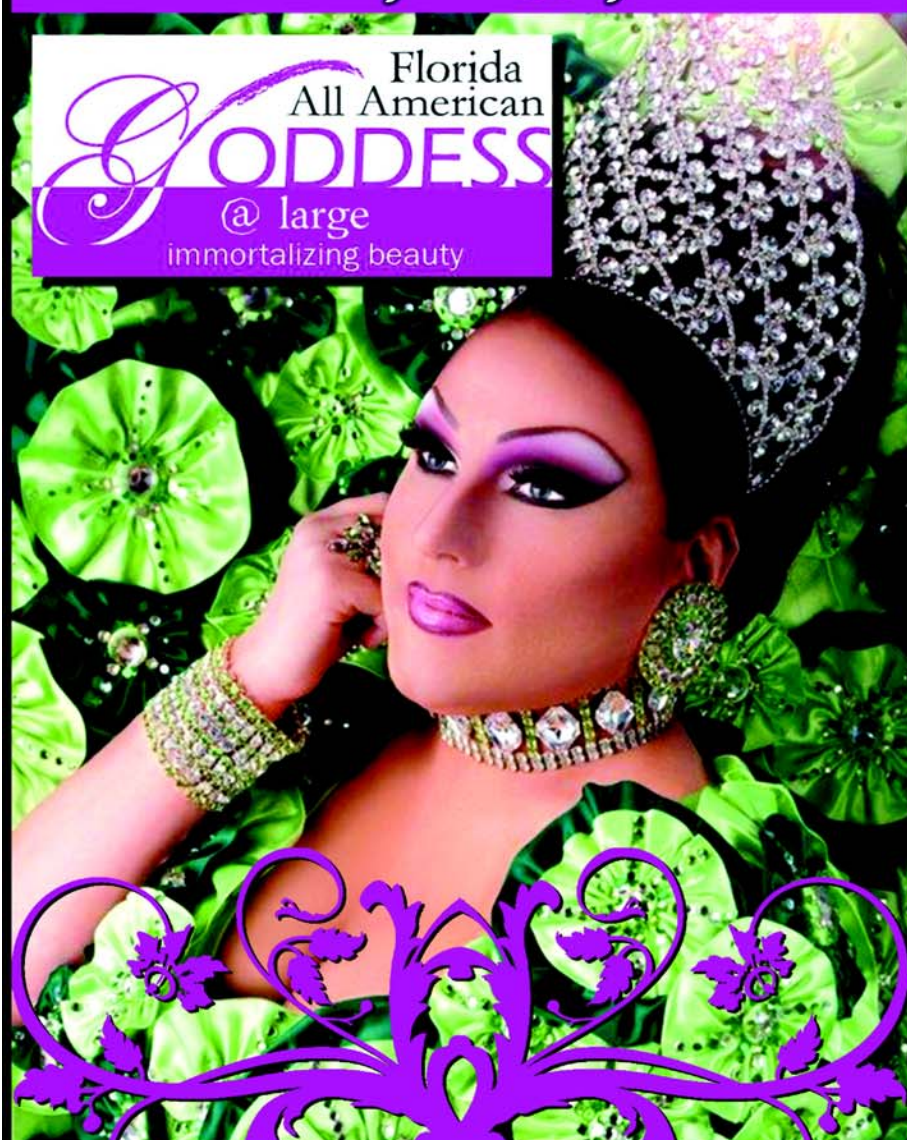


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UNDER THE GAYDAR

by Tony Leggio
Email: tonymgp@hotmail.com
Photo by: Larry Graham, GrahamStudioOne.COM

From One Holiday to the Next

The holidays come fast don't they. Southern Decadence, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's and now it is Mardi Gras time. Wow, I just sobered up from New Year's and someone handed me a cocktail and said, Happy Mardi Gras. So I am preparing myself for another wild Mardi Gras season.

Gay Mardi Gras is steeped in tradition, both old and new. The official kickoff to Mardi Gras season is January 6 or 12th Night. 12th Night means many things to many people. In medieval and Tudor England, the Twelfth Night marked the end of a winter festival that started on All Hallows Eve — now more commonly known as Halloween. The Lord of Misrule (no not David Boyd from Lords of Leather, but close) symbolizes the world turning upside down. On this day the King and all those who were high would become the peasants and vice versa. Hence masking at Mardi Gras, rich and poor are all the same in costume, but the rich have nicer costumes and better masks, but I digress. At the beginning of the twelfth night festival a cake which contained a bean was eaten. The person who found the bean would run the feast. I wonder if the people at Randazzo's had family back then. Midnight signaled the end of his rule and the world would return to normal. Or in other words, the SDT trucks guided by Sidney Torres would come down the street. But in New Orleans, the New Orleans Carnival season, with roots in preparing for the start of the Christian season of Lent, starts after Twelfth Night, on Epiphany (January 6).

If one cannot wait for gay Mardi Gras to begin, from the first event which was the Krewe of Satyricon's 12th Night Ball at The Country Club on January 2 to the festivities of the Official Gay Mardi Gras Bead Toss from the *Ambush* Balcony led by this year's King Cake Queen Opal Masters, this year is poised to be one of the best. You can find a complete listing of all the Gay Mardi Gras events at GayMardiGras.COM.

Don We Now Our Gay Apparel

Before moving on to the Carnival season, I would like to take a moment to thank all the gay establishments for their generous holiday parties they hosted this season. I tried to make as many as possible so if I missed your event, try having it earlier, lets say July. All those events poured into one week takes a toll on a party girl. But nothing says thank you for your patronage more than two hours of complimentary liquor. All kidding aside, Oz and the Pub held their parties on the same night at the same time, so I bounced (more like stumbled) between the two. Both were wonderful holiday events and Oz even had a special Christmas show that night hosted by the always entertaining Persana Shoulders who reminds me of a very well coiffed Peter Pan.

Both places had these great Christmas trees with stacks of toys underneath that guests brought. Some kids were very happy this holiday season thanks to the gay community. Also the following night, The Corner Pocket and 700 Club held their holiday parties. I was able to make it to both of them much to my liver's dismay. 700 Club collected funds for Belle Reve and Lazarus at the door raising \$1,600, and the drinks flowed steadily. The Corner Pocket had a special holiday show put on by Barry Bareass, Lisa Beaumann and the Corner Pocket Dancers. Not to be confused with the June Allison dancers. I like to think of their style of dancing as interpretive. Besides, all is excused if you are wearing a fur lined, red g-string. Ho, ho, ho, and I do mean that literally.

As always, a few nights earlier, Orlando's put out a feast for their holiday celebration and JohnPaul's held a lovely performers party. Their were plenty of holiday drag shows to keep people's mood festive and Amon Ra held a special Sister Sunday Social which was absolutely hysterical. And Barbara Ella and Queen Amon Ra Rhonda Roget did a fabulous show stopping number with feathered fans and lots of high hair and sequins. God, I love holiday drag.

But the house parties I attended were the ones that really were off the charts. Parties in bars are fun, but celebrations in peoples' homes are always more intimate. Anais and Marco St. John threw a

very naughty soiree and no one greets in a Victoria's Secret Santa's helper outfit better than Anais. Randy Weaver held a lovely party at his home in the Marigny and Steven Graffeo and his partner Jim Weigand held a brilliant holiday/Saints party at their home in the Bywater. And I also think I may have met my next special friend there. I just need to remember his name. Damn that spiked egg nog.

Looking back on the 2009 holiday season, I have to say it was one of the better ones. People's spirits were high and their hope for a brighter 2010 was uplifting. At one of the parties I attended someone said we will ascend in 2010. Catchy phrase and hopefully this will ring true for a more prosperous year for all of us.

Mazel Tov

On Thursday, January 7, the Mystic Krewe of Satyricon will present the opening night performance of *Jewtopia* at Le Chat Noir. The show begins at 8pm and tickets are \$25. This is a comedy by Bryan Fogel and Sam Wolfson. Gary Rucker directs the off-Broadway play about two single friends who form a pact to find the women of their dreams.

This should definitely be a theatrical experience not to be missed. For tickets call 504.525.4498.

You're So Gay

Friday Night Before Mardi Gras has announced it's theme this year and I love it. It is entitled *Cirque Du Sogay* and will be held at the Audubon Tea Room on Friday, February 12 at 8pm. If you have never heard of this group before, you do not know what you are missing. This is a wonderful organization with some very fun people.

Friday Night Before Mardi Gras (FNBMG) came to life during Mardi Gras 1985, when Dr. David Wood and Dr. Ivan Sherman invited friends into their home on the Friday night just before Mardi Gras. Their guests, already in a festive mood for Carnival frivolity, arrived unexpectedly in wigs and a new tradition was born.

The party grew with each passing year and became known as the Friday Night Before Mardi Gras bash. Ivan and David never issued written invitations and graciously welcomed everyone who appeared at their door. By 1999, the attendance had grown to 350 wildly costumed partygoers. Thank God Facebook wasn't around then. That year, Billy Henry and Ed Potratz suggested that the next party might be produced as a fund-raising event for HIV and AIDS service organizations. Extravaganza One at The Carrollton was a huge success. The next five Extravanzas continued at The Carrollton and attendance steadily grew. After Hurricane Katrina (that bitch!), Extravaganza Seven sparkled at New Orleans businessman & entrepreneur, Sean Cumming's Esplanade Avenue mansion. Extravaganza Eight was held at the Elms Mansion on St. Charles and Extravaganza IX carried on at The Venusian Garden. In 2009, Extravaganza X moved to the Audubon Tea Room with the theme *Divas at the Tea Room*. The event was another smashing success and it was also the first time I attended one of their parties. This event is definitely not to be missed, so become a supporter now. For more information on the organization and the event, as well as to buy tickets, go to FridayNightBeforeMardiGras.COM.

Save This Date

The 9th annual Taste of the Town will be held Friday, March 26th at Lafreniere Park Pavilion Island deep in the heart of Metairie. I know saying the M word makes you cringe, but this is one of the premiere events in the New Orleans metropolitan area. This culinary event boasts top named restaurants preparing their signature dishes as well as an open bar from 7 - 11pm. The entertainment this year will be the Bucktown Allstars. Tickets begin at \$90. For more information go to TasteOfTheTown.COM or call 504.210.0670.

Everyone Has A Twin

You know that old saying that there is someone who looks exactly like you somewhere in this world. It is totally true and many people call them doppelgangers. These doppelgangers are usually

[continued on 24]

Passport to Versailles

NO GUILLOTINES PLEASE

Photo by Larry Graham
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KCQ V: The She Devil, Elizabeth Simms/1998
KCQ VI: The Czarina, the late Christine Cheridon/1999
KCQ VII: Sex Goddess, Stephanie Williams/2000
KCQ VIII: The Peacock Queen, Phyllis Denmark/2001
KCQ IX: The Freedom Queen, Lisa Beaumann/2002
KCQ X: The Voodoo Queen, Teryl-Lynn Foxx/2003
KCQ XII: The Amazon Queen, Savanna DeLorean/2005
KCQ XIII: The Diamond Queen, Raven Kennedy/2006
KCQ XIV: The Fantasy Queen, Princesse Stephaney/2007
KCQ XV: The Fleur de Lis Queen, Marsha Naquin-Delain/2008
KCQ XVI: The Grandee Queen, Tami Tarmac/2009



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under the gaydar ...from 22

mean versions of you. Well, I have one and I have decided to call her Chardonnay. If you see Chardonnay, please make it a point to steer clear of her, she seems to speak her mind without warning. Also, she tends to have a short fuse and absolutely no patience whatsoever. She may look like me, but trust me she is definitely not me. I am much more delicate than she. I unfortunately have never seen her or met her, because she only seems to appear when I am drinking too much white wine.

So remember if you run into someone who looks like me acting crazy and out of control, please note that it is Chardonnay and not me. Happy 12th Night everyone!

Have an event or have something of interest to the LGBT community, feel free to send press releases or information to tonymgp@hotmail.com.

**Gay Mardi Gras
GayMardiGras.COM**



Kathleen & Laura sing with backups
Nita & Shay



B-Bob's manager Bob Brunson sings



Karakoe DJ Mel celebrates her birthday
while she spins the music



Kristie sings



Kristie wants cmPix to leave her alone
while she sings



Bethany, Micheal & Chuck



Shay, Corey & Nita



B-Bob's bartender Leon sings



Stacey, Kathleen, Kim, Heather,
Wendi & Laura



Matt warms up his vocal cords by
tongueing Donnie



Kathleen sings



Christina, Coree, Caysee & Paige



Peter sings



Happy times!



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