



Vendetti brings outrageous comic style and laughs back east



By Heather M. Malobisky

Cheril Vendetti has a style that is hard to describe. She's all Italian with an attitude and accent straight from the Bronx mixed with a showgirl flair and a few recipes that take cooking to new heights (or depth depending on how you look at it).

Her performances are always unique, a combination of wild outfits, songs, standard material and an amazing ability to work a crowd and ad lib. Her quick wit and on stage reflexes are a talent hard to come by in many of today's comics.

"I think I was a stripper in a past life, only this time I came back a little chubbier," said Vendetti when describing herself.

She states that her comedy is a mixture of personal experience, ad libbing and working the crowd saying, "It's not as structured. More spontaneous, your out of your head and into your body. It adds something...It's more exciting and creative."

Vendetti is coming in from Los Angeles and rolling through this side of Pennsylvania this month on a nine stop ten day tour of the east coast. She will be playing the

Zone, 1711 State St., Erie on Thursday, June 22 at 10:30 pm and Sneakers, Jamestown on Friday, June 23 at 10:30 pm and she promises that both shows will be different. The Sneakers show will be an AIDS benefit as well.

Vendetti and I have chatted via e-mail and phone over the past few months. She has given me the opportunity to interview her and here is what I've learned.

First, Vendetti is straight but certainly not narrow. She loves to play the gay bars.

"Why do you have to be gay to play a gay bar? I play the gay circuit for many reasons. I play it because I can be an artist the way I want to be and not be judged. In the gay clubs the acceptance level is a lot higher. It's more freeing."

Vendetti told me she believes gay people are very talented and said, "If you can go back and forth with a good drag queen and keep up, you're doing pretty good...everything they do, they do 100%."

She has other, more personal reasons for playing the gay clubs as well. Her brother David, formerly Chubby the Clown for the Ringling Bros., used to manage her career and wrote many of her jokes. David was gay and died from AIDS complications five years ago this November.

"I miss him...I like to think that of all the thoughts in the heads of all the gay men at a performance, one is something my brother would have been thinking," said Vendetti.

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CMU Votes Yes!

Carnegie Mellon University's board of trustees voted 52-8 in favor of a proposal to offer domestic partner health care benefits for same-sex and opposite-sex partners of CMU employees. The program is expected to take effect July 1. It is the culmination of at least six years of effort by members of CMU's community to acquire such benefits. In particular, one person was especially persistent yet patient in his efforts to bring the policy change about (but I won't mention his name because he might kill me if I do). It was also facilitated by the arrival of a new, forwarding thinking president of the University, Jarrod Cohen.

Carnegie Mellon University is among the top computer science schools in the world (possibly the best, unless you ask somebody from MIT or Stanford). It also has a well-respected drama and statistics departments, among others.

Interestingly, CMU is just a few blocks away from The University of Pittsburgh, which has been aggressively fighting an effort, including a law suit, to provide such benefits. The University of Pittsburgh has been plunged into a public relations crisis over the extreme measures taken by its board of trustees in the fight, as well as the intransigence of the trustees. One such measure has been to actually challenge the constitutionality of including sexual orientation in Pittsburgh's Human Relations Ordinance. It's also taken a significant toll on the morale of staff at the University, especially combined with other complaints about working conditions there.

It is believed that CMU's passage of these benefits may place extra pressure on the University of Pittsburgh to do the right thing as well, although it is not clear it will be enough to convince the majority of Pitt trustees to break ranks with right-wing faction which currently controls it.

For information on LGLV or to join:
League of Gay and Lesbian Voters
5819-B Forward Ave.
Pittsburgh, Pa 15217
(412) 421-4470 info@lglv.org
<http://www.lglv.org/>

Speaking truth to power in Cleveland: My experience at the United Methodist General Conference

Oped by Laura Montgomery Rutt

"You're under arrest!" This phrase echoed in my mind as I rode silently in a taxicab from the Police Station to Soulforce Headquarters 20 blocks away. I was not one of the 191 arrested the morning of May 10 outside the United Methodist General Conference in Cleveland, but I wanted to be. I felt on the "outside" of the action. However, my job was to be on the outside, to act as the media liaison, to answer questions the press had about what was going on and what was going to happen in the next few days.

I felt utterly alone in that taxicab, as people such as Arun Gandhi, grandson of Mohandas Gandhi, Bishop Joseph Sprague, Rev. James Lawson, friend of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Rev. Mel White, co-founder of Soulforce, Rev. Jimmy Creech, the minister who was defrocked by the United Methodist Church for performing a holy union for two men, and other ministers, members and friends of the United Methodist Church sat in jail cells for taking part in a peaceful act of non-violent civil disobedience to protest exclusionary church policies.

My mind drifted back to what led me to that point and the decision to join Soulforce, a movement based on the principles of Jesus, Gandhi and King. For the past two decades, the United Methodist Church, the church to which I belong, has been implementing policies that dehumanize and exclude gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people from the life of the church. I could not remain silent and watch the church destroy people in

the name of God, claiming to love all people, claiming to be one body. The church may think it is one body right now, but it is a deeply wounded body and bleeding profusely.

Early in the morning on May 10, approximately 400 Soulforce supporters, including Arun Gandhi, Yolanda King (daughter of MLK), several leaders of the 60's civil rights movement, and bishops, ministers, and friends of the United Methodist Church had gathered on the mall next to the convention center to walk together, arm in arm, around the convention center. "Marching in the Light of God" resounded through the crowd as the line of marchers encircled the convention center, partially drowning out the cat calls by Fred Phelps and a dozen or so other people who were carrying signs and shouting, "GOD HATES FAGS".

After the march, 191 courageous people, gay and straight, stood their ground outside the convention center blocking the exit, still arm in arm, refusing to move until police placed them under arrest. At the same time, several United Methodists inside the convention center interrupted a speech by the Bishop of Canterbury to show solidarity with those standing outside the convention center and with those who have been forced out of the church because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Approximately 100 people, half in the balcony and half on the floor, sang out a back-and-forth litany "Wide is God's Welcome! - Extend the Table!"

Twelve hours later, all those arrested had been charged with persistent disorderly conduct and fined \$100 plus court costs. It was a long day indeed. The next day was to prove just as trying.

As I sat in the Convention Center on May 11 and heard the debate and watched 27 people get arrested inside the Convention Center in a peaceful protest of non-violent civil disobedience by the coalition A.M.A.R., it dawned on me that the past 36 hours had been history-making. No longer would we sit silently by and watch the church send messages of antipathy and apathy as our brothers and sisters are defrocked, dehumanized, and devalued by the church.

The United Methodist Church claims to "love the individual". But on May 11, delegates voted to retain policies that state: 1) "Homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching" 2) "Self avowed practicing homosexuals" can not be ordained as ministers, and 3) Ministers can not perform holy unions between two people of the same sex.

Not only do these policies affect those inside the church, but as the largest mainline denomination, the decisions of the church affect how society perceives all of God's children. The Church may not use the same language as Fred Phelps, but the message the church sends is the same.

So many talented people have been forced out of the church because they could no longer deny a part of themselves. So many

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P.R.I.D.E.

Mission Statement:

P.R.I.D.E. is a nonprofit communiqué aimed at informing and entertaining the gay, lesbian, transgender, bisexual and ally community, we realize that we are limited to what we know. If you have ideas, comments, or suggestions, send them our way. You can contact us by pager at: (814) 461-3102 or Email us at prideneeds@hotmail.com. Submission are gladly accepted but we ask that you contact us first for writing guidelines. When sending submissions please include your name, Email address, and phone number for contact. Anonymous submissions will not be printed. Views and opinions appearing in this newsletter do not necessarily represent those of the P.R.I.D.E. Staff. We will not publish or reproduce any submissions that include the context of anger or discrimination against sexual orientation, gender, race, spirituality, or physical ability. We do not support the exploitation of minors. Subscriptions are available for \$15.00 per year. Check or money orders can be made out to P.R.I.D.E. and mailed to P.R.I.D.E. Subscriptions, 3882 Hereford Road, Erie, PA 16510-2457. Please include your mailing address when sending payment. Subscriptions will begin the month following receipt of payment.

Positively Representing Identities of Diversity in Erie



Corrections

There was a mistake in last month's issue that occurred when editing for space. In the article, "Introducing Miss Erie 2000" the name of a contestant was inadvertently omitted, leading to some confusion in the story.

The story should have read:

The last was Miss Ivana. Her number was one of my favorites, "I Am What I Am." The outfit was huge. White twill was extending everywhere from her silver sequined cape, over her white and silver trimmed gown. Over all the number was well performed, but I felt she could have done more.

During the next few minutes, Miss Percy, Miss Erie 1990, performed. Her number was tight; she had nothing to prove to anyone, for she showed us why she was a former Miss Erie. She is FAGTAGULOUS!!!!

We apologize for this mistake. The staff of P.R.I.D.E. strives for excellence in every issue. Unfortunately, we are only human.

If you find a discrepancy in an article or any other portion of the newsletter, please let us know. We will be sure to correct the mistake in the next issue.

If you are interested in writing for or helping out with the newsletter see our mission statement on page two to find out how to contact us. Your comments, suggestions and ideas are always appreciated.

Speaking truth

continued from page 2

people have been forced to hide and lie about who they are to be able to answer their call to ministry in the United Methodist Church. So many people have left and gone to other denominations like the United Church of Christ or the Unitarian Universalist Church, or have given up on God and religion all together.

Thank God for people like Bishop Sprague, who are willing to stand up and speak out for justice and inclusion, for people like Rev. Mel White, who co-founded and leads Soulforce, and for people like Rev. Jimmy Creech, who was willing to perform a holy union for two men and was defrocked by the church.

On June 25, Soulforce will be at the Presbyterian General Assembly, and so will I. Changing society and winning hearts and minds through relentlessly speaking the truth is never easy. But as history shows us, a small group of committed citizens can change the world. And Soulforce is doing just that.

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May 22, 2000

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Leather group thank you's

By ELKS - Erie Leather Kinship Society

Thanks to those who came out for the Leather/Levi Night at the Zone Saturday May 20th. It was good to see the Leather Pride flag and colors hanging throughout the bar, as well as posters of the "Hanky Code" and some bondage-inspired art. The ELKS logo was emblazoned on posters and on various pieces of literature at the Leather info table.

It was nice to meet a couple of new friends in leather along with some more familiar faces. Special thanks to Scott for helping decorate and offering up his services as bootboy. Thanks also to Bob and the staff who were very friendly/supportive. It was good to see that they seemed to have a good night of business, too. For those of you who couldn't make it, it was fun.

The next ELKS meeting will be Saturday June 10th at 2PM at the Erie Pride Picnic at the Beach 11 Pavilion of Presque Isle. Bring a dish to pass. I plan on making a leather pride flag composed of baked goods. Besides what people bring, there will be some food offered (like hamburgers/hotdogs, drinks, and stuff) but the organizers of the picnic could still use volunteers to either help supply or just go and pick up some of those items. Contact myself, Mike Miller at swede@eriegaynews.com or my other half, Michael Mahler, at info@eriegaynews.com or (814)456-9833 if you would like to help out. There will also be games, and a group photo taken around 4 or so which you are welcome to be in or not.

We will be having an info table for the ELKS at the picnic after the meeting. We also need to plan our next event. Any ideas? A lesbian Dom/sub duo have opened a bed and breakfast which is very leather friendly - they plan on equipping it with a dungeon. Perhaps we could have a combination dinner/meeting/demonstration there? Also, it would be nice to possibly make arrangements to march as a group in either the Buffalo or Toronto Pride parades. If interested in either of those or if you have any questions/comments about the ELKS leather group, contact me at (814)456-9833 or swede@eriegaynews.com or browse the ELKS web site at <http://www.ncinter.net/~egcn/elks>. See you at the picnic on the 10th.

Yours in Leather, Mike Miller

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Don't forget the Erie Pride Picnic on Saturday, June 10th



The annual Erie Pride Picnic will be once again on the second Saturday in June (June 10) at 2 PM at Presque Isle State Park, Beach 11 Pavilion. If you would like to get involved, contact Rick Blair at (814) 461-9665 or rtblair@hotmail.com. Bring a dish to pass and volunteers are needed. There will be a Family Portrait taken around 4 PM. Anyone may be in the picture or not, if they wish.



Visit Ashtabula on Sunday June 11

Please also note that Ashtabula will be having a Pride Picnic the next day, Sunday June 11th. The Kent State University Ashtabula LGBU and Ashtabula LGBT Drop-In Support Group are co-hosting the 1st annual "Family Pride Picnic" on June 11th this year.

What: 1st Annual Ashtabula County Family Pride Picnic

Who: Sponsored by Kent State University Ashtabula LGBU & Ashtabula LGBT Drop-In Support Group

When: Sunday, June 11, 2000

12:00 - 6:00 Lunch served at 1:00

Where: Lakeshore Park - Main Entrance on Lake Road (Corner of State Road) at the tourist Pavilion

Each person, couple or family to bring a covered dish - everything else is provided.

Children will be present - no alcohol allowed. For more info (440) 964-4289 or email lgbuashtabula@gay.com

Pride events will be happening throughout June. See the article, "Pride Events 2000" in last month's issue or browse to www.interpride.org for Pride Events

May 19th-July 1st Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde by Moises Kaufman Fridays and Saturdays 8pm. Directed by Richard Davis. Featuring Scott McClelland as Oscar Wilde. A riveting and though-provoking insight to the famous courtroom drama of an artistic genius. Roadhouse Theatre, 145 W 11th St, Erie, PA (814)456-5656. Adults \$10 and Students \$5. See page 6 for review.

Jun 17- "The Birds and The Bees" night at The Zone At The Zone Dance Club, 1711 State St, Erie PA, (814) 459-1711.

Jun 17- Buffalo Pride 2000: Forever Proud (Buffalo NY) Pride Buffalo announced that they will have Pride 2000: Forever Proud" on Saturday, June 17. There are several events planned, including a Pride Parade, a festival and a Sunday afternoon tea dance.. Write to Pride Buffalo, 266 Elmwood Ave, Suite 207, Buffalo, NY 14222, call Craig Klose at (716) 883-4846, Mark Smith at (716) 448-9955 or email buffalopride2000@yahoo.com

Jun 17- Shades Annual Gaypride Dance (Lesbians of Color Group) (Hamlin House, 423 Franklin St (between Virginia and Allen), Buffalo NY 14203) 9 PM to 4 AM. Annual Gaypride dance Tickets are \$8/adv \$10/door and are available at Visually Speaking Copy Services located at 2328 Main st. Bflo 716-831-5663 or call Ann @716-882-7373 or Linda @716-894-3202. Also call SHADES voicemail at 716-879-0945.

Jun 17-Pittsburgh Pride March, Parade and Festival (Pittsburgh PA) Info is at www.pittsburghpridefest.org and in Pittsburgh Out and Planet Q newspapers.

Jun 18-Film: Bedrooms & Hallways (Harris Theater, 809 Liberty Ave, Pittsburgh PA) 7 PM. \$10 - one show only! Only 194 tickets available. Presented by Pittsburgh International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival. For more info, browse to www.pilgff.org or call (412) 232-3277.

Jun 20-Litha 6 PM. Pagan holiday celebration by GLBT-friendly Covenant of Brigid's Haven at Cabin 3, Presque Isle

Calendar of Upcoming Events continued

(near park administration office). Bring a drinking vessel and dish to pass for the potluck following. A \$3 donation is asked to defray the cost of site rental. For more info, contact Sharon at medhbh@surferie.net or (814) 438-9262.

Jun 22- Cheril Vendetti (comedian) At The Zone Dance Club, 1711 State St, Erie PA, (814) 459-1711.

Jun 23- Cheril Vendetti (comedian) at Sneakers (Jamestown NY) At Sneakers, 100 Harrison St, Jamestown NY. For more info, call (716) 484-8816.

Jun 24-Cleveland Pride Parade and Festival (Cleveland OH) Parade steps off from Cleveland State University, festival at Voinovich Park. Call (216) 371-0214 for more info or browse <http://www.clevelandpride.org> or pick up Gay People's Chronicle.

Jun 24-Toronto Pride Parade (Toronto, Ontario, Canada) Pride Toronto goes on June 19-25. Events, Dyke March, Parade (Parade is Sunday, June 25th), entertainment. Details and scheduling still being worked out. For info www.pridetoronto.com. Take proper ID for border-crossing (birth certificate or proof of US citizenship or legal US residence).

Jun 24-Shades (Buffalo area Lesbians of Color group) annual bus trip to Toronto Pride (Buffalo NY to Toronto, Ontario, Canada) \$20 round trip. Proper border-crossing I.D. required (e.g., birth certificate, proof of US citizenship or legal US residence) For tickets: Shades voice mail 716-879-0945 or call Ann at 716-882-7373 or Linda 716-894-3202

July 6-2 Girls Alone (Aroma's, 2164 W 89th St, Erie PA) 7 to 9 PM. For more info, email twogirlsalone@att.net or browse <http://twogirlsalone.iuma.com>

July 8-Menspace: Ice Cream Social at Brian and Dave's. 7:30 PM. Bring a dish or snack to share if you like or not if you don't. For more info, contact Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833 or email info@eriegaynews.com.

July 14- Concert: Village People with special guests, The Trammys featuring Earl Young (Specials Amphitheater, Chautauqua Institute, Chautauqua NY) 8 PM. Tickets \$28. To purchase by phone, call (716) 357-6250 or online at www.ciweb.org. All phone and outlet orders

will include a \$1 per ticket service charge.

July 15-10% Network meets-Jones Pond, Angelica NY Gay male campground. For more info, call Greg at (716) 664-4764.

Jun 16-Dancin' in the Streets (Cleveland OH) Sponsored by AIDS Taskforce of Greater Cleveland. For more info, call Nancy at (216) 621-0766 ext. 224.

July 22-2 Girls Alone (100 French, 100 French St, Erie PA) 7 to 10 PM. For more info, email twogirlsalone@att.net or browse <http://twogirlsalone.iuma.com>

Aug 12-Menspace Will be held in Butler, with an optional side trip to Camp Davis. For more info, contact Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833 or email info@eriegaynews.com.

Recurring Events

Stop Kiss by Diana Son Saturdays at 8 PM, Sundays at 7 PM beginning June 10 through July 2 at Buffalo United Artists, 884 Main St (between Allen & Virginia), Buffalo NY "A thought provoking story of two young women in New York whose growing attraction leads to an innocent kiss, and provokes a brutal gay-bashing." Kamala Boeck directs Ellen Opiela, Katie White, Don Gervasi, Carlton Franklin, and Lydia Al-Amin." 8 PM Saturdays and 7 PM Sundays ONLY June 10 - July 2nd. Ticket prices: general admission \$17, BUA members \$14, students \$10. Group rates available. Reservations and information (716) 886-9239. Browse to www.buffalobua.org for more info.

Get Used To It by Tom Wilson Weinburg Fridays at 8 PM beginning June 16 through July 1 at Buffalo United Artists, 884 Main St (between Allen & Virginia), Buffalo NY "A musical revue by the playwright of BUA's highly acclaimed '10% Revue'. Directed by Tom Dooney, starring Michael Hartney, Paul LaDuca, and Jeff McNeil" 8 PM Fridays ONLY June 16 - June 30. (three shows only.) Ticket prices: general admission \$17, BUA members \$14, students \$10. Group rates available. Reservations and information (716) 886-9239. Browse to www.buffalobua.org for more info.

Groups

10% Network (Jamestown NY social group) Usually meets third Saturdays. Contact John at (716) 484-7285 or otto@madbbs.com for more info.

"Always Our Children" First Wednesday

(Jun 7, Jul 5, Aug 2) at 7 PM at Catholic Charities, 329 W 10th St, Erie PA. Support group for Catholic parents of gay children. Call (814) 456-2091 for more info.

Be Ye Kind One To Another (BYKOTA) (Ecumenical Christian Group) 2nd and 4th Thursdays (Jun 8, Jun 22, Jul 13, Jul 27, Aug 11) at 7. Contact Sue or Julie at (814) 734-3959.

Erie Sisters Club (ESC) (CD/TV/TS/TG) 4th Saturday of the month at accepting establishments. Changing facilities available. Write to 1903 W 8th St Ste 162, Erie PA 16505-4936, email Lothar.lk@cwix.com or browse www.geocities.com/Wellesley/1614 for more info.

HIV Counseling and Testing (Free) Erie County Department of Health, 606 W 2nd St, Erie PA. Mondays 12 to 3:30 PM, Thursdays 9:30 AM to 1 PM. For more info, call ECDH at (814) 451-6727. Other times can be arranged.

LGBU/Kent First and third Thursday Kent State-Ashtabula Room C-133. Teens, young adults, students, adults... everyone welcome! For info, contact Jim Shiffer at (814) 763-2022 or shifferj@toolcity.net, Lisa at (440) 992-9139 (after 8:30 PM) or lisann_27@hotmail.com or email jnk_nj@hotmail.com.

Menspace (gay/bi men's social group) Usually 2nd Saturday at 7:30 PM at varying locations. For more info, contact Michael Mahler at (814) 456-9833 or email info@eriegaynews.com.

Womynspace (gay/bi women's social group) A particular Saturday at varying locations. For more info, contact Peggy at zippywahoo@csonline.net or call Robin at (814) 868-8969.

P.R.I.D.E. 

Newsletter is currently printing with a run of approximately 425 issues each month.

Information on advertising is available by leaving a message for the staff on voicemail at: 461-3102 or email: pridenews@hotmail.com

Gross Indecency is a powerful and successful drama

By Rita L. Kilbane

The current Roadhouse Theater production of *Gross Indecency* leads one to ask who or what is on trial, the artist, the art or morality? This courtroom drama revolves around the three trials of renowned playwright, Oscar Wilde.

The first trial is actually a prosecution case in which, Wilde, as the plaintiff challenges the Marquess Queensbury who made a statement defaming the author's character. However, the case is dismissed as Queensbury proves that his comment was a necessary proclamation to the public. The following trials place Wilde in the witness box as he defends art and his peculiar associations with young men.

The action of a courtroom drama primarily occurs within the text. Therefore it is necessary to enlist skilled and well-spoken performers to deliver the dialogue. Director, Richard Davis has found nine such orators. Narrators Scott Frisina, Brian Altman, Aaron Pacey and Jeffrey Rodland are challenged by dictating infinite factual documents as well as portraying diverse characters. It is not an easy task, but these actors triumph.

It has been said that lawyers truly make the best actors, but Larry Lewis as Clarke and David McNeill in the role of Carson, prove that actors make the best lawyers. Lewis and McNeill are two of the finest actors in Erie and they successfully display these skills in this production. Even when one errs in his performance, it is disguised. As the Marquess Queensbury, Brad Harrington creates the perfect antagonist illustrating equilibrium between insanity and arrogance.

Initially, Lord Alfred Douglass, Wilde's lover, who provokes Oscar to take the Marquess to court, instigates the trials. Jeffrey H. Shiffman portrays Douglass who is enraged by his father's lack of acceptance and enamored by Wilde. Shiffman illustrates Alfred's frustration masterfully and also presents a beautiful characterization of a young man enthralled by "the love that dare not speak its name." Wilde and Douglass share many tender moments and neither actor shy away from the moment.

Scott McClelland embraces the role of Oscar Wilde. McClelland's interpretation is

genuine, sincere, enlightening and often amusing. It is perhaps one of the greatest performances of an eccentric that I have ever witnessed. McClelland accentuates the artistic and philosophic genius of Wilde while capitalizing on the playwright's intensity.

The simple courtroom set which extends into the audience permits the viewer to focus on the performance and the integrity of the drama. Jamie Campbell's lighting acts as a curtain for set and scene changes establishing moments in time or transitions in thought. While the narrators are clad in period suits, the barristers don traditional robes and wigs. Wilde's wardrobe is appropriately flamboyant.

Playwright Moises Kaufman cleverly entwines actual shorthand transcripts of the trials, newspaper articles, quotes from Wilde's friends and enemies as well as segments of Wilde's works, the unpublished biography of Arthur C. Clarke and the autobiography of Lord Alfred Douglass. Kaufman's in depth research adds dimension to the drama providing a credible account of the trials. For details see ad on page 10.

Vendetti

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Her career has taken her many places. She has opened for the likes of Jackie Mason, Kenny G., Elvira and Rita Moreno at the Hollywood Bowl.

By her count she has worked as a waitress for over 200 restaurants and she has even worked as a cabbie in New York City for the Yellow Checker Cab Co. She used to play amateur nights on the cabaret circuit while double parking her cab long enough to run in and do a "tight three minutes."

When I asked her about the experience she said, "I picked up Bette Midler and Lennon and Yoko...but most of the people I picked up were pimps." She continued by saying driving a cab in New York is "like being in a dodge car. You get out all your frustrations. It's better therapy."

Vendetti said, "LA people drive to be seen. I've had a guy driving around my building for days. I think he thinks there is an agent living here. New York is so much different. You have to go back east to get grounded."

Vendetti's career is taking off. After her east coast tour she is back in LA to film a

television pilot tentatively named after her cook book, "I Got Your Recipies, dot dot dot, Right Here". In October there are plans to shoot another T.V. pilot called "Eat This," which Vendetti says the producers plan to stream on different sites on the Internet.

Vendetti is currently a regular at the Comedy Store in Hollywood and recently appeared in a documentary on the club, The Main Room. She has a Clio award that sits on her microwave for playing, not surprisingly, an Italian Cook in a Foster Farms commercial. She has also appeared in HBO's Real Sex. She now divides her time between numerous night clubs in Reno, NV, Hollywood and LA.

A taste of Vendetti's cooking: **I Saw the Blessed Mother in My Lasagna**

Ingredients

1 lb. lasagna, 1 c. parmesan cheese, 2 qt. You Pick the Saint Sauce, 1 c. mozzarella cheese (shredded), 1 lb. ricotta cheese

Directions

First change your name to Bernadette. In a deep deep pan, and we know what you saw was deep-boil water and cook Blessed Lasagna for about 10-20 minutes or until you've

run down to the Grotto. By that time you've pre-heated your oven to 350 degrees, as a hiding place in case the townspeople are trying to break down your door. In a baking dish (2 1/2 inches deep) cover bottom with "You Pick the Saint Sauce," parmesan cheese, mozzarella and ricotta.

Layer it 4 times. Cook 45 minutes until it bubbles or until you're so sick of telling the story the Blessed Mother shushes you.

Serves

Only To Believers.

There have been more sightings of the Blessed Mother than of Elvis. She's been spotted everywhere. In tree trunks, engines in pintos and all kinds of foods. In East L.A. she was spotted in a stale taco. In the south her body took on the shape of the key that opens a can of spam. In Seattle someone was drinking a de-caf cappicino and the steamed milk resembled Her face. In Wisconsin her image showed up as a cheesehead and she was asked to leave the game as she was rooting for the other team. In my family while my mother was cooking she recommended add more sauce to her cape, the Lasagna was a little dry.

Marching the Millenium and Rocking for Equality: Memoirs of a Quickie Weekend in Washington D.C.

By Gary N. Snyder

Last year, when I received a post card announcing the Millennium March on Washington for Equality, I decided immediately to attend. I wanted a 'March' experience for myself being that I missed the 1993 March on Washington, only having been out for barely a year at the time. In one weekend, hundreds of thousands (including myself and a companion) descended upon the Capitol for entertainment, fun, festivities, education and politics.

In retrospect, there was so much to do for the weekend, I realized that planning things in advance was one of the best things we could have accomplished for enjoying the weekend. Upon arrival Saturday, we drove into the city to tour around the sites, despite the warnings that driving and parking would be mere chaos. We decided to take a spin around Dupont Circle, a.k.a. 'The Fruit Loop', and found the park 'abuzz' with people and activities. Once we decided to attempt a parking spot in the locale, which notably took us a good half an hour to find, we walked a handful of blocks to the hub of action and took in many interesting sights.

I was proud of the diversity encountered as we enjoyed the view. There was something for everyone it seemed, from male cheerleading rehearsal, chess playing, pamphlet passing, voter registrations, impassioned speeches, dog walking, vendors selling various wares, and tons of 'eye candy' as far as you could see all around the fountain - notably an 'S & M' station (Stand & Model). After several laps around the park, a few digital 'cell' phone calls to friends at home and a stop at the local drug store, which was near bedlam - what with queens and kings buying up their personal necessities, we decided to travel on to the mall and peek at the representation of our tax money in statues and edifices.

(Words to the wise, when visiting the Nation's Capitol, make a special trip just to see the museums and parks, etc. Driving around 'The Mall' did not count, and no shopping was done - not that we saw any discounted items we couldn't live without to say the least. Whoever heard of a mall without sales????)

With time being a factor, we decided it best to keep moving on through town and get to the RFK Stadium in enough time to see the Equality Rocks Concert. The concert was spectacular! It lasted four and a half hours straight without a stop and was worth every cent for the donations to the Human Rights Campaign. (I completely overlooked the fact that the show started 45 minutes late.)

Opening the show was none other than Nathan Lane, notably from the major motion picture *The Birdcage*. His opening speech was whimsical and truly entertain-



Photo contributed by Mike Miller

ing. I mean truly, how many of you have seen a celebrity talking vulgar trash about a 'hater' like Dr. Laura and make a crack like 'There is a new study Dr. Laura is discussing now about how gay individuals have larger appendages, meaning their fingers. (holding up his middle finger) Tell me Dr. Laura, am I gay?'

Numerous ovations were given for performances by many well-known artists and celebrities including: Chaka Khan, K.D. Lang, Michael Feinstein, The Pet Shop Boys, Garth Brooks, Tipper Gore, Kathy Najiminy, Kristen Johnston, Betty and Ellen DeGeneres, Anne Heche, Elizabeth Birch as well as Matthew Shephard's parents, Judy and Dennis.

The most moving part of the show was Melissa Etheridge's performance of *Scarecrow* after a tribute from HRC to the families and victims of hate crimes. I had called home to let some of the staff hear the live performance on the digital cell phone. Natu-

rally, there was not a dry eye in the stadium of 45,000 patrons.

The crowd sang the song in place of Melissa when she was overcome with emotion as she said the words 'This was our brother, this was our son.' You could see her thinking of her children and the pain one would endure at losing them. As the song ended, the crowd echoed the refrain of 'Love, love, love, love, rising above, all in the nave of love,' repeatedly swaying back and forth in one fluid movement with hands joined and lighters a glow. I know Matthew was watching and felt proud, yet humbled at the show of recognition for his life and the message it announces. Love is all. Hate is nothing.

After the concert and a two-hour walk/Metro trip back to the hotel, we decided to try some nightlife at the D.C. Eagle. Arriving at the late hour of merely 2 a.m., the bar was closing at three a.m.. We made our way through the first floor to the bar and paid for drinks. Deciding that we should see what else lies in wait, we made our way to the second floor, of three notably. My companion was impressed with the beefiness of our comrades in the bar. (It's a Leather/Bear/Man's Man Bar)

My compatriots here in the ELKS would be proud of my patronage. Although my companion felt it necessary to repeatedly make wisecracks about smelling the 'leather,' I feared he was going to be somebody's b*!@h for the night if he didn't keep his comments to himself. We left with smiles on our faces and visions to take home for later. (I would have laughed seeing him slung over some hunky bear's shoulder but hey, we all have fantasies.)

The hour we spent passed quickly and we realized with the late hour that traveling on to the next bar on our tour, it was to be open 'til 5 a.m., was stretching the night thin. We returned to the hotel, skipping the 5 a.m. stop, to let the craziness of the day succumb us to a deep slumber. Waking in the morning at just a little after nine a.m., we quickly packed up our things and checked out to take the Metro (subway) system back down into the city. We were well aware that the 'March' had already begun (with lineup at 8 a.m. and kickoff at 10 a.m.).

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Memoirs in D.C.

Continued from page 7

Getting to the 'March' was not as easy as we supposed after leaving the Metro station downtown. We found ourselves barricaded away from the Mall at the Millennium Festival, several blocks of fenced in vendors with everything from visa cards to diva wear, pride items to food and drink. There was even entertainment with a 'Queen's cafe,' being hosted at the time we passed by one exquisite darling in her tiara and black pantsuit, 'Veronica' was proud.

Eventually we found an entrance and made our way around the booths, had delicious Chinese and picked up stacks of free information on several different companies and promotions. We passed up the chance to sign-up on-line with the PlanetOut Visa Card, we'll do it now from home we figure. But we did note the booths to come back to and moved onto the March at the Mall, on the other side of the Millennium Festival.

Once we arrived, we approached the moving throng beyond the crowd just as fate would have it to see the Pennsylvania contingency going by (what luck!). I kept my eyes moving along to try and spot those of us who had come down from up here on the lake, but alas, I was unable to see them go by.

My companion asked if we were going to join or not, an interesting question considering he had not even wanted to attend in the first place. Well, I finally decided that it was now or never, and we joined the group passing at the time, the Vermont grouping!

Entertaining it was to say the least! People applauded as we walked by, notably Vermont had just passed the Civil Unions Bill. (Yes I admit we were imposters, but who really cared, we are all family, right? Even the bare-chested women with only stickers for pasties - I found that to be an interesting statement of fashion, one 'Veronica' would have to weigh heavily.)

Once the March came to the end at the Main Stage on the Mall, we had an opportunity to see people as far we could see in all directions, we were everywhere! My heart was so big and I felt so proud and happy, nearly bursting. We stayed to listen to several speakers including Wilson Cruz, the actor from *My So-Called Life*.

Realizing that all of the people surrounding us were going to leave town sometime that evening or the next day, we went back to the Festival and bought our passed up items. One notable item was the T-shirt my companion bought that said "I HUNG out at the Millennium March and Festival in Washington, D.C. April 29-30 2000" which he found most humorous.

With arm loads of trinkets and all the free items, we made our way back to the Metro and then on to home by that evening. The most interesting thing to note was that when we arrived home, we turned on the TV and came across CSPAN broadcasting the end of the Rally on the Mall. (We were just there - an intriguing feeling of displacement, sorta like being in two places at once.)

All in all we enjoyed ourselves and found a community of like-minded individuals who chose to be themselves, from the transgendered, young or aged, drag/illusionary, gay/lesbian, bare-chested women to the leather clad/Levi folk - we made our presence known and will not let injustice keep us from love and happiness - Make LOVE not HATE! (Sorry, I'm a hippy at heart.) *May we continue to strive in achieving our equality for all. Let love be our guiding light.*

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Resource Directory

24 Hour Counseling

- Erie Hotline**
(814)453-5656 Toll Free (800)628-0190
- Hamot Health Center** (814)877-6136
- St. Vincent Health Center** (814)452-5151

Bars and Restaurants

- Sneakers** (715)484-8816
100 W. Harrison ST., Jamestown NY
14701-6615 Open 2pm-2am 7 days/week
Email: artemistoo@mindspring.com
- Rascals** (716)484-3220
701 N. Main St., Jamestown NY 14701-
5031 Open 3pm-2am 7 days/week
- Matthew's Trattoria** (814)459-6458
153 E. 13th St., Erie, PA Contact for res-
ervations and entertainment listing.

- The Village** (814)452-0125
133 W. 18th St., Erie, PA
Open 8pm-2am 7 days a week

- The Zone Dance Club** (814)459-1711
1711 State St., Erie, PA
Open 8pm-2am Monday to Saturday

Counseling

- Virginia Ayres, Ph.D.** (814)835-3829
- Family Service**
Jamestown NY Office (716)488-1971
- Fredonia NY Office** (716)679-3455
- Gay and Lesbian National Hotline**
(6pm-11pm Mon-Fri) 1-888-843-4564
- Lake Erie Counseling Associates**
(814)455-4009
- Well Being Center** (Deb Monohan)
(814)838-0123

Info Lines

- Chatauqua County NY (North)**
(716)679-3560
- Chatauqua County NY (South)**
(716)484-8434
- Erie** (814)456-9833

Religious Organizations

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- More Light Presbyterians**
Evon Lloyd McJunkin evon@erie.net
Meetings are on certain Thurs. at 7:30 P.M.
at the First Presbyterian Church 112 W 3rd
St., Waterford PA. (Day) (814)864-1920

- Unitarian Universalist Congregation of**
Erie 7180 New Perry Highway Erie, PA
(814)864-9300

- Unitarian Universalist Congregation of**
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Social Organizations/Youth

- 10% Network (John)**
Chatauqua County, NY (716)484-7285
- Menspace in Erie** (Michael) (814)456-9833
- Womynspace in Erie**
info@eriegaysnews.com (814)456-9833

Student Organizations/Youth

- Covenant House Teen Hotline**
1-800-999-9999
- Erie Gay Youth Website**
http://www.angelfire.com/pa3/ErieGayTeens
- National Runaway Switchboard**
1-800-621-4000
- Teen Hotline** (412)771-8336

Support Groups

- Erie Sisters Transgender Support Group**
(TV/TS/CD) Send mail to Erie Sisters,
1903 W 8th St., Suite 261, Erie PA 16505
- GayAA (Bernie)** (814)459-7262
- Partners (LesBiGay group, Corry, PA)**
(814)664-7090 (Luella)
- Parents & Friends of Lesbians and Gays**
PFLAG-DuBois PA Karen/John Kressley
371-8962
- PFLAG-Erie Mary of Robin**
(814)868-8962
- Sexual Compulsives Anonymous (SCA)**
453-5656 (Erie Hotline)

HIV/AIDS Resources

- AIDS Bereavement Support Group and**
HIV/AIDS Outreach Ministry of Cath.
of
St. Paul 452-3779 (Sue Kuebler)
- AIDS Network Information** HIV test-
ing at Health Department Monday Noon-
3:30, Tues. & Thurs. 9:30 A.M. to 1 P.M.
Evening hours by appt. only 451-6727
- St. Mark's/Catholic Charities Support**
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