

Photos by Darwin Reed



A-Listers & Community Leaders celebrate 21st KCO Coronation with "The Borghese Queen" Barbara Ella @ Ambush Mansion ~ New Orleans

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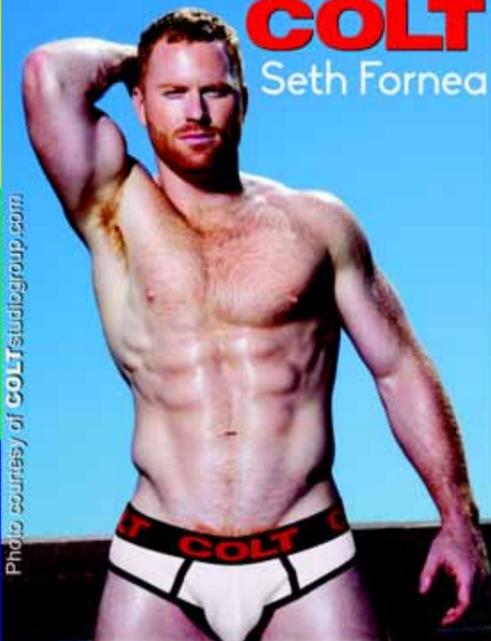
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under the gaydar

by Tony Leggio
Email: ledgemgp@gmail.com
Photo by: Larry Graham, GrahamStudioOne.COM

Get in on the Tale End

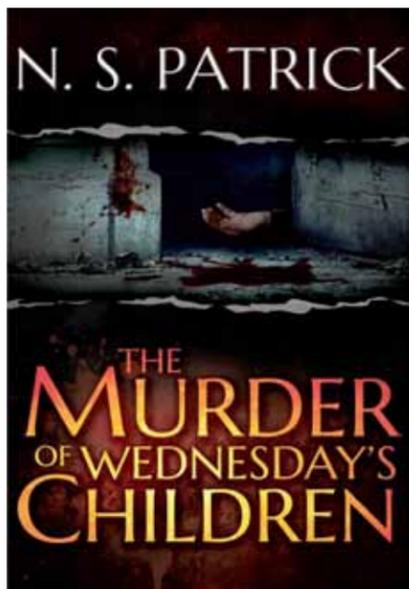
The Lords of Leather hosts one of my favorite Gay Mardi Gras balls on Sunday, March 2nd at the Frederick J Sigur Civic Center located at 8245 W Judge Perez Drive in Chalmette. This year's theme is **Tales and Adventures** which leaves the possibilities for costumes endless. This organization has fun with everything they present and this year will be no exception. The Lords is the only leather oriented Mardi Gras krewe in the world and they incorporate leather in almost all of their costumes. For tickets or information on Bal Masque XXXI, go to www.lordsofleather.com.

And the Balls Keep Rolling Along

The Krewe of Armeinius is presenting their annual ball on Saturday, March 1st entitled **Bal du Blanche** at the Frederick J Sigur Civic Center located at 8245 W Judge Perez Drive in Chalmette. With a title like that you know it will be a fascinating evening (or a hot mess, could go either way). Just kidding, Armeinius always delivers a show with outstanding costumes and everyone's favorite trashy diva Bianca del Rio. Bianca can currently be seen on **RuPaul's Drag Race** and rumor has it she may be made queen of the ball this year. Whether she is or isn't, you are assured to have a dramatic evening. Doors open at 7pm and tableau starts at 8pm. For tickets or more information, go to www.armeinius.org.

Book Signing

I am so excited to announce the release of Steve Patrick's newest novel **The Murder of Wednesday's Children**. His sophomore work is published



by Silver Knight Publishing LLC. His first book **The Mysteries of Jack the Ripper** received rave reviews and his next book is sure to be another hit. Follow amateur sleuths Archer Reed, lone Wallace and Tango the Greyhound as they discover murder and intrigue at the summer home of a wealthy industrial tycoon on Mantiach Island. I am huge fans of the Thin Man murder mysteries and this novel seems to be in the same vein. So get a copy of Patrick's new book at his book-signing on Saturday, March 8th from 1- 4pm. The event will take place at his home on 417 Incarnate Word Drive in Kenner. For more information or to pre-order your book, call 504.913.5741 or email at nspatr@cox.net.

Party Down

During Mardi Gras season there is very rarely any down time for rest and relaxation and these last two weeks prove this point. On Monday, I attended the "Show Your Colors New Orleans" event at the private room upstairs at Annunciation restaurant sponsored by BOLS Amsterdam and Galliano. Four bartenders were creating specialty cocktails for guests to sample. Most of the attendees were members of the New Orleans Bartenders Guild, who knew we had one in the city. But I am joining it right away. They have these monthly events and I was lucky enough to get invited to this one. The bartenders mixed some great cocktails with my favorite being the Orange Julius Caesar made with white rum, Bols Yogurt, Vanilla Syrup, Lime Juice and Bitterman's Orange Cream Citrate. After a few of those, everyone was repeating "All Hail Caesar."

It was a theatrical Tuesday as I went to see **A Moon for the Misbegotten** at the Irish House on St. Charles Avenue. This is a great venue to have a dinner theatre with the many choices of beers and top notch cuisine by Chef Matt Murphy. This play by Eugene O' Neill was staged by the Inner Compass Theatre is done in four acts and is a sequel to O Neill's other play **A Long Day's Journey into Night**. Now older the main character from Long Day's Journey, Jim Tyrone played by Casey Groves, is still a raging alcoholic with little friends. Not exactly light fare, but this play to me has more comedic overtones to it than its predecessor. Thank goodness because plays about raging alcoholics can be such buzzkills when you are drinking.

I always love discovering new

happy hours in the city and on Wednesdays, you need to try Dominique's on Magazine. Every Hump day, this trendy new eatery offers \$5 cocktails and small bites. The patio is perfect for hanging out when the weather is nice. Thursday, my friend Beaux and I went exploring in Mid-City checking out NOLA's newest gay bar to the area, the Tulane Avenue Bar. Congratulations to Mid-City on their first gay bar and what a very cool place. It is intimate and beautifully decorated. That night, the owners, Pedro Antunes and Bertrand Washington, were on hand to greet guests and make some tasty martinis. They talked to me about all the plans to expand the venue creating a destination for both locals and visitors alike. They also have drag shows on Saturday nights, so check them out.

Friday was a day of celebration starting with the 30th Anniversary Party for the NO/AIDS Task Force. Thirty years ago, the NO/AIDS Task Force began humbly in the Crescent City at the height of the AIDS crises; and since then the dedicated men and women on their team have given hope, dignity, courage and even life to those people afflicted with HIV and AIDS. On February 7th, a sold-out audience celebrated their achievements and learned about what is next on their horizon during their soiree at Westin Hotel located adjacent to Canal Place. Bryan Batt emceed the evening's festivities which included a three course meal, a slide show of the last thirty years of events and gracious toasts. But the evening was all about the observance of this respected organization and its staff. The night started with a reception followed by a three course meal with a presentation. The Gay Men's Chorus serenaded guests as they entered the ballroom. Bryan kept things lively and fun as the party progressed ending with everyone kicking up their heels and dancing the night away.

Next, Princesse Stephaney and I took our leave and went to the Contemporary Arts Center's SweetArts 2014 Ball. This was the unveiling of their new exhibit "30 Americans" as well as being one of the biggest fundraisers their museum holds annually. Guests were received by an acrobat pouring champagne from above. The progressive party was on all three floors each with new art to view as well as different local restaurants and craft cocktails. The third floor was the happening scene as everyone hit the dance floor to shake their moneymakers to old school dance hits. What a fabulously fun night.

Friday was fun, but Saturday topped it with two spectacular Mardi Gras parties and club hopping. The night began with the Endymion Queen's Party held at the New Orleans Film and Event Studio. Guests were greeted at the entrance by stiltwalkers, models in champagne dresses and the Brazilian band Casa Samba. Alexandra Kern,

the Queen, looked absolutely radiant as she greeted her guests. The venue was a party scene with different rooms providing different vibes. Anais St. John performed in the reception area as people nibbled on passed appetizers, before they were second lined into the main room where there was a DJ, go go dancers and plenty of atmospheric entertainment like psychic readers and caricature artists. The food was catered by the Hyatt's off-premise catering division 1718 and was simply splendid. There was an incredible vibe throughout the night as the party culminated in Alexandra's coronation. All hail Queen Alexandra, I cannot wait to see you in the parade. Following that event, we traveled across the city to Chalmette to catch the after party of the Krewe of Amon-Ra's ball. By the time we arrived, everyone was in a jovial mood after a wonderful tableau. There dance party was crazy fun and well attended. But the party did not end there. The Quarter was our final destination of the night, stopping at Lafitte's and Oz.

I am going to have to get my body back into Mardi Gras party status because the next day was rough, but I managed to make it briefly to the Lords of Leather's Royalty Party at Kajun's Pub. They auctioned off many creative Mardi Gras décor. I swear if I get one more Carnival wreath, I am going to move to a new house with more doors.

The next week's fun started on Wednesday with The Skin Horse Theatre's re-imagining of **Shakespeare's Macbeth**. This talented group produced a surreal vision of madness, murder and power. The play opens with the entrance of the three witches played with maniacal glee by Ellery Burton, Pandora Gastelum and Monica Gilliam. Eerily attired and with fixed stares in their eyes, they usher in the action and sit at the sidelines introducing the actors. The play was staged at the Tigerman's Den located at 3113 Royal Street. The venue lends itself to a creepy atmosphere with the bare, wooden interior and makeshift lighting, perfect for this show.

On Thursday, I went to two totally different events. The first was the opening of Style House hair salon located at the corner of North Rampart and Esplanade Avenue. This was definitely a very chic soiree, with hair models with stunning dos, exceptional cocktails and lots of good-looking people. It is great to see all the new businesses opening up in the city, good luck to them in their new location. Afterwards, I went to Gigi Zachau's Queen's Party at the home of Michael Shlenker and Don Schween. Gigi celebrated her "almost" reign in style with friends at one of the coolest houses I have ever been to. Their home is specifically designed as a party house complete with a bar that rivals most taverns in the city. Gigi,

[continued on 40]

Adore Delano

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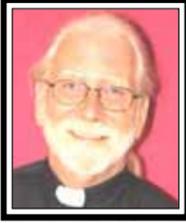
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RuPaul's DRAG RACE SEASON SIX



a community within communities

by The Rev. Bill Terry, Rector St. Anna's Episcopal Church
Email: fr.bill@stannanola.org

Mardi Gras

FAT FAT FAT Tuesday, corpulent fun, a bacchanal to end all bacchanals. Costumes that are racy and discreet, brazen and bawdy, sweet and petite. Mardi Gras. It is time for the fantastic fun of a day of revelry and libation. Young, old, middle aged, there is usually something for everyone. I suppose for this city it is the big blowout before we all go on a diet, quit cigarettes, start exercising, lose ten pounds, and destroy the credit cards and other "Lenten disciplines."

As a native I remember Mardi Gras quite differently. The Krewe of Carrollton

rolled down Carrollton Ave. The Krewe of Comus rolled down Bourbon Street as the closing act. The French Quarter did not "close." But then again the Quarter had half the t-shirt shops, door men stood at clubs for a peek inside, four or five jazz venues and Frenchmen Street was still residential. It was the days of the Upstairs Lounge and Charmaine's Bar. It was a town when the Half Fast Marching Club actually walked and no one knew where the "real" parade route for Zulu was headed. Ah the golden age.

That same age in which little Ruby

Bridges and ten others 54 years ago desegregated New Orleans Public Schools to howling parents chagrin. The first Gay Mardi Gras krewe was the Krewe of Yuga or "KY." This krewe was formed to satirize the straight, aristocratic Mardi Gras traditions in 1958. In 1962, the Krewe of Yuga threw its first ball at a badly chosen sight, a private children's school. No sooner had the tableau begun with Queen and Maids expectantly waiting the adoration of the spectators when police cars roared up and the ball was raided. Doors were locked and people were unceremoniously hauled to jail. Ah, the golden age.

In those days many in the LGBT community stayed in the closet. There was nothing new about gay men in New Orleans. They had been silently acknowledged, you know, the bachelor men that moved to the French Quarter. Guys like Tennessee Williams would sojourn to this dowager-Queen City

and discover who they really were. One did not say they were gay it was simply understood. That was then and this is now.

Now some oldtimers might grumble that "it's all commercialized!" Perhaps, but today we have the great Drag Queen contest and no one gets arrested; at least not for being gay. Today the Public School system while in disrepair is fully integrated as far as public access goes. Yes, it has its issues but none the less fully integrated. Today in addition to Mardi Gras we have Decadence, Gay Pride, and Essence Festival. No my dear we are still not quite there. Other issues need to be settled like decriminalization of marijuana use; legal same sex marriage in Louisiana or at least the recognition of civil unions in other states as legitimate. Turbulent times perhaps reflected most sarcastically with Krewe du Vieux foisting political and social critique upon us as only such a parade can.

The laconic days of the 1950s and 60s are gone. Some of which many of us sorely miss. But, the 21st century has given us many gifts of social justice, equality, and hope. It is hard to sort all that out, it truly is, it's confusing sometimes because as a community we want so desperately to think of a golden age. Perhaps this IS the Golden Age, at least for some, and I am not talking about "the One per cent." I am talking about you and me. In the middle of this confusing, rapid paced, age of technology there are glimmers, more than glimmers, bright stars of hope and equality. Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is near and at hand." It always has been in the hearts of people like Stewart Butler, about to receive an ACLU Award, or, perhaps in the heart of A.P. Tureaud and Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. The Kingdom of God that Jesus spoke of knows no shame in being who we are created to be nor to celebrate our common life. The Kingdom of God is an on-going process drawing us closer to "the beloved community" of hope and hospitality. So, party hard on Mardi Gras, last flash of the flesh. Be safe, be thankful, that today you can be who you are in the streets of New Orleans. Maybe not in Sochi but certainly in New Orleans—we have at least that going for us. Then make your humble supplication to the creator and sustainer on Wednesday thanking him/her for all the current, past, and future blessings that we are imbued with. For it is after all, "the sacrament of the present moment."

things it has forbidden to itself."

"We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars. "

If you have an event, story or idea, you want covered, contact me at ledgemgp@gmail.com.

under the gaydar ...from 38

you looked lovely and once you have a tiara, no one can take it away. Well, unless you do a porn shoot or something.

Love was in the air this Valentine's Day as the Mystic Krewe of Satyricon presented their 12th annual Bal Masque aptly titled **Bal d' Amour**. All kinds of love were shown by the krewe as the tableau came out in creative and fun costumes. I was also honored to receive an award of thanks from this great group of men and women. Keep up the good work and all hail King Chris Santilli.

Parades started on Saturday with Krewe du Vieux and the excitement of Carnival was upon us. I have never seen so many parties and people in costumes so early in the season like that night. I went to my friend Laura Tennyson's house for her annual party which is just a stone's throw from the parade route. This year's parade theme was exceptionally biting leaving no one unscathed from the Dick Dynasty Krewe to the Olympics, Club Opp and everyone's favorite corrupt ex-mayor Ray Nagin. They did a commendable job in kicking off the parade line-up in style.

Sunday was a Dog Day Afternoon literally. There is a happening little dog park uptown on Louisiana near Tchoupitoulas where I brought Rose to mix and mingle with some other four legged friends. I never really went to dog parks before, but they are quite the social setting. Some friends met me there, and then afterwards we went to Dat Dog on Magazine Street's outside patio for lunch, which is very dog friendly.

That evening was night of **Royalty, Rome and Intrigue** as we celebrated the coronation of Barbara Ella as King Cake Queen XXI, "The Borghese



Coronation Portrait of King Cake Queen XXI Barbara Ella
(photo by Larry Graham)

Queen." The action took place at **Ambush** Headquarters to a standing room only crowd of well-wishers. There was food and drink fit for a king (and lots of queens) as guests toasted the reign of the newest drag bon vivant to grace the Ambush Mansion walls.

That concludes my two weeks of merriment, have a safe and enjoyable Mardi Gras!

Tony's Tidbits of Wisdom

Recently the Mystic Krewe of Satyricon had their Bal Masque on Valentine's Day at the Sigur Civic Center in Chalmette. The theme was all about love and in honor of love, their collection that evening was for Forum For Equality who just recently with four couples, filed a lawsuit challenging the state's constitutional ban on recognizing same-sex marriages legally per-

formed outside the state. I commend them on their commitment to help everyone in the state be treated fairly and pardon the pun "with love."

Their lawsuit charges that Louisiana's refusal to recognize same-sex marriages violates the US constitutional guarantees of equal protection and due process. This lawsuit also says that state officials infringe the couples' First Amendment rights by requiring them to claim that they are unmarried on state tax returns.

The basis of the equal protection violation claim is that Louisiana recognizes marriages legally performed elsewhere, including marriages that cannot be entered into inside the state, such as marriages between first cousins (what are we back in the days of the Tudors) or common-law marriages. Louisiana singles out only same-sex marriages for unequal treatment, a violation of the constitutional guarantees of equal protection and due process.

For more information on their actions and how to support this cause, go to www.forumforequality.org.

To Quote A Queen

In honor of Mardi Gras, I thought a quote from well-known playwright Oscar Wilde would be appropriate. Wilde wrote some incredible plays and poetry throughout his lifetime, but it is his scandalous and overtly decadent lifestyle that kept tongues wagging. Please enjoy two memorable quotes from this brilliant artist that lends itself to the Carnival season. The first should be thought of as the beginning of Mardi Gras day and the second at the end. Have a great time!

"The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it. Resist it, and your soul grows sick with longing for the