we'll think about it."

Fabulicious has high hopes, big dreams, and an increasing fan base. Watch out RuPaul, you've got some competition coming. These divas are ready for the drag race, and ready for the fame.

And then there's "The Fame," something Fabulicious knows quite well.

Fanara shared, "We're doing a tour with Lady Gaga. She just doesn't know it yet." ●



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FRANK MARINO IS

KING OF THE QUEENS

BY WILLIAM BESSETTE

As Las Vegas reflects on what it lost in 2009, one thing that will be close to the top of the list of things we miss is *An Evening at La Cage*. Fortunately for Las Vegas, host Frank Marino, and the crew, the show must go on, reborn as *Divas Las Vegas*.

La Cage was the baby boomer to *Divas Las Vegas*' Gen X, sort of melded together, as Marino describes. "We have Britney Spears, Lady Gaga, and Beyoncé, but yet I also want to keep the staples, because I know my core audience. You want to keep Cher, you want to keep Madonna, you want to keep the ones that every age group is going to enjoy."

The change didn't stop with the numbers, however, as Marino and crew set out to make sure *Divas Las Vegas* was its own show. "I was producing this show with the attitude of seeing what the entertainers themselves would like to do for their character, so we collaborated together. It was a mix between producers, entertainers, and the audience, putting all that together and coming up with what we wanted to do for the show... from day one, I knew a drag show — in my opinion — needed to have male dancers. That's the main difference between this and the other show. The male dancers are getting rave reviews, both from the gay and straight audiences alike.

"New costumes and new numbers are being done," he continues. "Behind the scenes, choreography is working on building up the numbers that you've already seen and creating new numbers. A brand new set is being designed by the guy who did the *American Idol* and *America's Got Talent* sets... the only reason we don't have them in there yet is because they are so intricate and it takes so long to build."

Bringing a new show to the Strip is always a risk in a down economy, but Marino and his troupe seem to have staying power. "The showroom's been packed," he asserts. "Don't get me wrong, we are comping a lot of people in because it's a brand new show and we want people to see it, but our paid numbers are well over the amount we expected to have. Very few shows open up profitable, in the black. We are lucky enough to say we were able to do that."

One thing that has not changed about the show is definitely the audience, something Marino wishes would change. "About 95 percent of the audience is straight and I would like to change that and get the gay people in. That's why I put the male dancers in there," he explains. "The average gay person says, when they see a drag show, 'Oh I can go and see that in a gay bar.' Or they've seen them in gay bars and had bad experiences or they weren't terrific, so they shy away. But once I get a gay person in to see the show, they'll like it and possibly bring someone else another time."

With big dreams, Marino couldn't put it better as he toasts to *Divas Las Vegas* ringing in another 25 years on the strip. "My dream would be to do the show and build it up to a point where in the future I could just be the producer and direct somebody else in doing my part... to have the biggest drag show ever, in the world." ●

Meet The Cast of Frank Marino's Divas Las Vegas

It's the stunningly talented cast of *Divas Las Vegas*, many of whom who've been performing alongside Frank Marino for years, who make audiences come back to see the show multiple times. Perhaps you've seen them previously appear in *An Evening at La Cage*, or maybe you're new to town and haven't had the chance yet to enjoy their performances. Either way, take a moment to learn a bit more about your favorite female impersonators on the Strip.

Derrick Barry is proud to be performing nightly as Britney Spears and Lady Gaga in *Frank Marino's Divas Las Vegas*. Barry, being no stranger to the stage, showcased his acting abilities in over 20 productions between junior high, high school and college. After first dressing up as Britney for Halloween, he found himself opposite the pop princess on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. His uncanny resemblance to Britney carried him to the entertainment capital of the world where he performed as Britney Spears for four years in *An Evening at La Cage* at the Riviera. Barry had national notoriety after being featured as a Top 40 Contestant on *America's Got Talent*. He has also been featured on *The Next Best Thing*, *The Comedy Festival* and *The Today Show*. Barry was most recently cast in music videos for pop sensation Katy Perry and hip-hop artist Eminem. This year, Barry embarked on his first international tour that followed Britney Spears' Circus. He is honored to be the only female impersonator acknowledged on BritneySpears.com. Barry looks forward to a long career in the entertainment business as an actor, comedian, singer, dancer and female impersonator.



Sammy Gonzales was always interested in acting and dancing. He was one of the only kids in his community to be the oddball, not to be interested



in the country way of life. Gonzales moved to Las Vegas when he was 25 and worked for a hit female impersonation show for four years when legendary actress Debbie Reynolds asked him to be her hair dresser/assistant. Recently, Frank Marino called and hired him to join the fabulous *Divas Las Vegas* show, which to date has been the funniest, easiest, and most family-oriented place of employment he's ever experienced.

Steven Wayne began his career as a Cher impersonator after dressing up in drag for Halloween at age 19. More than 20 years later, he still performs as the iconic diva, as well as Canadian superstar Celine Dion. Steven relocated to Las Vegas from the east coast in 1999 to fulfill his dream of being a "showgirl" on the Strip.



Wayne balances both his professional career in the daytime and his passion for show business in the evening.

Kenneth Blake is no stranger to the entertainment business. With two well-known musicians in his family, he was exposed to the "rock-n-roll" lifestyle at an early age which fueled his ambition to become a stage performer and tempered his musical abilities. In 1987, Blake saw the Broadway musical *La Cage aux Folles*, and his life changed forever. Female impersonation was to be his destiny. Blake entered and captured the titles Miss Gay Arizona America, Miss Gay Western States America, and Miss National Capital Cities US of A — all beauty and talent pageants designed for female impersonators. His career in female impersonation really took flight when he appeared as Dolly Parton in the short lived *Boy-lieve It or Not!* He then moved on to Lake Tahoe's longest running stage show *Carnival Cabaret* where he performed the likeness of Marilyn Monroe, Reba McEntire, Celine Dion, Judy Garland, and Dolly Parton. But it was his fast paced, spot-on illusion of Madonna in that show's finale that got him noticed by Las Vegas producers. In 2004, Blake opened in Las Vegas' *An Evening at La Cage* — as Madonna, Dolly Parton, and in his signature piece, "What Makes a Man, a Man" — where he remained until the show's closing in 2009. When offered the position in an all-new production, Blake jumped at



it. He now works six nights a week performing the roles that made him famous.

Joseph Santellana aka CoCo Vega has been a resident of Las Vegas for five years. Originally from Toledo, Ohio. His characters in *Divas Las Vegas* include Bet-te Midler, Tina Turner, and Shirley Bassey. Santellana designs and creates gowns and costumes for entertainers from across the nation.



Crystal Woods was born in Fort Lauderdale. She worked there as Diana Ross and other superstars for eight years when *La Cage* producers found her and offered her a job in Las Vegas. Some of Woods' highlights were appearing on TV shows like *The Tonight Show*, *Sally Jessy Raphael*, *Leeza*, *The Maury Povich Show*, and *Dog Eat Dog*. Woods can be seen performing as Whitney Houston and Diana Ross.



Larry Edwards is an entertainer's entertainer and to prove it, our country's most famous mayor, Oscar Goodman, awarded Edwards the prestigious Key to the City of Las Vegas! Originally from Fort Myers, Fla., Edwards knew at an early age that his life was bound for greatness after graduating in fashion merchandising at Massey Jr. College in Atlanta, Ga. However, the bright lights and neon mar-quees of Las Vegas called his name. Edwards answered that call. His career has taken him far beyond the stage. Millions of viewers have seen him featured on such programs as *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* and *Entertainment Tonight*. He even made his way on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* as she interviewed his alter ego, the real Tina Turner. In spite of all this success, Edwards says the highlight of his career was when he was chosen to make a cameo appearance in the Academy Award-nominated movie, *What's Love Got To Do With It*. He can also be seen in the hit Sandra Bullock movie, *Miss Congeniality 2*, along with Frank Marino. Edwards currently portrays Beyoncé and Tina Turner in *Divas*. ●



The *Glamorous* Vegas Life



A look inside the hearts,
minds and closets of four
diverse local queens

BY KATHERINE FERNELIUS



Syren Vaughn

Scott Wilson grew up knowing that he was going to be on stage, and his dream was realized at a very young age. He has been on stage, professionally singing since he was eight years old. But 15 years ago, he was dared to enter the Miss Gay Utah pageant drag contest. Scott transformed into Syren Vaughn for the event, and he won, and it's just snowballed from there.

Although Syren has played a prevalent role in Scott's life, female impersonation has been a side job. "I never looked at (doing drag) as a career move. I've done it mostly for charity."

Syren has participated and help raise funds for many charities around the country including Utah Aids Foundation, City of Hope, Nevada Aids Project, Aid for AIDS of Nevada, and different pride festivals around the country, among many others. Even though he has put his feminine talents to good use, Scott has not always had the greatest support as Syren. "My parents understand it. They have always supported it. It's just they would rather have Scott instead of Syren. But I have to say they have always been great. They have always supported me. It's just that one little thing — the wig. It's that last little hump."

Scott's transformation was an easy one with his performance background; however, he understands the challenges and strength it takes to go through any kind of transformation. "Everyone needs to feel okay about themselves. So stay true to who you are whether it's in a wig or out. Just be true to yourself." ●



DeShannon

Mitch Gill made his first transformation into a drag queen soon after he graduated from high school. At the time, Mitch was living in Texas with his family of farmers. He had always wanted to be a performer, but he never felt it was an attainable goal. That was until he saw his first drag show. "I knew I could do that," Gill recounted.

The most well known and successful queens in his community took him under their wings and told him that if he was going to do this, he was going to do it right. The rest is history. Mitch has been performing — the right way — ever since. For many years, performing as DeShannon was his career. But when Mitch realized that he could use his performing talents to help charities, specifically AIDS charities, he began only performing for fund-raisers and charity events. DeShannon has volunteered his time to PAWS, American Heart Association, Sin City Sisters AIDS Drug Assistance Program (SADAP), almost everything for the Rodeo and Nevada Gay Rodeo Association. DeShannon has raised money all over the country.

Mitch has transformed into DeShannon for many years now and has been very successful. He attributes this to his ability to separate and balance his life. "You have to learn to separate it. When DeShannon is done, DeShannon goes into the closet and is put away. Then Mitch comes out. Mitch is there for his partner and his friends. You have to be able to separate." ●

Shawn M

Shawn Magby saw *La Cage* at the Riviera Hotel and Casino when he was 18 years old and knew instantly that is what he wanted to do. Nearly 22 years later, he has transformed into one of the most recognizable drag queens today. Shawn M has been performing at Freezone for the past 12 years, been a guest on *The RuPaul Show*, *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* and played a part in *Miss Congeniality 2*. "It's a career and not only is it a career it's just fun," Shawn said.

Shawn has had so much success performing as his female counterpart, but at the end of the day, he is happy being a boy. "I would never want to be a girl 24 hours a day. I like being an actor — doing it on stage and taking it all off — and just being a regular guy afterward."

Being on stage has helped Shawn come out of his shell and become a more confident person over the years. "I've helped a lot of people. I've made a lot of people happy and I've educated a lot of people. It's been good for me. It's like therapy to me."

Going through any self transformation can be a challenge, but one that can bring a lot of happiness and strength. Shawn advises, "Just go with your heart and what you want and feel. Don't let anyone stop you or bring you down." ●



JewDi Vine

The transformation from Justin Liming to JewDi Vine began just five years ago at Hamburger Mary's. The restaurant started turn-about shows where the male servers dressed up in drag and performed for the customers. At that point JewDi Vine was born.

Growing up, Justin was largely involved in theater, and knew he had a flair for the drama, which made his transformation easier. "My theater background was a really good catalyst for me to start performing in drag."

He had grand performing dreams, including being the next Justin Timberlake, Justin admitted. But as he grew up, his dreams changed. "When I came to Las Vegas, I wanted to be a show boy. But instead of becoming a show boy, I became a show girl."

Justin has had immense support from his family and friends, and the support follows when he transforms into JewDi. "I am so fortunate. I have a huge support system."

Justin admits that the road to transformation is a tough one. "But there are such great resources today that people can and should use. Also seek out your friends, family and community. It makes the process a lot easier to have positive influences and a support system on your side." ●

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It is that time again and volleyball is starting. If you are interested in playing or putting a team together, e-mail lohalloran@lvga3.com. Volleyball will start up on Jan. 4, and the schedule will be announced shortly thereafter. Games will be held at the new Whitney Recreation Center at 5712 E. Missouri Ave. (near Boulder Hwy at Tropicana Ave.).

LVGA³ will be represented in the Cambridge

Recreation Center Basketball League starting Jan. 13. A big thanks goes to Todd Serfass, owner of Fun Hog Ranch, for sponsoring the very first LVGA³ basketball team. The roster is being filled now; e-mail Thomas Bogle at tbogle@lvga3.com for more information. The Cambridge Recreation Center is located at 3930 Cambridge St. For a list of game times, please visit www.lvga3.com. ●

LVGA³ teams to play in
Sin City Shootout tourney

LVGA³ Winter softball ended on Dec. 6 and had the best turnout ever. If you would like to get involved or play in the Spring softball league, e-mail Larry O'Halloran at lohalloran@lvga3.com for more information. LVGA³ would like to thank all the sponsors who made the season possible, and the organization looks forward to growing the league and getting more people involved.

Three LVGA³ teams will represent Las Vegas in the Sin City Shootout, a national softball tournament to be held Jan. 16-17. Local teams playing in the D Division are Fun Hog Ranch, managed by Glenn Davis, and Cedar Pharmacy, managed by Thomas Bogle. The Rat Pack, managed by Joel Sanchez, will be representing Las Vegas in the C Division. For those of you who have not seen these guys play, they are very focused and dedicated. You do not want to miss seeing our local LVGA³ teams playing against other teams from all over the United States and Canada. For more information on where our teams will be playing, visit www.sincityshootout.com.



The Rat Pack will play in the Sin City Shootout Jan. 16-17

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ABOUT LVGA³

LVGA³ stands for Las Vegas Gay Arts, Athletics & Activities. LVGA³ is an initiative to build community through social programming. It's one of the newest community resources in Las Vegas, specifically aimed at improving the quality of Gay life in Nevada. www.lvga3.com.



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The showgirl must go on....to other things



Bette Midler recently announced that the final performance of her critically acclaimed Las Vegas show *The Showgirl Must Go On* will be Sunday, Jan. 31. The final performance will mark the end of her two-year residency at The Colosseum at Caesars Palace which began on Feb. 20, 2008.

"What a fabulous two years this has been, and I thank AEG and Caesars Palace for the best partnership a showgirl could imagine. Who knows? These legs have had such a great run in the desert — it may be time to haul them to places with more humidity and fewer slot machines. But first I need to finish recording my album of the sexiest new love songs that only a showgirl could sing," stated Midler.

"Bette is one of the most talented, hard working professionals in the business and we would have loved for her to stay longer, said John Meglen, co-CEO and President of AEG Live/Concerts West. "All of us at AEG Live thank Bette and the entire cast, crew and staff for a great two year run at The Colosseum."

"Like every one of her performances, the approaching finale of Bette's two-year engagement leaves us applauding for more," said Gary Selesner, president of Caesars Palace. "Bette always will have a home at Caesars Palace."

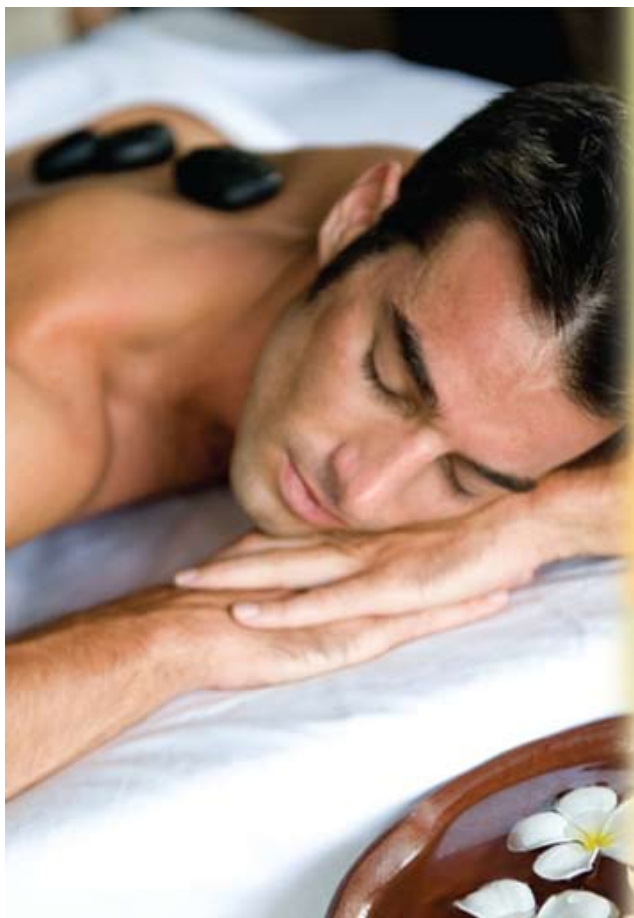
Tickets for *The Showgirl Must Go On*

start at \$95 and can be purchased by calling 1-877-7BETTEM (723-8836) or logging on to www.ticketmaster.com, keyword "Bette Midler." (All Ticketmaster orders may be subject to additional service charges and fees). Tickets may also be purchased in person at The Colosseum at Caesars Palace Box Office, which is open daily from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

For more information on *The Showgirl Must Go On*, visit bette.aeglive.com or on FaceBook at www.facebook.com/bettevegas. For more information on Bette Midler, visit her official website www.bettemidler.com. ●



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QSINGLES

What are your New Year's resolutions for 2010? After regrouping from the bad year I had in business in 2009, I am very optimistic about 2010 in both business and my personal life. Now that I have found peace through all that I have been through in 2009, I can focus on dating and working towards a relationship in 2010.

Which one of those resolutions do you think you will break first?

I am a really good goal setter. If you notice, I did not put "get into shape in 2009." I have been on a steady workout program for a while now and I am getting back to the in-shape self I used to be. It really has to be a mental change in order for a person to be successful at doing a complete body transformation. Diet and exercise go hand in hand.

Are you more of a sports person or an arts person? Why? I am more of a sports person since I play basketball, softball, volleyball, football, etc. I excelled in sports growing up. Basketball was my best sport due to having one of the best

coaches ever from junior high up through high school. He instilled dedication and hard work in us that paid off by being the number one team in the state of Oklahoma. I know this mentality has carried over into my business and work ethics. If you really want something in life, you are going to have to work for it. Nothing in life is free.

Since we are all more money conscious right now, describe an inexpensive dream date. Oh

wow, I could come up with a few, but my ideal date is cooking dinner at my house and enjoying a bottle of wine. Building a fire in the fireplace and watching it burn while cuddling up on the couch and watching a movie of his choice. I can also make two cups of Grandma Ruby's Spice Tea to set the mood as well. I like all kinds of movies. I love my holiday movies that bring a tear to my eye. I am very easy going and go with the flow.



THOMAS

For you personally, what was the highlight of 2009? Deciding to care about my education and getting off of academic probation. I rewarded myself with violin lessons and a floral design class over the summer.

What do you wear to sleep in on a cold winter night? Feetie pajamas I got from the little boy's section of Target. If there is an upside to only being 5'2", that's it right there.

What is your favorite cold weather beverage? Extra-chocolate

hot chocolate that's skirting the line of too-much-chocolate! Have to have an ice cube in it so I don't burn myself.

How long do you have to date someone before it's time to meet the parents?

I don't have a particular requirement, though I've tended to meet them fairly early on. One: I enjoy putting the person's personality into context. Two: family is important to me, and the way that they interact with their parents weighs heavily on my screening process.



DENISE

What trait annoys you most in someone's personality? Lack of integrity. I value trust very highly and don't have patience for people I can't count on.

Are you more of a sports person or an arts person? Why? I'm more the artsy type.

I've played a few instruments. I paint and draw and I sculpt occasionally. I write, carve on and build things out of leather... that sort of thing. At the end of it, if I've done things right, I feel like I've captured something primal; it feels like having a really in-depth and personal conversation with someone who really understands where I'm coming from. That said, while my lifestyle verges on sedentary, I'm not opposed to getting out and playing soccer, going bowling, hiking, sword fighting, or giving something new a try. Watching a baseball game in person is something I was surprised to find I enjoy, too.

What is the best dating advice you ever gave to someone? Be honest and open in communication, compromise without sacrificing your integrity, and if they don't have respect for you, your boundaries, or your needs, get the eff out.

WANT TO MEET THE QSINGLES?

If you like what you see here and seek the chance to meet one of this month's QSingles, or if you'd like to be considered for a future issue, contact Chris Miller, matchmaker at www.engageingintroductions.com.



QVEGAS *Readers' Choice* *Sexiest* *of GAY VEGAS* *Awards*

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SEXIEST LOCAL TELEVISION OR RADIO PERSONALITY

DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES IS JANUARY 15 • RESULTS WILL APPEAR IN THE FEBRUARY ISSUE

Q NIGHT OUT

NIGHTLY GUIDE TO LAS VEGAS NIGHTCLUBS, BARS AND LOUNGES FOR LGBT PATRONS

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
BACKDOOR 1415 E. Charleston Ave. 702-385-2018	Noches Nortenas (Latin Country Night) 9p - 2a	Karaoke Night 2-4-1 Drinks 10p - 4a	Happy Hour 2-4-1 Drinks 10a - Noon	Underwear Night 2-4-1 Drinks 10p - 4a	Happy Hour 2-4-1 Drinks 10a - Noon	Noches Latina (Latin Night) 10p - 6a	Noches Latina (Latin Night) 10p - 6a
BADLANDS SALOON 953 E. Sahara Ave. 702-792-9262	\$3.50 Beer Bust 9p - Midnight	Happy Hour 2-4-1 4p - 7p	Happy Hour 2-4-1 4p - 7p	Happy Hour 2-4-1 4p - 7p	Happy Hour 2-4-1 4p - 7p	\$5 Liquor Bust 7p - Midnight	\$5 Beer Bust 7p - Midnight
CHARLIE'S LAS VEGAS 5012 S. Arville St. 702-876-1844	\$5 Beer Bust 4-7p \$2 Long Isl. 7p - Mid Sunday Show 9pm	Beginner Dance Lessons 7-9pm and Ginger Grant 10pm	Happy Hour 4-7p FREE Drag Queen Bingo	Happy Hour 4-7p \$1 Mini-Pitch. 7p-2a Retro Night w/Trivia	Happy Hour 4-7p Line Dance Lessons Bear/Bare Chest Nite	NGRA Apprec. Night 75¢ Happy Hour 7-9p \$10 Liquor Bust 9p-1a	75¢ Happy Hour 7-9p \$5 Beer Bust 9p-1a
ENTOURAGE VEGAS 953 E. Sahara Ave. 702-650-9191	Open 24 Hours Salsa Sundays Latin music & videos	Open 24 Hours Boys Night Ages 18-21 in free	Open 24 Hours Dark Night All lights are off	Open 24 Hours Wise Wednesdays Ages 40+ get in free	Open 24 Hours Inked Show off your tats	Open 24 Hours Freebie Fridays Exciting giveaways	Open 24 Hours Packed House Our busiest night
ESCAPE LOUNGE 4213 W. Sahara Ave. 702-364-1167	Karaoke 9pm-1am Happy Hour 5-7a and 5-7p	Monday Night Football Happy Hour 5-7a and 5-7p	Happy Hour 5-7a and 5-7p	Happy Hour 5-7a and 5-7p	Happy Hour 5-7a and 5-7p	Gamble, Mingle and Drink	Gamble, Mingle and Drink
FLEX 4371 W. Charleston Ave. 702-385-FLEX	Football Drink Specials and Free Food	Football Drink Specials and Free Food	Underwear Island with DJ Nutz 10p-2a	Welfare Wednesday Desirae Penda'vis Midnight	2 for 1 Budweiser All Day Long	Confessions with JewDi Vine and DJ Ricoche 11pm	Ntoxxicated with Diva Toxxx 11p
FREEZONE 610 E. Naples Dr. 702-794-2300	Karaoke Happy Hour 4 - 8p Beer Bust 8p - 1a	Karaoke Happy Hour 4 - 8p Beer Bust 8p - 1a	Ladies Night Happy Hour 4 - 8p Beer/Lick-Her-Bust 8p - 1a	Happy Hour 4 - 8p Beer Bust 8p - 1a	Naked Boy Frat Party Beer Bust 9:30p - 2a \$7 Liquor Bust	Queens of Las Vegas Show/Dance Party Beer Bust 8p - 1a	Queens of Las Vegas Show/Dance Party Beer Bust 8p - 1a
FUN HOG RANCH 495 E. Twain 702-791-7001	\$5 Beer Bust 6-9pm	Happy Hour 3-7p \$1.50 Long Island Iced Teas 9p-2a	Happy Hour 3-7p \$5 Beer Bust 9p-2a	Happy Hour 3-7p \$1.50 Margaritas 9p-2a	Happy Hour 3-7p \$5 Beer Bust 9p-2a	Happy Hour 3-7p	Come in, drink up and just have a great time.
GOODTIMES 1775 E. Tropicana Ave. 702-736-9494	Watch sports, mingle, drink, gamble and relax	Watch sports, mingle, drink, gamble and relax	Watch sports, mingle, drink, gamble and relax	Karaoke with Sheila 9p-1a	Watch sports, mingle, drink, gamble and relax	Vaquero Night \$10 Liquor Bust 10p-3a	Noche Calientes DJ Papi Chulo & DJ XTC 10p
KRAVE LAS VEGAS Harmon Ave. at LV Blvd. 702-836-0830	SINDaze: Vegas' 8th Deadly Sin hosted by JewDi Vine	Closed	Kouture DJ P.A. \$2 wells/\$5 premiums	WTF? Wednesdays DJ Earwaxx 11pm Win up to \$1000	THURSTdaze DJ Javier Alba Liquor/Beer Bust	Flesh with VJ Alpyne (main room) and sKizoFrenia (lounge)	World-class DJs in main room and Candybar in lounge
LAS VEGAS EAGLE 3430 E. Tropicana Ave. 702-458-8662	\$5 Well or Draft Bust 12 - 5p and 10p - 2a	Monday Night Football with Brett	Karaoke with Mark & Brett 7p	Jock Strap and Underwear Night 7p - 3a	\$5 Well or Draft Bust 12 - 5p and 10p - 2a	Jock Strap and Underwear Night 7p - 3a	\$5 Well or Draft Bust 12 - 5p and 10p - 2a
SNICK'S PLACE 3rd St. off Las Vegas Blvd. 702-385-9298	Open 24 Hours	Happy Hour 2 - 4a and 2 - 4p	Happy Hour 2 - 4a and 2 - 4p	Happy Hour 2 - 4a and 2 - 4p	Happy Hour 2 - 4a and 2 - 4p	Happy Hour 2 - 4a and 2 - 4p	\$5 Beer Bust and \$6 Liquor Bust 9p - Midnight
SPOTLIGHT LOUNGE 957 E. Sahara Ave. 702-696-0202	\$1.50 Bloody Marys 8a - 4p \$5 Beer Bust 4 - 7p	\$5 Beer Bust Noon - 4p 2-4-1 9p - Midnight	\$5 Beer Bust Noon - 4p 2-4-1 9p - Midnight	Hump Day \$1.50 Well Screws or Margaritas 8a - 4p	Latin Thursdays with Las Esprellas, 9p Drink specials & raffles	\$5 Liquor Bust 1 - 4p \$5 Beer Bust 8 - 11p	\$5 Beer Bust 12 - 3p Couples Night 6 - 9p Jock Night Mid - 9p

WE ALSO RECOMMEND THESE MAINSTREAM NIGHTLIFE OPTIONS

BEATLES REVOLUTION LNG. The Mirage 702-692-8383	For you technology junkies, this has to be the coolest place in town with touch screen cocktail tables, great music and a couple of secret tricks to uncover. Check out Closet Sundays.	RHUMBAR The Mirage 702-792-7615	Designed in a style reminiscent of a mojito, with its white and green decor, Rhumbar is a new venue at The Mirage with a beautiful outdoor patio. Captiv8 is a gay night on Wednesdays.
BLUE MARTINI Town Square 702-949-BLUE	This new local hot spot is situated in Town Square and is always packed with great eye candy. Every night from 11 p.m. until close is hospitality pricing—half off drinks!	LAVO The Palazzo 702-791-1800	Check out the newest patio on the Las Vegas Strip by the Tao Group. Gays abound on Label Junkie Wednesdays with fashion shows taking place throughout the space.
CATHOUSE Luxor 702-262-4228	This swanky burlesque club/restaurant has hosted several gay events and is located in the Luxor. Great décor, sassy cocktail uniforms and fabulous lighting and sound.	STUDIO 54 MGM Grand 702-891-7254	A modern interpretation of the original, featuring state-of-the-art sound, video and lighting, live dancers and chart-topping dance music. 4 dance floors and go-go boys and girls.
CHRISTIAN AUDIGIER Treasure Island 702-894-7580	This renowned fashion designer turned nightclub connoisseur took over the space where Tangerine was in the Treasure Island and appointed it with some fierce bling. Check it out.	TAO The Venetian 702-388-8338	Restaurant, nightclub and ultra pool, this celebrity hang out is just hot. Found in the Grand Canal Shoppes at The Venetian.



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FRIDAY, JANUARY 1

"An Eclectic Collection" Art Exhibition
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Holsum Design Center, 6-10pm
www.dartedesigns.com

SATURDAY, JANUARY 2

Bette Midler: The Showgirl Must Go On
Caesars Palace, 7:30pm
www.caesarspalace.com
Repeats Sat., Sun., Tues., & Wed. through Jan 31.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 3

HRC Faith & Religion Group Meeting
The Center, 2pm
lasvegas.hrc.org

MONDAY, JANUARY 4

Free HIV and Hepatitis A & B Testing
The Center, 1-6:30pm
www.thecenterlv.com
Repeats every Monday and Thursday.

Stonewall Democrats General Meeting
The Center, 6:30pm
www.stonewalllv.org

TUESDAY, JANUARY 5

Imperial Court General Meeting
The Center, 7pm
www.desertempire.org

SinCityQSocials Trendy Tuesday
Location TBD, 8-10pm
www.sincityqsocials.com

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6

NGRA Fundraising Meeting
Escape Lounge, 6:30pm
www.ngra.com

THURSDAY, JANUARY 7

LVPT Casino Buffet
Orleans Casino, 11:30am
www.lasvegasprimetimers.com

FRIDAY, JANUARY 8

NGRA Appreciation Night
Charlie's Las Vegas, 8pm
www.ngra.com
Repeats every Friday night.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 9

NGRA Miss Nobody Competition
Charlie's Las Vegas, 8pm
www.ngra.com

SUNDAY, JANUARY 10

LGBT Senior Social Connection Meeting
The Center, 2pm
www.thecenterlv.com

MONDAY, JANUARY 11

NGRA Board of Directors Meeting
The Center, 6:30pm
www.ngra.com

TUESDAY, JANUARY 12

Betty's Outrageous Adv. Board Mtg.
The Center, 6:30pm
www.bettysout.com

SinCityQSocials Trendy Tuesday
Location TBD, 8-10pm
www.sincityqsocials.com

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13

Lambda Business Association Luncheon
Las Palmas (Commercial Center), 11:30am
www.lambdalv.com

THURSDAY, JANUARY 14

LVPT Dine Out Night
Barley's Brewery, 6:30pm
www.lasvegasprimetimers.com

NGRA Back to School Party
Badlands Saloon, 9:30pm
www.ngra.com
Help Nevada Gay Rodeo Association welcome the students of IGRA University to Las Vegas!

FRIDAY, JANUARY 15

HIV Campground Project
Blue Moon Resort
www.hiv-campground-project.org
Lasts until January 17.

IGRA University
Tuscany Casino & Suites
www.ngra.com
Lasts until January 17.

LVPT Meeting & Potluck
The Center, 3pm
www.lasvegasprimetimers.com

NGRA 2010 Royalty Competition
Charlie's Las Vegas, 8pm
www.ngra.com

SUNDAY, JANUARY 17

Her HRC Las Vegas
Revolution Lounge, 7pm
www.hrc.org/herhrc

MONDAY, JANUARY 18

NGRA General Meeting
The Center, 6:30pm
www.ngra.com

TUESDAY, JANUARY 19

LGBT Life and Estate Planning Seminar
Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce, 5:30pm
lasvegas.hrc.org

Women's Empowerment Network
The Center, 6pm
www.myspace.com/womensnetworklv

SNAPI General Meeting
The Center, 6:30pm
www.lasvegaspride.org

SinCityQSocials Trendy Tuesday
Location TBD, 8-10pm
www.sincityqsocials.com

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20

Oink Night

Fun Hog Ranch, 10pm
www.funhogranchlv.com

THURSDAY, JANUARY 21

LVPT Casino Buffet

Sunset Station, 11:30am
www.lasvegassprimetimers.com

Las Vegas HRC Third Thursday Social

Location and time TBD
lasvegas.hrc.org

SATURDAY, JANUARY 23

NGRA Winter Break

Badlands Saloon, 9:30pm
www.ngra.com

SUNDAY, JANUARY 24

LVPT Breakfast

Egg Works 2, 9am
www.lasvegassprimetimers.com

MONDAY, JANUARY 25

Imperial Court Board Meeting

The Center, 7:30pm
www.desertempire.org

TUESDAY, JANUARY 26

Log Cabin Republican Organizational Mtg.

The Center, 6:30pm
702-355-4887

SinCityQSocials Trendy Tuesday

Location TBD, 8-10pm
www.sincityqsocials.com

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27

Stonewall Democrats Board Meeting

The Center, 6:30pm
www.stonewalllv.org

FRIDAY, JANUARY 29

LVPT Cocktail Night

Charlie's Las Vegas, 6pm
www.lasvegassprimetimers.com

SATURDAY, JANUARY 30

Utada "In the Flesh" 2010

House of Blues, 7pm
www.ticketmaster.com

SUNDAY, JANUARY 31

SinCityQSocials Champagne Brunch

The Broiler, 11am
www.sincityqsocials.com

CALENDAR SUBMISSIONS

Submit full event details to Calendar@QVegas.com no later than the 15th of the month preceeding the event.



READER SURVEY

To help us learn more about **who our readers are** and **what they want to see in our magazine**, please complete and submit the following survey. All information you provide may remain confidential and anonymous. However, if you choose to provide your e-mail address, you will be entered into our **e-mail newsletter** database and will be eligible to **win various exciting prizes** from gift certificates to merchandise such as movies and music. If you provide your mailing address, you will receive a **complimentary monthly subscription** to QVegas. Your assistance with this survey will help us better serve our LGBT community in the future.

GENDER IDENTITY

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Transgender Male ☐ Transgender Female ☐ Questioning

ORIENTATION

☐ Lesbian ☐ Gay ☐ Bisexual ☐ Straight ☐ Queer ☐ Questioning ☐ Other

YEARLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME

☐ \$0-49,999 ☐ \$50,000-\$99,999 ☐ \$100,000-\$149,999 ☐ \$150,000+

AGE

☐ Under 18 ☐ 18-29 ☐ 30-39
☐ 40-49 ☐ 50-59 ☐ 60-69 ☐ 70+

RELATIONSHIP STATUS

☐ Single
☐ Partnered/Married

HOUSING

☐ Own ☐ Rent
☐ Live with family

PREFER TO SHOP

☐ In person
☐ Online

TRANSPORTATION

☐ Own or lease vehicle
☐ Get a ride or use public transit

LOCATION

☐ Las Vegas ☐ Henderson ☐ North L.V. ☐ Other in NV ☐ Outside NV

WHAT TYPE OF CONTENT DO YOU PREFER?

☐ Local news and events ☐ Entertainment ☐ General gay lifestyle topics

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☐ Editor's Note ☐ Our Qmmunity ☐ That's So Vegas ☐ QShopping
☐ The Center Page ☐ On Q (galleries) ☐ QTravel ☐ QPeople
☐ QVibrations (horoscopes) ☐ Quid Pro Quo ☐ Supporter Spotlight
☐ Q Nightlife Vision (galleries) ☐ QGirl ☐ QFashion ☐ QMedia

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☐ Magazine only ☐ QVegas.com ☐ E-mail newsletter ☐ Facebook ☐ MySpace

COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS/QUESTIONS?

YOUR NAME	
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For ease of use and to conserve resources, we suggest completing this survey online at **www.QVegas.com**. However, you may also mail the completed survey to QVegas, 1380 E. Sahara Ave. Ste. A, Las Vegas, NV 89104 or fax to 702-650-0641.

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Please Read Your Ad carefully when it initially appears. If an error is found, please contact the classifieds department at (702) 650-0636 ext. 102 immediately. We are not responsible for errors or minor changes after the first issue of publication. QVegas assumes no responsibility for omissions or errors. The right to reject, edit, cancel and determine proper placement of a classified ad is the right of QVegas.

EMPLOYMENT

Let QVegas Classifieds work for you. If you have a job opening, hire qualified *Family*. To place your ad and info call 702-650-0636 ext 102.

FREEZONE is Now Hiring for Doorman, Tooter sales and Go-Go dancers. Apply in person at FreeZone - 610 East Naples - 794-2310.

Strippers Wanted. Apply in person at FLEX Nightclub 4371 W. Charleston or call 385-3539 to make an appointment.

BUSINESS SERVICES

NOTICE: QVegas documents all customer complaints regarding classified advertisements. It reserves the right to refuse advertisements from individuals or companies who misrepresent themselves and/or advertising claims. Advertisers and clients are kindly asked to conduct their dealings in a moral, humanitarian and mutually respectful manner. All complaints should be made to QVegas Attn.: Classifieds Director 1380 E. Sahara #A, Las Vegas, NV. 89104

Men's Naked Yoga Class, meeting three times weekly. Log onto www.mensnakedyoga.com and click on the schedule tab for more info! Privates also available.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Men's Nude Yoga Class, Please Join us for a private men's nude Hatha yoga class, three times weekly. Log onto www.mensnakedyoga.com or see my ad in the classified section. Contact and calendar posted on the web.

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WARNING: QVegas reminds readers to use common sense when placing or answering an advertisement. Meeting people for the first time in a public environment is recommended and letting a friend know your whereabouts and destination is advisable.

Call 702-650-0636 ext. 102 to advertise in our personals section in the next issue of QVegas.

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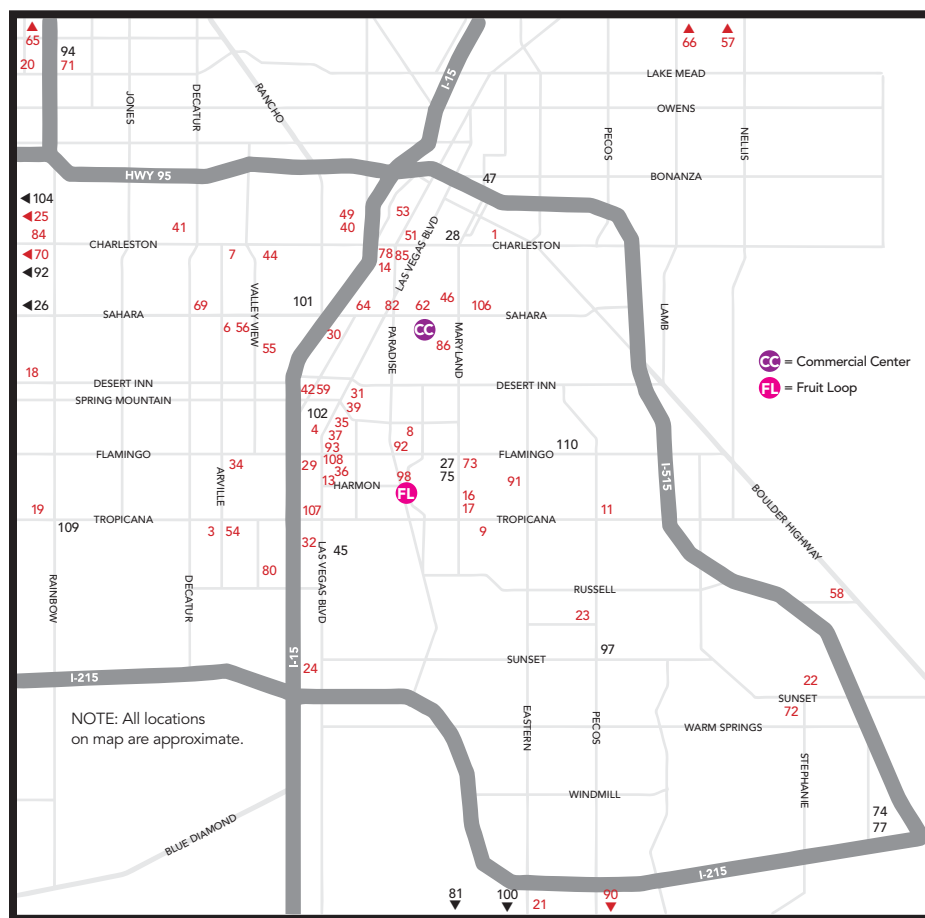
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CAPRICORN 12/22-01/19

The year gets off to a rip roaring start as an influential new business connection is made. Watch out not to overwork those calves and ankles on the 10th. Annual New Moon in your sign on the 16th provides the means for a stronger incoming financial flow. Celebration on the 18th is a bit of a surprise but so well deserved. Make it a point to thank a loved one for going above and beyond the call of duty on the 27th and 28th.

AQUARIUS 01/20-02/18

This definitely isn't the month for relying on good luck and just allowing things to occur. You'll need to roll up those sleeves and really work hard in order to achieve major goals. The 7th looks best for throwing a fund-raiser or other type of social benefit. Energies on the 15th suggest that you stay close to home to avoid any type of skirmish. Your red letter day for January is the 19th. It's the one day when you can absolutely do no wrong.

PISCES 02/19-3/19

It's been said that everything comes to those who wait. While that may be true in most cases, it's not the pattern for this month (see Aquarius' message above). Get past that shy/introverted side of yourself and let her rip. The 10th is fine for scouting real estate sites. Take time to smell the roses on the 21st. Have the tropical getaway booked before the 30th. On the 31st, please remember it's not what you'll say but how you articulate it, okay?

ARIES 03/20-04/19

For a sign that craves intrigue and excitement, the month shall come off as rather low key. Not that lots won't be accomplished, but much of it will happen on the sidelines or in secret. This is one of those rare times when the spotlight shouldn't be sought out. A gathering with good friends on the 2nd shall provide you with some keen insights. Being in the right on the 20th won't be good enough. You'll need to back it up with solid proof.

TAURUS 04/20-05/20

Your natural charm and charisma usually works wonders. It still shall this month, as long as it's mixed with equal parts focus and determination. Don't allow airheads or supposed know it alls to sway you from the path to success. New Moon on the 16th renews your financial status in a big way. Set aside the 21st to dance the night away. Physical energies increase greatly as of the 23rd. We suggest that you decline an invite made for the 29th.

GEMINI 05/21-06/21

It's been said that "patience is a virtue". It's one that nobody ever masters, especially you Gemmy. Immediate results are awesome, but they just don't happen all the time. Count to 20 before you act (or react) on the 8th to avoid a tense situation. Surprise reunion on the 15th fills your heart with delight. Sun's transit on the 19th offers you a new career opportunity. The 29th proves to be a wonderful day for listening and communing with nature.

CANCER 06/22-07/22

Your patience and strength of character shall be put to the test on the 4th and 5th. This primarily has to do with those who are jealous of your successes and achieving goals. Pay them no mind. You come first, no matter what. A three-martini lunch on the 11th really helps to thaw out a rather frosty potential new client. Resist the urge to shop for a newer vehicle until early March. The 25th provides an unusual romantic encounter. Bravo for you.

LEO 07/23-08/22

You're certainly no stranger to hard work. Well, get ready for a chore-filled marathon as of the 4th. Some of these projects manifest from seeds that were planted quite some time ago. It'll be necessary to limit socializing to one night a week in order to achieve optimum success. Remember that no goal is reached without sacrifice. Next month will be much less frantic. Then you can prowl all month long.

VIRGO 08/23-09/22

Your organized, analytical mind may be in for a rude awakening this month. Not only will very little go as planned, but what does manifest will tend to do so in a butt-backwards manner. Take heart, Virgo, as there are some compensations. Like happy hour and maybe a deep tissue massage. The 15th and 16th look to be the small oasis in the desert. Cheer up though. By month's end, you'll have more money and a sweet new hottie.

LIBRA 09/23-10/22

Being busy as a bee pretty much describes the pace for this month, as of the 6th. Take the first five days to charge up those batteries in preparation for the barrage of activities. Resist the urge to be naughty on the 13th. It'll only come back as juicy gossip to haunt you. Take some time on the 22nd to clean out a closet or two. The less clutter in one's life, the easier it is to grow. Socko party on the 29th brings out the entertainer in you.

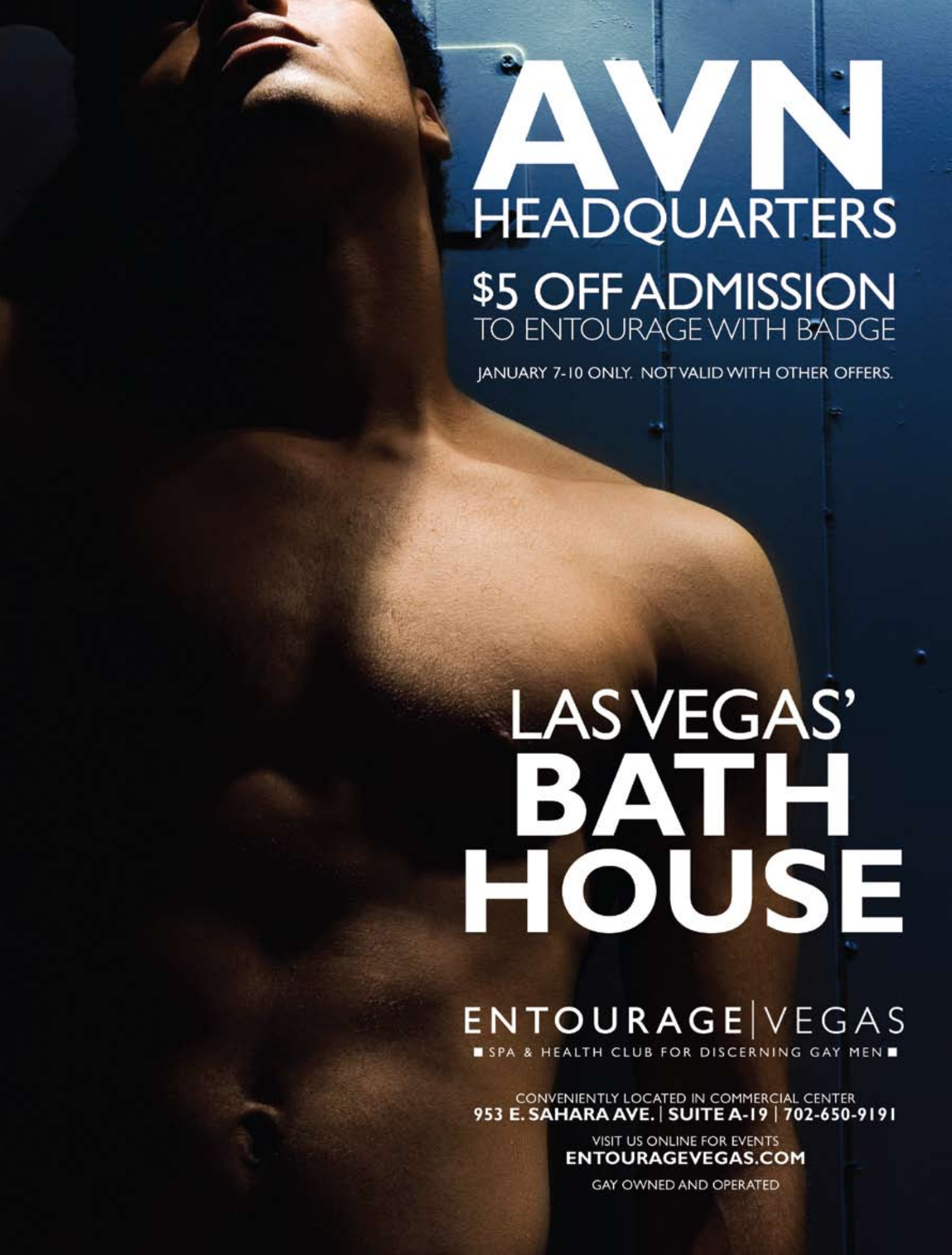
SCORPIO 10/23-11/21

The urge to take off for some exotic, foreign locale might be overpowering, but your wallet says otherwise. Start saving now for that dream vacation. In the meantime, a three-day jaunt from the 21st-23rd should suffice for a while. Watch those lower back muscles on the 18th or you could be sidelined for a few days. After the 23rd, aspects indicate that you'll encounter far less resistance when presenting any concepts or ideas to the boss.

SAGITTARIUS 11/22-12/21

You'll start 2010 with a rather large wad of cash. Resist the urge to blow it all at once, Sag (we know it's painful). Take care of necessities and then you can splurge a bit. The 8th and 9th look to be the most socially active and amorous. Listen closely to a friend in need on the 24th. You'll get to repay an old debt by the 27th. Surprise invite to a show/concert on the 29th should be snapped up quickly. It's a once in a life experience.





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Thoughts on the LGBTQ movement from a genderqueer activist

First, I would like to congratulate *QVegas* on its first Transformations Issue, which I hope will be an annual tradition. I personally believe that this issue represents a commitment from the magazine to greater inclusivity and representation of the diverse LGBTQ communities in Southern Nevada. And what better time than the first month of a new year to publish such an issue?

On the subject of January and traditions, I believe that the movement for full equality, both federally and locally, needs to endorse a New Year's resolution of sorts. If you're not the type to commit to a resolution, perhaps we can call it a slogan instead. My suggestion? I have a few: "inclusivity or bust," "the activism of yesterday doesn't work today," and "'Gay' is not synonymous with 'LGBTQ.'" Any of the three would appropriately apply to my point, which is that transgender persons and communities have historically been marginalized, "othered," and sometimes just plain excluded within the greater LGBTQ movement, and this must stop — now.

It is true that sexual orientation and gender identity are mutually exclusive concepts; however, in the grand scheme of activism, politics and societal perception, we are truly all in this together. There is no us and them, our rights and their rights. When one segment of our LGBTQ communities is thrown under the bus, we are essentially all thrown under the bus, although some may have a better view of the street than others.

As an anti-oppression activist, the idea of

fighting for gay and lesbian rights first and coming back for transgender people later is appalling, but as someone who identifies as genderqueer, the concept is personally damaging to me and my family, let alone the hundreds of transgender people I have worked with over the past year.

Given the historical recurrence of "incremental" activism and political change for LGBTQ people in the United States (a.k.a., throwing certain communities under the bus), I believe it is going to take a paradigm shift within the movement for full equality in order for inclusive change to truly occur. This shift must begin with each and every one of us, from the language we use on a daily basis to describe ourselves and others to the actions we take when a lack of representation masquerades as inclusivity. In other words, saying "gay" does not include lesbian, bisexual, transgender or queer folks, and policies, legislation, etc. that include sexual orientation without gender identity and expression (and vice versa) are not really inclusive.

I should take a moment to say that, in all of my thoughts above, by no means am I suggesting that the recognition of any LGBTQ (etc.) identity be lost to ensure the inclusivity of others. Rather, I am advocating for the respect and celebration of the many identities in our communities through inclusivity — whether we like each other or not.

So, what can you do to be a part of the change? How can you advocate for transgender persons and communities? Reading this



issue of *QVegas* from cover to cover is a great place to start. Talking with transgender folks, respectfully asking questions and educating yourself would be a next great step. There are also many great resources and ideas online, including a publication by the National Center for Transgender Equality called "52 Things You Can Do for Transgender Equality," which you can access at the following link: <http://www.transequality.org/52things.html>.

We have much to learn from each other. I hope you will join me in embracing my New Year's resolution for 2010: inclusivity or bust.

I can be reached at mel@thecenterlv.com or (702) 733-9800. ●

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