

glaad notes

by the Gay & Lesbian Alliance
Against Defamation

RuPaul turns 100

RuPaul, the fierce drag diva of late-night talk TV, soon will conclude the current season of *The RuPaul Show* on VH1, marking 100 episodes of the often outrageous and funny gabfest. As of now, VH1 has not renewed the show for another year. Since premiering Oct. 12, 1996, the show has welcomed an eclectic mix of guests, including Cher, Dennis Rodman, Charo, Whoopi Goldberg, Joan Rivers, Nell Carter, Sandra Bernhard and k.d. lang.

Throughout the past two years, *The RuPaul Show* has seen the host reveal his more fabulous side, with the biting humor of a drag queen, his open expression of his sexual orientation and a strong sense of camp. But, compassion also has been displayed in episodes, including one entitled "The Family Show," in which Ru featured footage from his family's reunion and interviewed his three sisters. That episode was nominated for a 1998 GLAAD Media Award. By continuing to produce and air *The RuPaul Show*, VH1 has demonstrated a commitment to the GLBT community and has sent a message saying that its issues are to be openly celebrated and explored. Through its efforts, television has become more educational, engaging and entertaining.

Tell VH1 how much you value *The RuPaul Show* and encourage the network to renew the show. Contact: John Sykes, President, VH1, 1515 Broadway, New York, NY 10036; fax: (212) 258-7955; e-mail: shows@vh1.com (write "The RuPaul Show" in the subject line).

Whose family?

What, precisely, is a "typical American family" — and how do you get its members to watch television together? According to the *St. Petersburg Times'* Eric Deggans, the answer could spell the difference between success and failure for two new multi-million-dollar TV networks. The new networks are Pax TV and Fox Family Channel, both of which began broadcasting last month. Pax TV is the \$500 million creation of Christian media mogul and Home Shopping Network founder Lowell "Bud" Paxson; the Fox venture used to be Pat Robertson's Family Channel. Pax TV — originally called Pax Net — encountered controversy when it ran an ad in some national publications stating, "Some so-called creative people seem to be using what was once the family viewing hour to peddle every kind of alternative language and lifestyle to our kids." In addition, Deggan writes that Pax TV promotional consultant Steve Sohmer said in regard to the phrase "alternative lifestyle" meaning "gay," "I did not know...that those words together were a buzz word." The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that Sohmer had said, "When I wrote that, I was thinking about the subject of casual sex. That's exactly what I was writing about."

But "many critics didn't buy his explanation," states Deggans. Pax TV's schedule "reveals series that seem overwhelmingly devoted to the old-style, Eurocentric definition of a nuclear family — leaving open the question of whether interracial families, gay families, minority families and immigrant families will find their values reflected in Pax TV's vision of

American family values." According to Pax TV's website, its line-up does include a number of historically lesbian- and gay-inclusive programs, including *Touched by an Angel* and *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman*, which have each featured episodes which include gay male characters.

Deggans lasers in on concerns about the new network's inclusiveness. He questions whether Pax TV will present a bleached and constricted image of the American family to the public.

Convey to the *St. Petersburg Times* the importance of Deggans' thorough reporting and his identification of potential concerns. Contact: Neil Brown, Managing Editor, *St. Petersburg Times*, PO Box 1121, St. Petersburg, FL 33731; fax: (813) 893-8675; e-mail: letters@sptimes.com.

Mother love

Knight-Ridder and *Miami Herald* columnist Leonard Pitts, Jr. devoted his Aug. 29 column to responding to a NC mother of a gay son. She had written complaining that Pitts' recent criticism of extremists' "recruit and cure" ad campaign made it "easier for my son to convince himself even more [that] he is gay. My son is a very confused young man who has allowed Satan to rule his life right now." Pitts' reply: "It sounds like you did a great job of raising him. I imagine that you kissed a lot of skinned knees and tended more than one fever — and loved him helplessly. Now there's this. And you're frightened. But you know what? Your son probably is too. I don't know about 'confused,' though. Indeed, this might be the first time in his life that he isn't confused."

Pitts writes that although scientists have reached no conclusive verdict on the origins of homosexuality, "I don't recall 'choosing' to be heterosexual. Do you?" Addressing the mother's concerns about her son's religious status, he writes, "So many people claim to know the mind of God, but the funny thing is, everyone who invokes His name seems to be thinking of something different." He concludes, "We choose the God we need, Mother. If I were you, I'd choose the one that allowed me to meet my child where he is and love him helplessly, still."

Pitts' column is a balm of compassion that rinses away a mother's seeming homophobia to disclose the fear underneath — and suggests a way of thinking and being that might help all parents accept their children's sexual orientations.

Thank Leonard Pitts, Jr. for his words of eloquence and common sense. Also, thank the *Miami Herald* for running the column. Contact: Leonard Pitts, Jr., Social Issues Columnist, Knight-Ridder/Tribune Information Services, 790 National Press Building, Washington, DC 20045-1701; fax: (202) 393-2460; Brad Lehman, Editorial Page Editor, *Miami Herald*, One Herald Plaza, Miami, FL 33132-1693; fax: (305) 376-8950; e-mail: HeraldEd@herald.com.

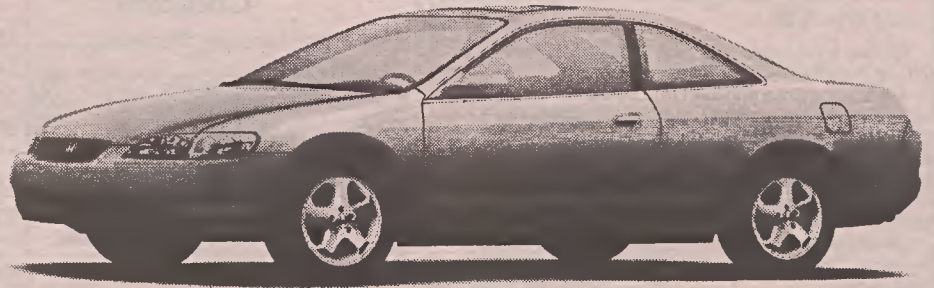
Biasbusters

Robert and Daniel were childhood best friends in the dusty California farm town of Ceres. That was before Robert, now 18, announced two years ago that he's gay. However, in the October issue of *Teen People* magazine, Daniel tells writer Suzanne Marmion, "I really don't like him that much." Such reactions prompted Robert and his close friend Jillian Sutherland to lobby and finally win school offi-

See GLAAD on page 21

Summer Clearance Sale!

Vanity plates would be redundant.



Clever wordplays like ICULKN, 2DI4 and 10SANY1 won't garner the attention they so desperately seek with an all-new Accord V-6 Coupe. How could they, with our sporty new design and 200-horsepower VTEC V-6 engine? Or standard luxury features like an 8-way power adjustable driver's seat, air conditioning, power windows and door locks, and cruise control? But don't take our word for it—come in for a test-drive. And experience for yourself an Accord like no other.

Accord V-6 Coupe

 HONDA

Rick Hendrick

 HONDA

"The Signature of Quality"

1650 Airport Blvd.
West Columbia, SC
(Take Exit 113 off I-26
Close to the Columbia
Metropolitan Airport)
(803) 791-5660
Toll Free: 1-800-555-5500
e-mail: RICKHONDA@aol.com



1997
PRESIDENT'S
AWARD

ASK FOR
Nancy Dodge or George Papp

We have the largest selection of
new and pre-owned Hondas
in the Midlands!

Monday - Friday 9:00 - 7:00
Saturday 9:00 - 6:00

Accord EX V-6 Coupe model shown. ©1997 American Honda Motor Co., Inc.



CAROL REINARD,
Realtor
COLDWELL BANKER
FLOUHOUSE, REALTORS
6548 Carmel Road
Charlotte, NC 28226

Most of my business
comes from referrals.
Thanks to friends like you,
my business is SKYROCKETING!
The next time you know of anyone
who is looking to buy or sell real estate,
refer them to me and
they will receive special attention.

Office (704) 541-5111
Voice Mail (704) 458-4857
Out of Town 1-800-849-9852

**COLDWELL
BANKER®**

FLOUHOUSE,
REALTORS®