



Bar Barons Mike & Matt in the holiday spirit @ 700 Club



Raynaldo, Kelp & Angie celebrating the holidays @ 700 Club



Oz's Tommy & Glenn join Frank (center) @ The Corner Pocket



Barry Bareass in Christmas mode @ The Corner Pocket



The Corner Pocket's boys on the bar



King Tony on his special JohnPaul's throne



Bobby at Le Roundup's Christmas Party with former manager George Simons



Le Roundup owner Collette, manager Candise & Felina celebrate @ Le Roundup's Christmas Party



Deanna Ninneman in for Le Roundup's Christmas Party



New bartender Chris & Felina @ Le Roundup's Christmas Party



Clint & Tiyana pop in to Starlight for the holidays



Conrad & Travis join Fire Department's Michael along with Robbie & Marcy as Michael picks up all of the Toys For Tots brought into Starlight



Fire Department's Gwen & Michael pose after picking up all of the Toys For Tots brought in by Starlight



Wilhemina & Marleeka cocktailin' @ Tubby's Golden Lantern



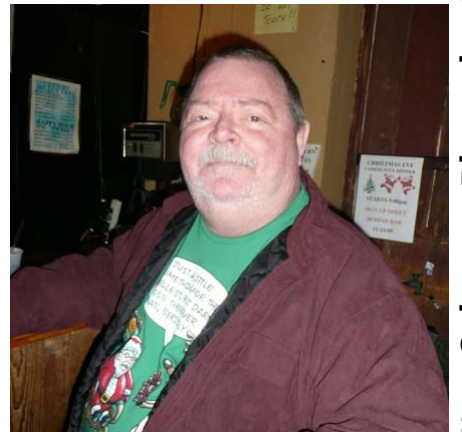
Santa Mac serving cocktails on Christmas Eve for Cutter's annual Christmas Dinner



Brett, Kevin & Pat in for Cutter's Christmas Eve Dinner



Friendly Bar bartender Steve & Big Daddy's bartender Lester @ Cutter's Christmas Eve Dinner



Cutter's own Jimmy helps out with Christmas Eve Dinner @ Cutter's



Lea, Lola & Blake in for Cutter's Christmas Eve Dinner



Bartenders Wayne & Juanita join new boss David @ Big Daddy's

CELEBRATIN' THE HOLIDAYS ~ NEW ORLEANS ~ PHOTOS BY AMBUSH, TONY LEGGIO





## the pink PASTOR

by Rev. Clinton Crawshaw  
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### Ditch Santa Claus!!!

There is no more confusion in the ordinary person's concept of religion than that surrounding forgiveness, sin and repentance. I bring this up because we are starting a new year! Everybody (including me) seems to make resolutions and embark upon new starts without ever shedding fully the burden of the old.

I am going to say something that sounds terrible now, but it is the major stumbling block between millions of people and an authentic spirituality.

Most people learn about God and Jesus at the same time they learn about Santa Claus, and though we all re-examine our ideas of Santa Claus when we grow up, many people stick with the same children's tale about an old man with a white beard who has a naughty and a nice

list and apply it to both God and Santa! As to Jesus, there is seldom an appreciation of a fully human, flesh and blood man called Jesus who faced life in all its joy and misery, but a glowing, clean little baby that smiles at the world and makes everything easy and simple if you say a special formula to it.

This is not Christianity.

When people like Richard Dawkins choose to attack Christianity it is invariably this 'folk religion' (spawned from well-meaning attempts to interest children in church) that is attacked.

True Christianity is a deep, life-long



and ultimately profoundly humble attempt to glimpse the unseen God through the life, ministry and continuing presence of Jesus Christ. It is worked out in this world primarily through loving kindness and the attempt to see the joy and glory of God's creation in all humanity. It is also characterized by frequent and honest failure; failure is the key to progress and growth - being challenged, and learning from it, is the way God leads us through this path, never in certainty and pride, but in hesitation and humility.

The raving horror that has appeared in the last century or so, and which is characterized by deeply injured people using the scriptures as a stick to beat people with has no more makes him Christian than does a mad man claiming to be able to turn lead into gold make him a physicist. Both are distorted shadows of the immensely valuable thing behind the ranting and raving. My Grandmother used to say 'Christian is as Christian does'. God sees the intent of the heart, and once that intent is assured, failure is nothing to fear - it is merely a milestone along the road, not an ending.

One of the worst effects of the 'children's story' branch of faith is that forgiveness is rather like a special favor we ask of a bad-tempered father figure - God is distant, and we crawl toward a God who is very angry with us, to beg forgiveness. This is all self serving, forgiveness here is a way of getting away from guilt, and avoiding horrible and medieval punishments, when in reality, repentance is just accepting truth - and then moving on with the knowledge that the God of Truth knows

all things, and that we exist in a 'forgiven universe'. Forgiveness comes from the recognition of our failing, and it is a desire for truthfulness that leads us to repent, not ulterior motives, such as evasion of punishment or desire for reward (heaven and hell?). It is the growth represented by our recognition of failure that is the reward in itself, and that brings us closer to God.

The truth is that love begets forgiveness, and if God truly is love (literally as well as metaphorically) then forgiveness is the very air we breathe. Do-overs come in the same moment we recognize we have fallen, and God presses against us intimately, and passionately, beyond our definitions and concepts, not as a kind of grander version of Santa Claus with a nasty temper, but as the Ancient of Days, the Alpha and the Omega, the Ever-loving and Ever living God.

So, as the New Year dawns, let's make it REALLY new. Let us embark upon the great journey, be willing to change and grow and develop and challenge ourselves and allow others to challenge us. Let us never be held back by failure or guilt or anything else, but honestly examine ourselves and embrace the truth, warts and all, and knowing that truth move forward again in God's grace.

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### trodding the boards ...from 30

ter held her own with an appealing combination of sugar'n'spice.

Blocker, making a happy return to NOLA, paced the show swiftly so that you forgot its 2 ½ hour length and from the rousing overture to the high-spirited finale his musical direction was, as always, top notch.

Jauné Buisson's choreography was both playful and sophisticated and the entire production had a nice look courtesy of Isabel & Moriah Curley-Clay's sets and Linda Fried's costumes.

Despite its shortcomings, Le Petit's *Irving Berlin's White Christmas* could put anyone into a festive holiday mood, even a Scrooge or a Grinch!

### Let Freedom Swing! at the Stage Door Canteen/ National WWII Museum

If all you want is an hour's worth of songs from the World War II era beautifully sung and joyfully danced to, then head over to the World War II Museum's Stage Door Canteen and you'll be thoroughly satisfied.

A talented cast of eight (Allison Kate Barron, William Bryant, Wendy Miklovic, Jimmy Murphy, Andrea Pizza, Jessie Terrebonne, Aaron Thacker, Jonathon Whalen along with understudies Tara Brewer and Brian Falgoust who were seen recently) do what's asked of them and do it extremely well. Using orchestrations by John Dilke and outstanding vocal arrangements by musical director Jefferson Turner, the boys sing about their gals (*I've Got a Gal in Kalamazoo*, *I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now*, *Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby*), the gals tap to *Rosie the Riveter*, and everyone has fun intoning the do's and don't's of wartime with *Scrap Your Fat*, *Ration Blues* and *Cash for Your Trash*.

After the exuberant *Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy*, *It's Been a Long, Long Time* is winning in its simply done way and *I Left My Heart at the Stage Door Canteen* is similarly simple and lovely. *In the Mood* is

a swinging dance number; everyone steadfastly *Praise[s] the Lord and Pass[es] the Ammunition*; and the patriotic finale, including *America the Beautiful*, *The Caissons Keep Rolling Along* and *anchors Aweigh* is as fine as you can ask for.

But.

But Sean Patterson's script is a muddle. The show starts with a brief film featuring interviews with Angela Lansbury and Mickey Rooney, who appeared at Stage Door Canteens, as well as former service members who enjoyed the escapism the Canteens provided and the excitement of rubbing shoulders with such stars as Bette Davis, Marlene Dietrich, Hedy Lamarr, Jack Benny and many, many others.

In *Let Freedom Swing!* it's unclear whether Tommy D'Angelo (Murphy), a seemingly second rate comedian, and crooner Eileen Scott (Miklovic), who host the show, are real stars or just B-listers; if the latter, that kinda ratchets down the "wow" factor. I'm not sure how *Let Freedom Swing!* can deliver this needed quintessence of A-listers but it never overcomes this challenge.

Worse, the Baker Sisters (Barron, Pizza & Terrebonne), who are seemingly modeled on the Andrews Sisters, are portrayed as fighting like catty schoolgirls on stage. This is insulting to the professionalism of all the performers who contributed their time to the Canteens. Perhaps this is supposed to be part of the Bakers' act but there's no context for this and it merely comes off as strange and cheesy.

This is all the more surprising given that Blake Coheley, who has done such stupendous work at NOCCA and should know better, directed. He certainly keeps the show moving along and his choreography is engaging, though after a while a certain sameness occasionally creeps in, the result no doubt of having to stage numerous dances to somewhat similar sounding music.

As for the theater itself, the seating seems to be configured for large parties. If you're a party of two, you may be consigned to the outer reaches of the stage

floor or balcony where sight lines leave something to be desired. I was seated in the rear balcony and while I had a full frontal view of the stage, I was forced to look over and around the people in front of me and so only occasionally got to see all the action on stage. And forget about seeing anything when the performers go into the audience below. Or, for that matter, getting anyone to ask you for a drink order.

One final comment.

One can't fail to notice that the entire cast, including understudies, is white. This is **absolutely inexcusable**. At first I thought perhaps they were trying to reflect the actual Canteens' casting policy (not that that would be at all excusable in 2009). But a plaque in the exhibit outside the theater says "Canteens were integrated & supported interracial dancing."

Could it be the production couldn't find any talented black performers? If that was the case, they should have tried harder. New Orleans does not lack such folks.

For as it stands, *Let Freedom Swing!* is an affront to the very ideals for which World War II was fought. With all due respect to the immensely talented cast, if its producers are true Americans, as soon as it is contractually possible to do so, if not sooner, they will rectify this situation. The men and women who fought in World War II deserve nothing less.

### Silent Night of the Lambs! at Le Chat Noir

Poor Santa. He used to be so jolly. But after such exposés as *The Eight Reindeer Monologues* (seen here three years ago) and Ryan Landry's *Silent Night of the Lambs!* (recently at Le Chat Noir) he's probably

popping oxycontin just to get through the day.

Written to include every bit of punny Christmas detritus, this mash-up of *A Christmas Carol*, *The Little Match Girl*, *Frosty the Snowman* and, of course, *The Silence of the Lambs* is pure, silly fun. Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer's daughter Clarice Starling is an FBI agent trying to track down the mysterious killer "The Skinner" with the help of Santa who's been incarcerated for...oh, never mind, explaining takes all the fun out of it. Suffice to say, anything that has a Carol Burnett reference and pokes fun at Canada is all right by me.

Running With Scissors does such zaniness to a tee and *Lambs* was no exception even if the first act ending could've used a little extra fizziness. What makes a Rw/S productions such a joy to watch is that its members are so in tune with one another that they seem to communicate on a sub-cellular level, one reacting to another's reactions with unconscious speed. Or something like that. All I know is that they sure do know what they're doing.

Eschewing drag roles of late, what incredible range does Brian Peterson have! Seemingly channeling Anthony Hopkins, he layers this with just how you'd think a frustrated Santa would be. And that weird gleam in his eyes is positively scary. What next for him—Albert Innaurato's *The Transfiguration of Benno Blimpie*? Falstaff?

Dorian Rush was lispingly wonderful as Clarice. Wesley Callaway, Jack Long and Lisa Picone, each in an assortment of roles, were their usual fabulous selves, Long and Picone especially so as they rifled through the late Tiny Tim's belongings with spot-on British accents.

Peterson's wigs and Valerie Johnson's wacky costumes added to the merriment especially her overstuffed Frosty. What more can one say other than "Ho-Ho-Ho!" (except, of course, for Ms. Rush and Ms. Picone)





Jim & Dudley take a break from Cutter's for cocktails next door at Big Daddy's



Gavin & Joey in for Christmas Night Dingo @ Oz



Jack, bar baron Mike & Jon celebratin' @ Bywater Patio Bar



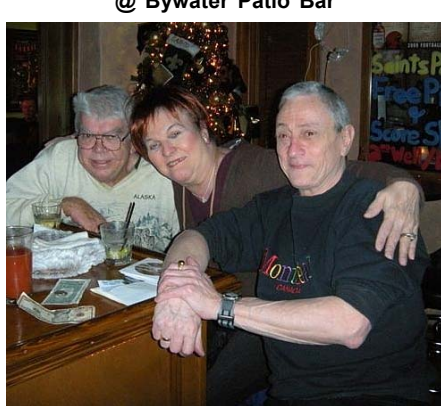
The Men of the Phoenix take in the Saints game



Koo & Marty delivering Christmas presents @ Big Daddy's



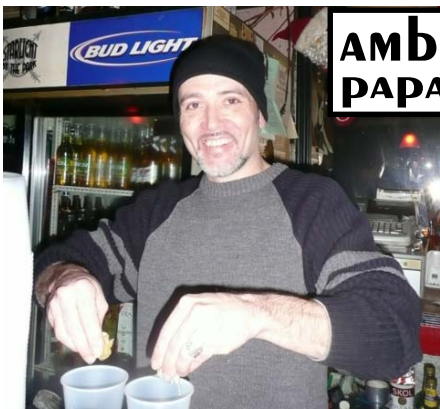
Manager Jerry & bartender Frankie welcome revelers Christmas night @ Lafitte's



Jay, Marcy & Lucille @ Bywater Patio Bar



Miss River Parishes & Miss Goldschlager @ JohnPaul's for Saints game



Henry behind the bar @ Starlight By The Park



Tony Leggio's newest "It Boy" Johnathan @ Bywater Patio Bar



Salon D'Malta's Monica & Bill in for the Saints game @ Cutter's



Breaux working the sound @ JohnPaul's during Saints game



Mom Tammy with Son Richie while Richie bartends @ Good Friends



Aynsley & Jason meet @ Bywater Patio Bar



Cheering on the Saints @ Cutter's



The Saints fans @ JohnPaul's



Rick & Wayne join hostess Santa Princesse Stephaney & Chad for Christmas Night Dingo @ Oz



BJ & Jonathan grab a cold one @ Bywater Patio Bar



Gay & Mac enjoy the Saints game @ Cutter's



JohnPaul's Paul, Ken G. & Lords of Leather Pres. David at Ken's fundraiser @ JohnPaul's

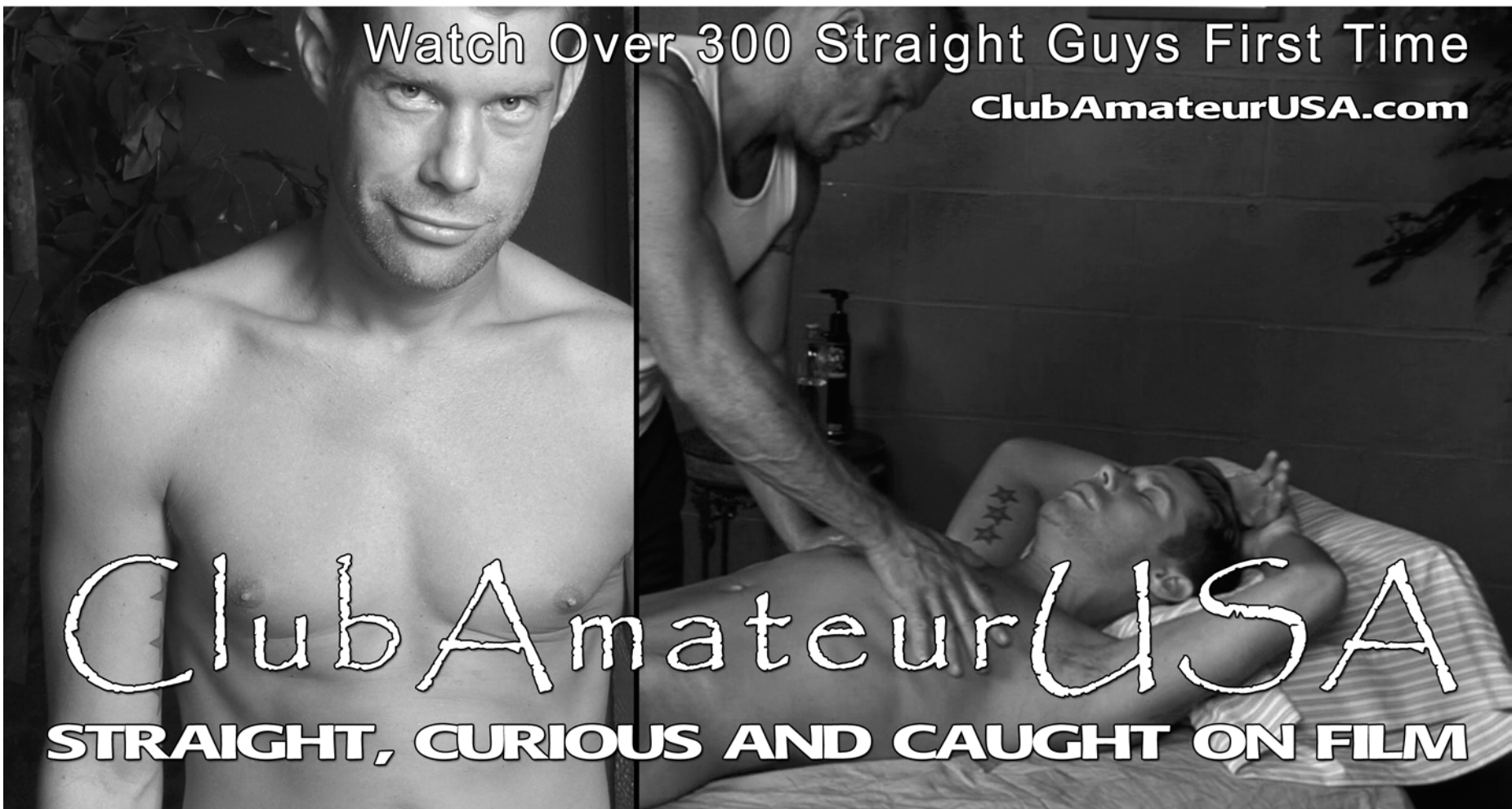
Holidays, Parties, The Saints ~ New Orleans ~ Photos by Ambush, Tony Leggio





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