



## the pink pastor

by Rev. Clinton Crawshaw  
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### A Tale of Two Cities

Sometimes I make myself sick – it is the curse of pastors to see things clearly for what they are, but to still fall into the traps we see. This makes us open to accusations of hypocrisy, and they are often justified.

I clearly see that the natural urge of humanity to surround itself with people who are similar is one of the prime reasons for war, racism, homophobia and all the other divisions and horrors of human history. Our distrust of difference may be understandable in evolutionary terms, it may have made sense when we were all little more than apes, but today I clearly see (indeed, it isn't rocket science) that it has ceased to be useful and has now become a curse. It is an impediment for our future moral, social and spiritual development.

Having said that, I have to admit that after just over a year in Harahan my husband Leon and I have moved to the Bywater and it feels very good indeed! I am now surrounded by open minded, progressive folk, many of whom are LGBT and it feels wonderful.

Apart from beating myself up for hypocrisy, it has made me think about the differences between Jefferson and Orleans Parishes, and why suburbs so often feel the need to define themselves as being the opposite of the cities that gave them birth.

In Atlanta recently there was an unwholesome squabble between the city of Atlanta (and Fulton County) and the various disparate counties that make up Atlanta's gigantic urban sprawl. The squabble was over who paid for Grady

hospital, and why Fulton County should bear so much of the burden for a hospital that served Gwinnett, Dekalb, Clayton and Cobb counties as well. The surrounding counties defined themselves as leafy refuges, full of prosperous folk who looked down their noses at the snake pit of urban Atlanta – a city full of uninsured burdens. The reality was that they were remarkably similar to Fulton county, and Atlanta sprawls its poverty as well as its wealth into the surrounding regions.

In our own backyard we have a suburban parish that still defines itself directly against New Orleans, and seems to fall all over itself to distance itself from Orleans Parish (and I mean culturally here, not in terms of competence or sound administration).

Sometimes when I watch the television and see the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's department latest advertisement I wonder who they see as their constituency. The advert has several burly, older white guys standing with folded arms, while the Sheriff talks in unsubtle tones about cleaning streets, as if human beings were vermin or filth. I may be doing their department a terrible disservice, and indeed, maybe I am oversensitive, but I often wonder how this advert makes Jefferson Parishes' large Latino, or African American communities feel, or the women of Jefferson Parish. It makes me feel very uncomfortable indeed.

The days when 'The Parish' was a culturally homogenous collection of rural and metro Cajuns is surely long gone. The average inhabitant of Jefferson Parish is probably much more likely to live in Kenner

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### trodding the boards ...from 31

a new group in town. Here's to their future!

### New Orleans Fringe Festival at various venues

Hats off, again, to the New Orleans Fringe Festival for offering NOLA an opportunity to see a cornucopia of theater, dance and general creative madness! Though it was impossible to see everything that was offered (15 out of about 45 entertainments was about the best you could hope for), I was able to see five of them.

Dealing with video diaries, Jean Ann Douglass' *some editing and some theme music* was well-directed and -acted but a bit trite and too weird for me. Halfway through it, I escaped to the happy confines of *Canarsie Suite* in which Jennifer Sargent & Aimee German gave a master class in sibling rivalry as two sisters who share a desperate need to entertain. This brilliant homage to mediocrity was fun, silly and theatrically inventive, and featured the wildest cops'n'robbers chase I've seen in a long time.

After a slambang first scene, Jared Gore's dyspeptic comedy *Dying to Say This to You* veered into melodrama and then just kinda trailed off. Elizabeth Skinner Gore made for a piquant leading lady, however. Similarly, the first two of Pamela Davis-Noland's "live music videos" in her *Badu-izms: A Tribute to Erykah* were imaginative, playful and brought a smile to my face; the final two didn't really add much to the original videos.

Coming from *Skin of Our Teeth*, I stumbled into the midpoint of *Rigorous Disco of Doom*. With its dancing pigeons and exploding disco ball in a deconsecrated church, it was very fringe-y but strangely moving and I wish I had seen it in its entirety. Oh well, on to next year's *Fringe*!

### In brief

The Thanksgiving edition of *Jim*

*Fitzmorris' Cabinet of Wonders* (Le Chat Noir) defined Thanksgiving as "football players & Pilgrims" and Christmas as when we "get everything we wanted, everything you needed and it still isn't enough", noted that Glenn Beck is "inspired by people he's inspired" (a wonderful turn of phrase) and cautioned us that in the upcoming Mayor's race not to vote for the business candidate as "business and politics are not synonyms."

Fitzmorris' observations range from Nagin to McStarDunks to Scrooge, and as this mad ranter of NOLA extemporizes one feels his stream of consciousness could go in three directions at once. A wonderful mimic, he fortunately knows when silence can speak louder than words. Mandy Zirkenbach, Matthew Mickal and Gary Rucker along with a play by Tulane student Dave Davis added to the fun.

Charles Mee's *bobrauschenberg-america* (Le Chat Noir) is a theatrical collage about love, death and longing. I'm not convinced that such a visual artistic technique translates to performance but the St. Francisville Transitory Theatre's presentation did have its moving moments. Extremely well done by Director Andrew Farrier and his cast of nine, James Lanius III's lighting & sound design and Tyler D'Aquilla's choreography contributed to the various textures of the piece. Though said to be a response to the art of the late Jeffrey Cook, that aspect of this production escaped me.

I'm not sure why Cutting Edge Productions chose to do the rather passé *Come Back to the 5 & Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean* (Attractions Salon) after the truly cutting edge *Pterodactyls*, but director Brian Fontenot did as well as he could keeping this exposition heavy soap opera moving along. Sara Pagones and CC Falcon were believable as the same self-dramatizing person twenty years apart, as were Dana Deris Fatic and Myra Dufour (a welcome new face) as the town's good time gal. Lisa Castro gave a brave performance as Joanne, formerly Joe.

### hot tails of red stick ...from 34

stop in and see this complex of stores. It is just an outstanding little community right on the edge of big BR. I think he elected not to put up a Christmas tree at his home last year. I have to ask him about this year. I would have to agree that being around it all year is not the best incentive for doing it again at home. He's a marvelous guy, a great and close friend.

I have to think of Ken at this time of the year too. He manages Louisiana Nursery over on Coursey, but he is more than a nursery guy. He is a friend who understands my gardening needs and helps me all through the year. I think he must love his job. I know that I have enjoyed my relationship with him, whether at the store, at his home, or at gatherings of the Krewe of Apollo. This is one of the former kings who came out in a magnificent costume. It was as if you had entered a Garden of Eden. I still adore my centerpiece of magnolia blossoms he gave me on that colonial pillar. I think of him each day as I pass it in my dining room. Ken is a talented guy, full of love for his friends, and he has one of the best personalities of anyone I know.

All of our local bartenders have a nice way of sharing all year. Whether you are at Splash, Hound Dogs, or George's, you know them, and they know you. I feel like many people take them for granted, and this shouldn't be that way. However, I think this is common everywhere you go. Whether you know someone from a bar, a bookstore, a nursery, or some gift shop, we as patrons need to go out of our way to show them a little more appreciation.

It is the season, but we need to show the joy of this season all year.

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Karaoke time @ George's



Guy & Jared



Chansley & Richard



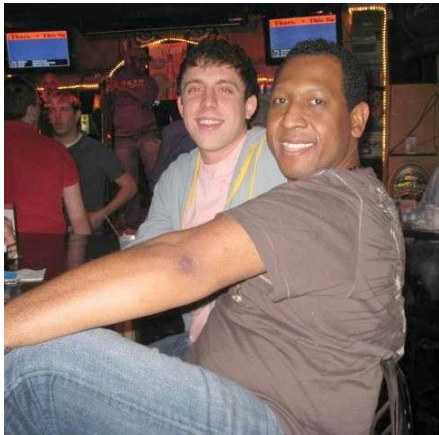
Jared taking a break



Dwayne, Paul & Scotti



Luther & Philip



Splash's Trixxie & a friend



Andy hugging a friend



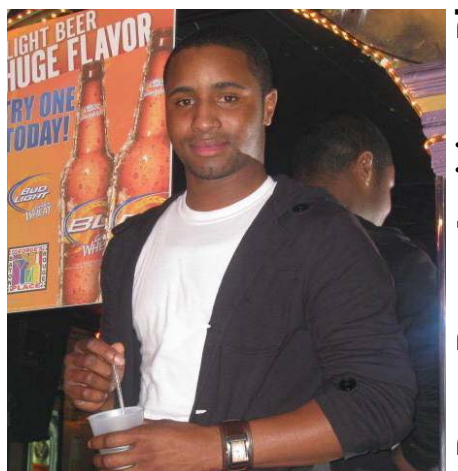
Richard & Hound Dogs' Johnny



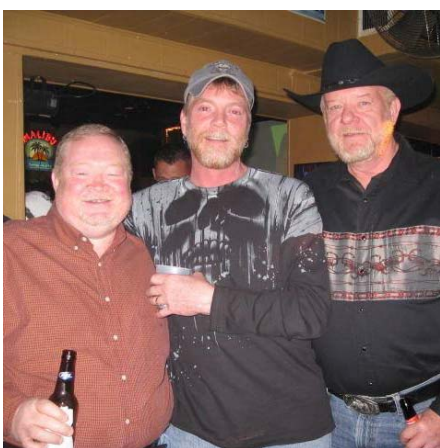
Mr. DIVA 2010 is all smiles



Another sexy karaoke stud



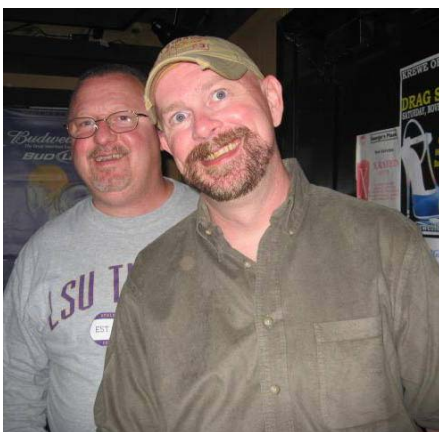
A sexy stud with a beautiful smile



Bears or cowboys?



The DIVAS



Tom & Rick



Chansley & Michael



Jimmy & a friend



Enjoying a night on the town



Chica LaRouge



Having fun at George's

BEARS, Cowboys, Oh MY! ~ BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA ~ PHOTOS by BRAD BENEDICT



# OUT & ABOUT IN MOBILE

## Southern Renegades Win Top Honors at Mobile Pride Chili Cook-Off!

Once again, Mississippi Mike has lead the Southern Renegades to capture the "Best Pride Chili" title in Mobile! The award was announced at the end of the 5th Annual Mobile Pride Chili Cook-Off, along with several other honors. Mike's savory-yet-slightly-spicy carne also landed awards for: Best Flame Chili, Best Original Chili and Best Meat Chili!



Meet the King of Meat! Mississippi Mike, the Southern Renegades' official Chili Chef, sports this year's four medals plus two earned last year.

The new medals follow last year's honors of "Best Chili" and "Best Flame Chili". This year Mike had the crowd guessing the secret of the chili's appealing flavor. The answer? Well, one thing, Mexican Mole', which gave the chili a mildly spicy but rich texture and taste, along with fresh ground pork sausage.

Because of the threat of rain, the event was moved from an outside area at Spanish Plaza, to the shelter of the pavilion at Lyons Park. And much to the surprise and satisfaction of the crowd, the new venue kept chili lovers close and interactive. When the DJ wasn't playing music, members of the crowd stepped up to the mic for a little "chili-o-kee". Six teams were situated along the perimeter of the pavilion, making the center a perfect place to socialize and sample.

Winning other honors, B.A.I. walked away with the Best Vegetarian Chili, while Best Decorated Booth went to D.S.D. (Dauphin Street Drunks... it sounds worse that it is! The "pirates" were quite charming!) Other groups participating were Mystic Women of Color, B-Bob's and Metropolitan Community Church.

See more Southern Renegades events, photos and information at [www.southernrenegades.com](http://www.southernrenegades.com).



The Southern Renegade Chili Team was among six teams helping to raise money to finance the annual Mobile Alabama Pride Celebration, scheduled for April 2010.



The boys celebrating Thanksgiving With Miss Cie @ B-Bob's



Miss Loretta (right) performing with Miss Cie



Jasyn, Jeremy, Mack & Jessica about to baptize Louis



James & Jeremy having Thanksgiving cocktails @ B-Bob's



Lisa out to see the show, and hang with friends @ B-Bob's



Miss Cie joins beautiful Jessica out @ B-Bob's

### the pink pastor ...from 36

than Grand Isle! There is a large gay women's community in Metairie, there are gay folk all over the Parish, and as I mentioned earlier, a growing Latino population in several parts of the parish. There are large numbers of African Americans (about 22%) and yet the place still sometimes feels like another country when you drive from the French Quarter to Harahan.

I actually enjoyed living in Harahan – the reason we moved was not because we were run out of town as a gay interracial couple, in fact we were always treated very kindly by our neighbors and the people we met, no, the reason was that it was just too far from downtown and the Quarter.

Often it is perception that divides cities long after the reality has changed. I understand that Harahan used to have a reputation, and indeed the loathsome David Duke made it his center of operations, but that was now long ago. When I worked as a hospice chaplain in South Central Los Angeles I was often told that if you went south of Washington Boulevard then you were sure to be shot, that was nonsense, and I lived to tell the tale,

but the city divided itself by means of foolishness like that. They didn't need to build a wall between the communities, they had done it with words and veiled references. We here have our own walls, there is one across the parish line between Orleans and Jefferson, and there are several smaller ones that divide and estrange people – like the imaginary wall along rampart street that means you can usually park in the Tremé with little difficulty. This is definitely NOT the way of the future, or at least not a future worth living in – the first step to overcoming these divisions is to be conscious of them. Let's stop ignoring them, and start thinking about ways to remove them.

Rev Clinton Crawshaw is the pastor of The Big Easy Metropolitan Community Church, part of the only worldwide LGBT-affirming denomination. The Big Easy MCC meets every Sunday at 5pm at St. Matthew's Church – 1333 South Carrollton Avenue, NOLA 70118. Check out their website at [www.bigeasymcc.com](http://www.bigeasymcc.com). Pastor Clinton can be reached on 504.214.4340 or [revcrawshaw@yahoo.com](mailto:revcrawshaw@yahoo.com).

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Josh, bartender Nate & Jeffrey get cozy for Meat Night @ Rawhide



Bywater Mike joins BJ @ Bywater Patio Bar, the newest gay bar in the Bywater



Rusty LaRoux & Kenny Petit back together again at Rusty's new home, Bywater Patio Bar



Get your free Mona Lisa's pizza every Friday with Aletha & Jeff @ Cafe Lafitte in Exile



The Saints' biggest Bourbon Street cheerleader Blanche Debris, straight from Oz



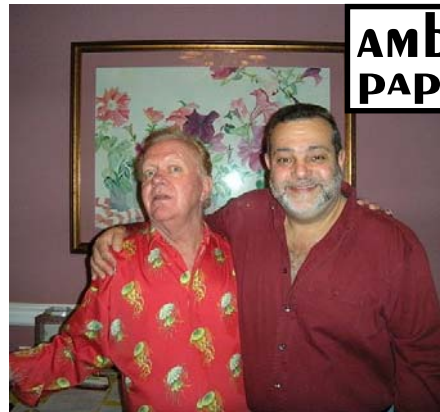
Sable Nicole Starr, one of the stars @ Oz



Mercedes Ellis Loreal gives it to 'em @ Oz



King Cake Queen XIII Raven Kennedy is a special guest in the Oz show



Queen Satyricon V Hoyle & JohnPaul's Paul join Satyricon's Thanksgiving Buffet & Auction @ JohnPaul's



King Satyricon VII Wedon & Troy at Satyricon's Thanksgiving event



Petronius' Randy & Jimmy at Satyricon's Thanksgiving Buffet & Auction



Ted & David at Satyricon's Thanksgiving event



Queen & King Armeinius Tim & Ricky join Bessie Ann for Satyricon's Thanksgiving blowout



Bywater Patio Bar's Mike & Rusty Leroux with Society Page's Orlando @ Good Friends' Karaoke Night



Tony & Brad @ Good Friends' Karaoke Night



FourPlay's Elizabeth Bouvier on stage @ JohnPaul's



Love was in the air for DB at Marcy's b-day show @ JohnPaul's



The Petronius Calendar Boys: April, May & June at Marcy's b-day show @ JohnPaul's

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