

Vol. 1, No. 52 February 8, 1985 \$1
COMPLIMENTARY ISSUE



Round the clock

THE GAY WEEKLY



Come see what everybody's bitching about!

RAWHIDE

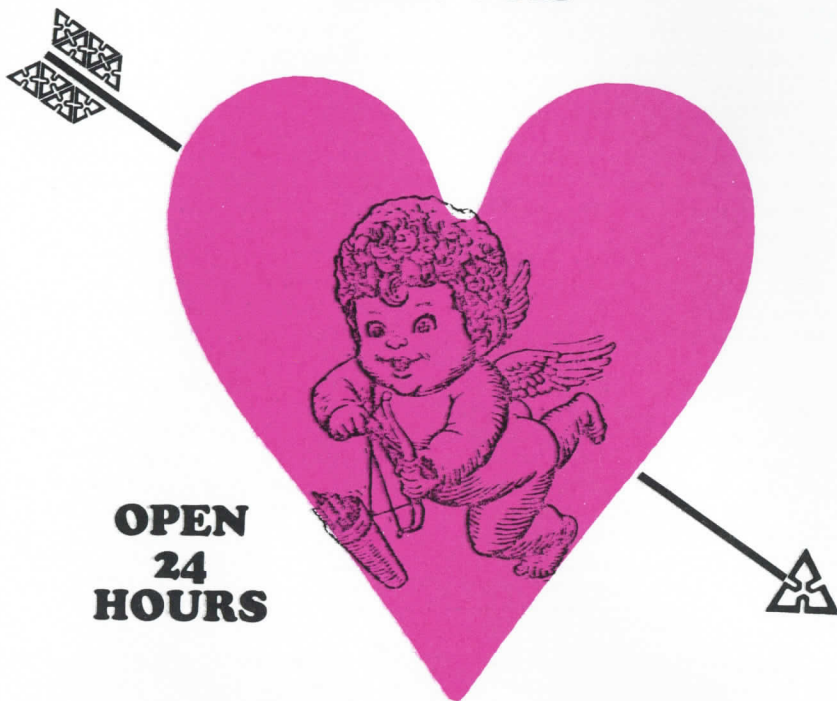
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OPINION

IS MARDI GRAS ANTI-ACTIVIST?

MARDI GRAS! The words conjure up all sorts of images — parties, parades, balls and costumes . . . the biggest street party in the world . . . a time when New Orleans plays host to the world's fantasies. If ever there was a holiday or even that captured the gay imagination, Mardi Gras is it. If there is one group that crosses all age, racial, social, economic and religious barriers and hosts this great party, it is the gay and lesbian community.

There are no lesbian or gay parades, but there is no better, happier or friendlier place to view a parade than in front of one of the gay bars along Rampart Street. The warmth and caring that is transmitted by members of these crowds is unbelievable.

There are gay and lesbian balls. One might even say that the only really beautiful, fun, imaginative balls are those put on by gay and lesbian krewes. More and more non-gays try each year to obtain the prized invitations to gay balls. At one time they would have come to laugh. They have learned that they come to appreciate the color, the splendor, the sense of carnival that is unequalled by the "straight" balls.

Mardi Gras day in the French Quarter (that wonderful gay ghetto) is an experience not to be missed. The costumes, the sounds, the feeling of fun in the air — all are better here than in any other part of

the city. Ask anyone and they will tell you that the Quarter is the place to be.

The Quarter is the place to be because we are there. We, the gay men and lesbians, are hosts and entertainers at the same time. It is our party in the Quarter, and we are generous enough to share the fun.

For years I've been told that the reason there is so little real support for the gay rights movement in New Orleans is because too many people are involved with — and live for — Mardi Gras. It takes lots of time, effort and money to stage a ball and design and build those costumes.

True. But Mardi Gras is not a negative force in the gay community. Mardi Gras, the whole carnival season, is a very positive force. Have you ever thought of what Carnival would be like without gay and lesbian participation? Where would you find the style, the fun?

Without lesbians and gay men, Mardi Gras would become simply another Chamber of Commerce tourist hype. We make the difference. Our participation in Mardi Gras is and always has been a public statement about our ability to function in the face of adversity.

Mardi Gras is when — secure behind our masks — we make lots of noise and put on a great show. We don't play by the straight world's rules on Mardi Gras. We play by our own rules, and the non-

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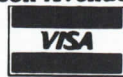
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OPINION

gays love it. We get out there and strut our stuff, thumbing our noses at those who don't like it. It is our day in the sun, a day we show pride in our accomplishments.

Where does it leave the gay rights movement? People who work hard to secure equal rights for their gay brothers and sisters should come to terms with the importance Carnival plays in the liberation of us all. The Gay Men's Chorus is a good example of important public statements. Their recent concert, for example, was reviewed in a St. Bernard newspaper. The reviewer named the group, then went on to highly praise them for their wonderful Christmas Concert. That review was probably one of the most important political statements ever to appear in that paper.

It said in essence, "here are some of the finest musicians around, and they happen to be gay." Anyone reading that review who cared about good singing would want to see and hear the next concert. The fact that the singers are

gay is not relevant to the quality of the singing. The chorus members are being judged on their ability to sing — not on who they choose to sleep with. Isn't that what the whole point of the gay rights movement is? We all want to be judged by standards that leave our sexuality out of it, without having to hide our gayness.

We can only make this happen when we are willing to state our sexual orientation as a fact, then go on to do the job at hand. It would do the gay and lesbian rights movement no good if the top doctors, lawyers, butchers, bakers, etc. were lesbian or gay if no one knows it. On the other hand, they might be prevented from continuing to practice if their sexuality were known. So short of playing Russian roulette with careers, what can be done?

Mardi Gras! Yes, Mardi Gras helps. We get out there behind our masks, our identity securely hidden, and we are ourselves. We make no excuses. We just are. We are visible. We are seen as

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OPINION

a proud, fun-loving group of people, perhaps just a bit more sensual, a bit more creative than most. People are not frightened. Somehow it's alright to be a lesbian or gay man on Mardi Gras. Then comes Ash Wednesday, and we take off the masks, and run back into the closets.

Perhaps this year we can learn from Mardi Gras. If just may be as much our fault as theirs that the closet seems so attractive. Pride in oneself is easily communicated. In our feathers and sequins we radiate pride. Strip away the feathers and our pride becomes fear. Don't let that happen. As you walk in the sun this Mardi Gras, down the middle of Bourbon Street with throngs throwing beads to you, take in the feeling. Then, when you take off your mask, remember that feeling, and resolve to make it happen every day. Do something to make it happen. Get involved with others who are working to make some-

thing happen within the gay community.

Whether the group is social, political, religious, health-related, or a carnival krewe, join and get involved. Doing things with other lesbians and gay men, making things happen, is the best way to build pride.

The next time you hear someone put down carnival, remind them of the strong tradition and sense of gay and lesbian togetherness that the carnival season fosters. We should have learned a long time ago that what makes New Orleans unique is not her weaknesses but her strengths.

And we too must learn that our sexuality is not our weakness. It is our strength. It is that part of us which, if nothing else, keeps us from being ordinary. It must follow then that if we are not ordinary, then we must be extraordinary! Happy Mardi Gras! ♦

John Ognibene

BRIEFING

BOURBON STREET AWARDS RETURN

After being absent from the heart of the French Quarter for a year, the world-famous Bourbon Street Awards will be back Mardi Gras Day outside Cafe Lafitte's in Exile, 901 Bourbon St.

Last year's awards show, which honors costumes in many categories, was cancelled when show organizer, the late Ed Smith, became ill.

This year's show, the 21st edition of the awards which brings thousands of people to Bourbon Street, is being sponsored by the men of Wood Enterprises.

The show begins at the corner of Bourbon and Dumaine at 11 a.m., Tuesday, Feb. 19, and runs until about 2 p.m. ♦

BALL SEASON NEARS END

With Mardi Gras less than two weeks away, the carnival ball season is coming to an end, with just a few balls to be staged before everyone begins planning the balls for 1986.

Balls remaining in the 1985 season:

Sun., Feb. 10 — Krewe of Petronius, St. Bernard Cultural Center.

Thurs., Feb. 14 — Mystic Krewe of Apollo, Municipal Auditorium.

Sat., Feb. 16 — Krewe of Arminius, St. Bernard Cultural Center.

Mon., Feb. 18 — Lords of Leather, St. Mark's Community Center, Rampart at Governor Nichols.

LONELINESS WORKSHOP SCHEDULED

A workshop on being alone or lonely in the lesbian and gay community will be held Saturday, March 2 in New Orleans.

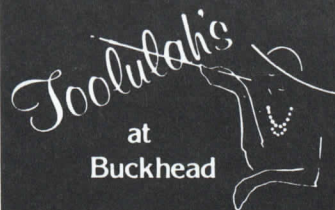
Workshop topics include: Being Single; Unsatisfying Relationships; Isolation in the Personal or Work Setting; The Bar Scene; Substance Abuse; Looking for Ms./Mr. Right; and other issues pertinent to coping with the gay and lesbian lifestyles.

The five-hour workshop will be held at the St. Charles Hotel, 2203 St. Charles Avenue and is being conducted by Cathie Roland, Ed.D., Eileen Burke, B.C.S.W. and Terry Mayers, M.Ed.

For more information contact Roland at 5108 Danneel St., New Orleans, LA 70115 or call her at 891-3120 or Burke or Mayers at 891-2642. ♦



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BRIEFING

NEIMAN'S OPENS IN BATON ROUGE

Have you ever wished that New York wasn't so far away so that you could enjoy some of those talked-about discos? Well, New York is in New York, but Neiman's is in Baton Rouge. That's right. Neiman's held its grand opening Feb. 1, and believe me, it's well worth the drive. Among some of its offerings is a beautiful all-new stainless steel dance floor, a light show second to none, and a sound system that will keep you dancin' the night away.

For those of you not so interested in the disco beat, they've thought about you too. Just take a walk up a flight of stairs and enjoy an array of music ranging from "oldies but goodies" to rock and easy listening.

Then again those love birds among you can relax downstairs in front of the 8-foot fireplace, enjoying music from the baby grand.

My friend, this bar has it all including three video screens, one in the disco, one by the main bar, and the third in the Theater Room. You got it. A theater room. Naturally on Dynasty Night don't ask someone to change the channel. Just sit back like at home and enjoy your favorite TV show on the giant screen. On other nights, you can expect to view the classic films you only thought you'd missed. So grab a buddy or two and drive to Neiman's, 2183 Highland Rd., Baton Rouge. Trust me, you'll be glad you did. ♦

Justin Coffey

RAWHIDE MINING COMPANY OPENS

Wood Enterprises' newest bar opened in grand style January 28th, with a buffet and reduced drink prices, packing in the crowds at Rawhide Mining Co., 740 Burgundy.

The bar, located at the site of "Tiger's" and "Play It Again Sam's," officially opened its doors Jan. 14, but the celebration was put off for two weeks.

Patrons munched on hors d'oeuvres and goodies, and the reduced drink prices kept the patrons happy as they enjoyed the massively renovated bar which now features a fireplace, a mirrored dance floor, and an old-fashioned, rustic saloon look, with lots of wood everywhere. ♦

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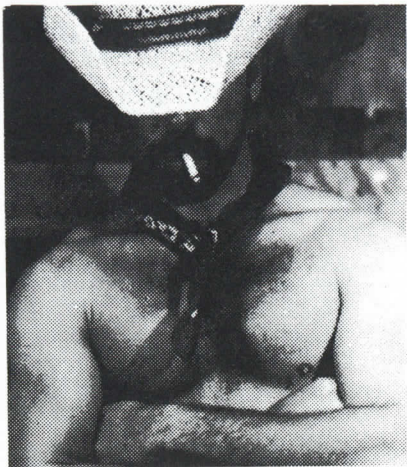
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GALLERY



1



2



3



4



5

1-Miss Rose (owner of La. Purchase) and bartender Corky, New Orleans; 2-Miss Rocket City Erika Blake at Club Atlantis, Huntsville; 3-One of the many talents at Avenue 54, Huntsville; 4-Avenue 54's show director Lorraine Casey; 5-Grand opening crowd at Neiman's, Baton Rouge; 6-Tissy Malone of the Chameleon, Atlanta, and Amber Richard of Illusions, Atlanta.



6

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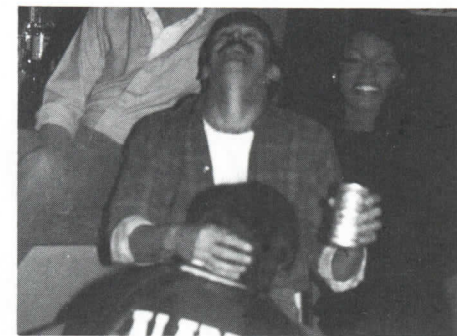
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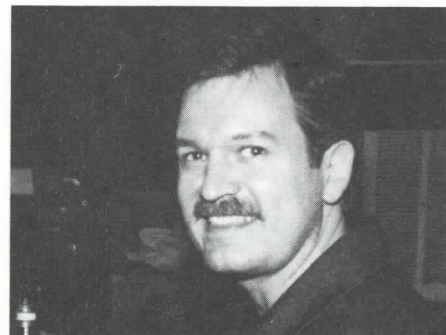
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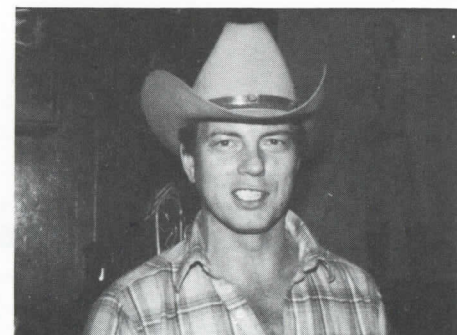
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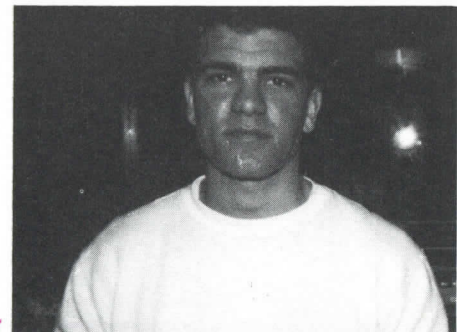
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7

1-Jim and Bud, your bartenders at Club Park Avenue, Mobile; 2-The one you can't see is Atlantis' manager, Stewart; 3-Dusty and Jeanne-Gerard of Chaps, New Orleans; 4-The 4001 Club, Dallas; 5-John F., manager at Bulldogs, Atlanta; 6-David, bartender at Bulldogs, Atlanta; 7-David, bartender at Weekends, Atlanta.

Petunia's *A Restaurant*

*Cajun
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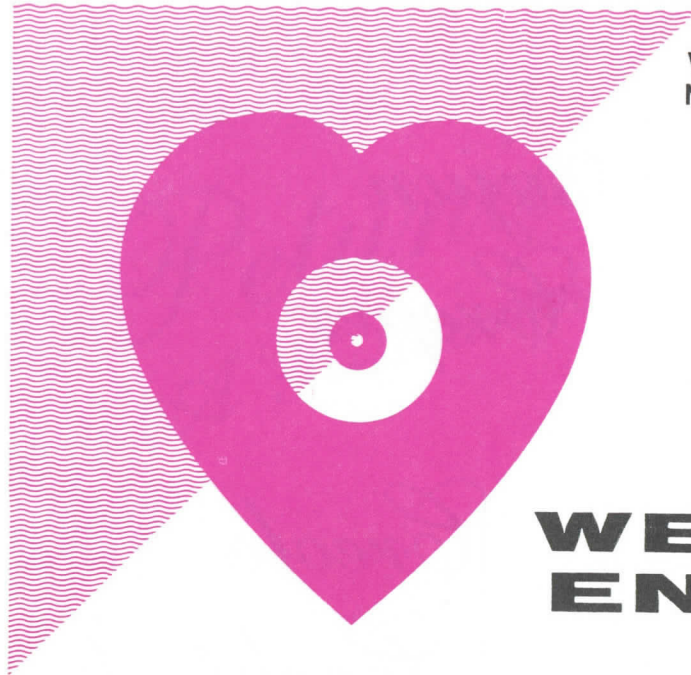
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Around the *Zodiac* clock

FEBRUARY 8-14
KEYWORD: "POETRY"
by Lawrence of New Orleans

FOR EVERY SIGN: Roses are red, Violets, and so on . . . below are some pointers for lovers to go on: Make *beautiful* music together while the messenger Mercury sends friendly communications via Uranus whether in the form of platonic Valentines, or by saying those intimate three little words — *Lets do it!* Also, the moon will blow a few kisses in the direction of sugary Venus, (the loving heart), and spicy Mars, (the sexy dart) so you should either be whispering sweet nothings, or at least breathing heavily this week.

The same planets that are in rhythm now, Uranus (which is gay stuff) and Mercury, publications were doing their thing one year ago, when the first issue of this magazine was being put to bed. So a big bear hug (from the constellation Ursa Major) goes to *Around The Clock* today. *Bon Anniversaire!*



AQUARIUS: This week could change your life. (Start no later than Wednesday, at eight in the morning!) Look feel, be, and act your best. Stay with a sweetheart or cruise like crazy for a pal. Take a fling at anything you want. (If your birthday is this week, the above lasts one year.)



CANCER: Just as Cupid can be a bit of an "imp," so can you be an angel or a Devil this week. Serve some *Dreamboat* to get your own way, or have them wait on you, (for favors, of course.) You can have fun by working together.



LEO: There's a strong flow of magnetic attraction between you and others now. Brush up against a co-worker. Play *kneesies* at the bar. You never know what you might bump into.



PISCES: Love Birds come out of their shells. Money matters hatch as well. Feather your nest to make it cozy, stock up on provisions, for a private rendezvous with a secret admirer or one you've been watching close.



ARIES: Friendship can be an uplifting experience. You may find a greater soul-mate than Romeo and Adam, (or Juliet and Eve!) Or simply fly to the Moon on a waterbed whichever it is, you'll learn something



VIRGO: Be hospitable and entertaining and someone may show you special thanks. This is a good time to *play house* for keeps or just to *shack up* for a few days with a helpful friend.



TAURUS: This week shows added power on the job as well as red hot sexual energy between you and whomever. Be aggressive, go after what you want from others. Push for success, but not too far.



LIBRA: This is a week for *togetherness*. Talk in bed. Let the other party know what turns you on. You may get a few pleasant surprises. It's a creative time too. Act on sudden brainstormers.



GEMINI: You'll get bright ideas and want to share your outlook with a hearthrob. A Lovey-Dovey relationship reaches new heights of understanding, or there'll be a match-up with a person from a different background.



SCORPIO: Cozy-up with your favorite teddy bear, or shop for a living doll you can hold. The emphasis this week is on comfort and physical closeness. Also, spending on the home. You'll get lots of attention now.

(continued)



policy at work as well.



Garbo routine. Don't put all you laundry in one basket. It pays to give candy.

* ASK THE STARS *

Dear Valentine — An ardent admirer of yours might find it hard to keep up with you once you've swept him off his feet. You are lucky in love, as Venus was in Mars' own element. (Your moonsign is in doubt, since I don't have your birth hour. It's either Pisces or Aries.) With most of you planets in fire or air signs, you are a bold and zesty lover, but you hardly have any earth or water signs in your Homo-scope. So you lack the patience for much sentimentality. Take some time to smell the flowers! Happy Birthday.

SAGITTARIUS: Whether you want to woo your beloved, or just make whoopie with some trick, be direct. Speak your mind. Honesty is the best

CAPRICORN: It's not rare for you to be aloof, and now is no exception. The planet of mystery is making you even more so. Lay off the Greta

Do you have any questions about the stars and how they affect you? Then simply write, including your birth date, year, town and time (if known,) to:

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WHAT'S THIS THING CALLED LOVE?

EOM/Atlanta has scheduled the second of its Gay Issues Forums, to be held on Sunday, Feb. 10, at 4 p.m.

This pre-Valentine meeting will feature Dr. Joseph Davis, a professional counselor, who will talk about various kinds of relationships within the lesbian/gay communities.

EOM/Atlanta meet at the Gay Center, 8484 Peachtree St., 3rd floor. For additional information, call (404) 261-5710 after 7 p.m. ♦

SKEETERS GRAND OPENING/ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Skeeters, formerly Ho-Jons, held its fifth anniversary/grand opening celebration on January 22nd.

Owner Rick Camp hosted a dazzling show featuring Skeeters' own "Cabaret On Parade" and special guest star the reigning Miss Gulf Coast and Miss Gay Louisiana U.S.A. Racine Scott of Dallas, Texas.

Ho-Jons, which closed this past summer, reopened in September at a new location, 150 Lee St., Montgomery, Alabama under the new name. Although the bar has been open for several months, Rick Camp decided to combine the grand opening with the fifth anniversary of Ho-Jons. Everyone attending was treated to free champagne and party favors.

Skeeters, which is one of the largest and finest gay complexes in the southeast, has been chosen to host the Mr. Gay America Pageant to be held later this year, although the exact date has not been set. ♦

Lydia Prim
Montgomery AL.

HOUSTON'S MARDI GRAS FINALE

Houston, Texas, will again this year continue its tradition of winding up the Mardi Gras celebration with "Mardi Gras Finale," a twelve-hour fete at 901 North Shepherd, well within the Loop.

Festivities will begin at 9:00 p.m., Feb. 23, and feature music by outstanding DJ Otis James. Party sponsors have spared no expense in providing the best light and sound in an industrial setting.

The \$20 ticket buys adequate, well-lighted parking as well as admission and open bar.

Tickets are available by return mail from the Invitation, or at Dramatika, 3224 Yoakum at Westheimer, Houston, Texas, or simply by requesting them by mail from MGF, Inc., 1904 Whitney, Houston, TX 77006.

Ticket requests should include your return address and \$20 by check for each ticket ordered. Enthusiasm within this group has soared as attendance is expected to fill the 25,000 square foot space. ♦

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IN TOWN

Eating Around

PETUNIAS

If you had access to a charming French Quarter Creole Townhouse about 150 years old, a supply of fresh flowers, simple but clean table setting, fresh seafood, fruits, and vegetables, and a reputation as a great creole chef, what would you do — open a restaurant, or organize a trapeze act for a traveling circus?

I discussed this with the lively Jim Shively and business partners, Hoyle Byrd and Peter Thomas, and Jim swears that they have already done the traveling circus trapeze act, so they are going to take the well-known St. Louis Crepe Shoppe at 817 St. Louis St. and make some changes!

First change will be the name: from now on it's called PETUNIAS. Other changes will be in the menu. While those 14" crepes with a multitude of mouth-watering fillings will still be offered, they will also draw from the opposite end of the culinary spectrum by offering cajun and creole specialties like a different gumbo for every day of the week, barbecued shrimp (call ahead of time for this one) and salads for those who prefer the "light cuisine" approach.

But if you're worried about your size, you will faint at the size of the servings. This is the restaurant to visit when you have an appetite!

Petunias will offer a daily chef's special (all you can eat for only \$5.95) as well as a full breakfast menu, featuring French Toast and Eggs Benedict among many other standard items. House wines, as well as huge (and I mean big) strong mixed drinks are also available.

Petunias is still across the street from the Hermann Grima House, and, of course, the Roundup is still next door. This gives you an idea of the eclectic ambiance that prevails at Petunias. Occa-

sionally they even have a guest mystery and the variety of people that dine there represent a cross-section of French Quarter personalities, media people, the jeans and jet set, tourists who are clever enough to know about the place, as well as many artists, writers, clergymen, nuns, and even Little Ruthie when she's sober enough.

This is really a fun place. The atmosphere is relaxed and prices are very moderate ranging from \$4.50 to \$10.00.

Upstairs is a private dining room which can seat 60 or host 200 guests. Jim says, "We can use the private dining room for any kind of wedding or reception. Also there is a small bedroom adjoining the main area which is certainly negotiable. Petunias offers a catering service for any event.

Ms. Jay Loomis is the head waitress and she's a stand-in for Elaine May! Ask about the secret recipe for "Petunia Gumbo" which is only served in season. Petunias has already been cited as one of the top 10 "newer" restaurants in the Vieux Caré!, and is open 7 days a week, 8 a.m. til midnight.

They also feature a fabulous Blue Petunia Meatloaf in season, and a Pale Yellow Petunia Sherbet during the month of May only, subject to the supply of fresh petunias.

Jim Shively wants it known that he is half cajun and half Texan which makes him coonass and jackass, hence "dat good ole cajun cookin' and that creole touch," not to mention that touch of Texas which makes for the bigness in the servings and hospitality. ♦

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This is an SRO production and that's exactly what happened the night I attended; several people had to be turned away. Too bad, because that night I got to see how even "the tired old queen of gay plays" can be resurrected from the dead if the spirit is there. And it was!

Rusty Ratliff in the role of the limpid librium-laden Michael gives us a performance worthy of the fact that this marks his 175th role. Michael is the neurasthenic ninny of characters, around which the whole "sense" of the play revolves. If we can't or won't sympathize with him, well, the whole show falls flat on its ass. Rusty makes it work with a naturalness that milks him of all his skill. A little restraint in act two might help Mr. Ratliff save his voice, in this "all stops open" performance.

Ron Williams in his first-time-onstage role as Donald cuts a very sexy and good looking figure onstage. A hot young number and he can act also! Mr. Williams has an unaffected stage presence, and I will be interested to see if he can sustain this fine charisma in future productions.

Warren Sampson, Jr. did the role of Emory, which everyone wants to try at least once. I did not think Mr. Sampson did what should have been done, but I can't forget what he did, portraying the nellyish Emory with the wild abandon of a second liner in a Decadence Day parade. I may disagree with his interpretation, but if it works, leave it in. He sure got a lot of laughs.

Another one to get his fair share of laughs was Kelly Blair in the role of Cowboy. Mr. Blair had the mind and body that the character of the "dumb hustler"

requires, and was just too convincing. We get the impression he's having a ball with this part.

Richard Chaney gives us a strong, subdued "overly jealous" lover in the role of Hank. He makes the phone call scene work with poignancy. Equally poignant, playing his "lover-maybe" was Kevin Mauldin as Larry.

Glenn Watson was at his best moment in the "put-down, tell-it-like-it-is" speech to Michael.

Chip Stelz as Alan, the heterosexual "old college roommate" who arrives at the wrong, or perhaps right, time, was excellent.

The great surprise of the evening was Mr. David Swisher as the pock-faced Jewish faggot, Harold. With the arch of an eyebrow, Mr. Swisher had the audience on its knees; with the liquid curve of a wrist he had them silenced with awe. A consummate performance!

Chip Stelz, assisted by Rusty Ratliff and Sheran Schreiber directed, with lights by Rusty Ratliff, set by the multi-talented Mr. Swisher. Don't miss it, reservations definitely suggested. ♦



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