

January 2007

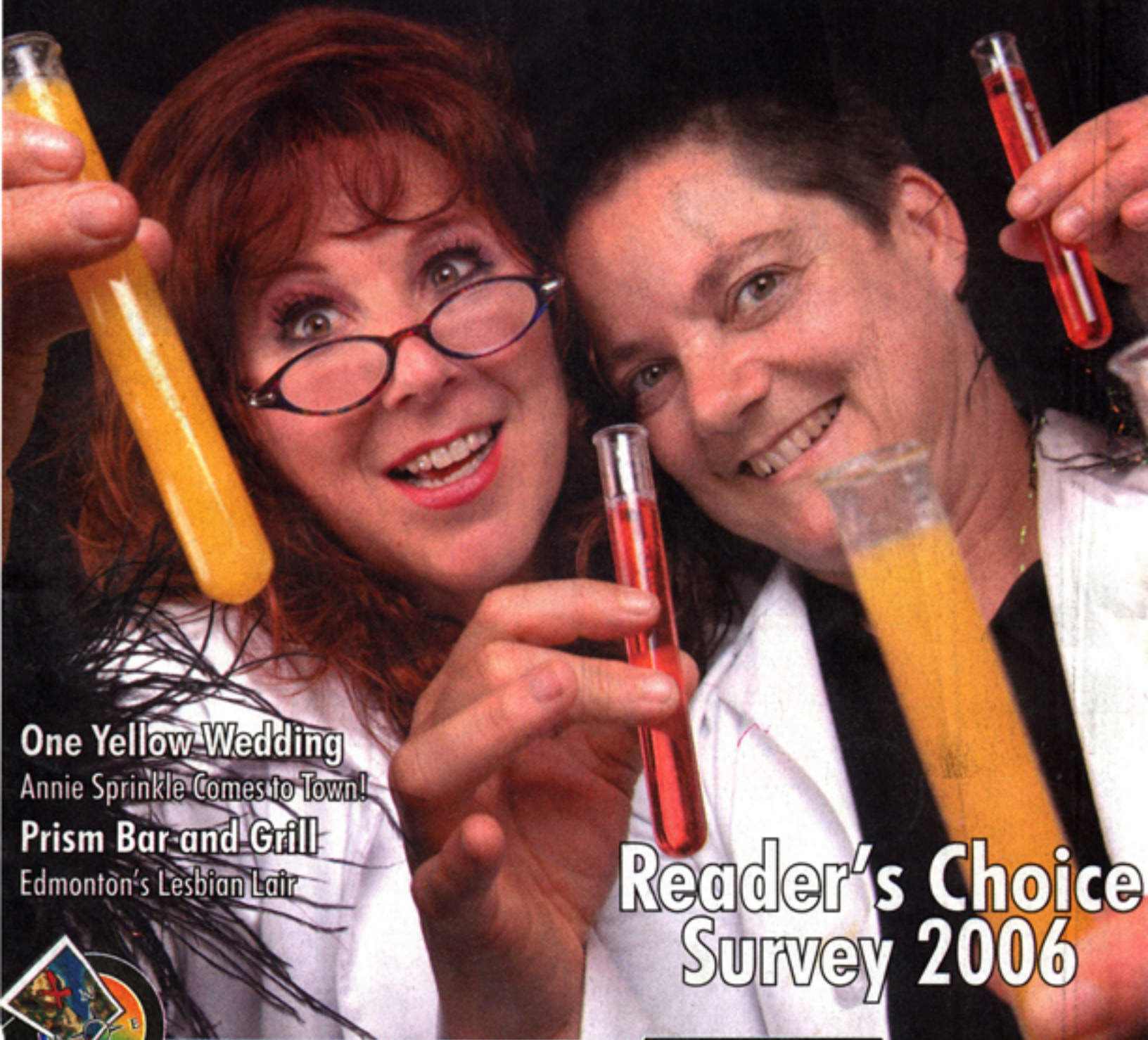
Issue 39

FREE of charge

Gay Calgary

and Edmonton

magazine



One Yellow Wedding
Annie Sprinkle Comes to Town!

Prism Bar and Grill
Edmonton's Lesbian Lair

Reader's Choice Survey 2006



COMMUNITY DIRECTORY • MAP AND EVENTS • TOURISM INFO >> STARTING ON PAGE 16

GLBT RESOURCE • CALGARY & EDMONTON

www.gaycalgary.com

One Yellow Wedding

By Kaitlyn S. C. Hatch

For those of you familiar with "The L-Word", there was one particular episode when most of the buxom group of gay gals go on an Olivia Cruise. Dana Fairbanks is a special celebrity guest along with a sex therapist named Annie Sprinkle...so begins my own awareness of Annie Sprinkle and her sexually liberating work.

At first I didn't think much of it, but that changed after a mutual friend had forwarded my partner Annie Sprinkle's website. We perused the fabulously bright photos that seem to almost always include her very well-endowed chest. Her website bio says she is best known "...as the prostitute/porn star turned Ph.D sexologist, educator, multimedia artist and Utopian entrepreneur." Besides her artwork Annie has also written a book called *Dr. Sprinkles Spectacular Sex - Make Over Your Love Life*. She has been a celebrity in an underground sense for years, but one of the highest caliber. Those who have heard of her are very familiar with her work.

When Fake Mustache was asked to perform with the Yellow Wedding, I was giddy to announce the news to my family. I first asked if they had heard of her, so they might understand just who was asking us to perform, and what kind of honour it was for us. My dad knew who she was and was thoroughly impressed to know I would be sharing the stage with such a woman.

This isn't a single-woman show though. One definite tradition with any sort of civil union is the need for a second person, which brings us to Beth Stephens. She is a sculptor, photographer and performer. When speaking on the phone with the two of them, Sprinkle's melodious voice and soft delightful laugh are about what I expected, but Stephens is the more talkative of the two. Stephens sounds how she looks - playful, a bit butch, and full of love and lust for her partner. It's a partnership in every sense of the word, which can be seen in every photograph of the two together.

Throughout the year the dynamic duo will hold performances all across the United States and around the world. Each wedding colour is planned with a theme and year: the Red Wedding had the themes of security and survival. Besides the Red Wedding they held four "Cuddles", two in San Francisco, one in Santa Monica and one in Glasgow, Scotland. The Cuddles involved a large bed installed in a gallery or centre, where Stephens and Sprinkle donned "cuddlewear", and guests were invited to join them in bed for a secure snuggle. The cuddle even involved their dog Bob, making it a project that the entire family pulled together!

Stephens was behind a bronzed panty display - an ingenious piece of art involved panties collected from well-known porn-stars and academics. The website states that "This work is an homage and a wink to the bravery and chutzpah of porn stars and adventurous academics, be it in the classroom or

on the silver screen, who have changed the way others see the world."

My own personal favorite installment for the year of security and survival was the X-TREME Kiss. Stephens and Sprinkle performed it on the opening night of the Artists' Television Access Gallery in San Francisco, and a video of it is featured by The Centre for Contemporary Art in Moscow, Russia. The kiss involves Stephens and Sprinkle kissing, nothing more, for three to four hours straight, resulting in a "...transcendent and lip tingling experience."

In April of 2005 Sprinkle was diagnosed with breast cancer and since it was the year of survival, this also entered as a project with the Love Art Lab. The couple did several pieces including a Chemo Fashion Show and a photography piece entitled *Hairotica*, during which Stephens removes all of Sprinkle's hair. *Hairotica II* became an installment during the Orange Year, themed as creativity and sexuality. The two women obtained the MRI images of Sprinkles breast and included it in a collage with photos from Sprinkles pin-up days, her surgery, and *Hairotica*.

A play called "Exposed" was created during this year. This was a play of the project, if you will. They covered it all, from falling in love to the cancer diagnoses to aging. It's a show still in the works that can be booked for your viewing pleasure.

The Yellow Year is themed courage and power, and the wedding will be different from the two prior. The Red Wedding was held at the Collective Unconscious Theatre in New York City and the Orange wedding was held at the Centre for Sex and Culture in San Francisco. The state of California recognizes same-sex civil unions, but not same-sex marriage.

Coming to Calgary will mean coming to a country where same-sex marriage is recognized and legal. This will be Stephen's and Sprinkle's first official marriage, something which they are both excited about. Sprinkle explained that the difference between the civil union and a marriage was about five hundred rights and benefits. They both agree that while they disagree with marriage in its most basic and original definition, they believe that equality is at stake here, and that no person should be made to feel less human for any reason.

Another huge difference with this performance will be the lack of their friends and family. This is their first time holding a wedding away from home and they are interested to see how it will work out. Sprinkle is looking forward to working with One Yellow Rabbit and any of the performers they have in attendance. The idea behind the wedding is to have fun, celebrate and be artistic. Anyone who plans on attending should dress in yellow or gold, but they can otherwise be as creative as they want. Stephens and Sprinkle explain that the weddings are all about freedom of expression and being yourself.

All these positive vibes and wonderful plans to create a greater sense of equality led me to ask where the inspiration came for this amazing seven-year art project. "Fucking," says Stephens bluntly. Of course, this makes sense. Their relationship is one out of fairytales, but made more magical by the fact that these are two very real people with very real passion. Their first date lasted three days, during which they were in bed. During the vows in the Red Wedding Sprinkle says "It was during that first kiss that I fell in love with her." From listening to them on the phone it's not hard to imagine all that love and passion.

Sprinkle has an incredible amount of awe in her voice when she speaks of Stephens' involvement in the project. She wanted to make sure that everyone knows this isn't her thing at all - it couldn't have happened without Beth. From reading the Vows it is easy to see that these two people are as committed to each other as they are to art. It's a project to align chakras and illustrate the true meaning of love.

So if you believe in love and you want to be involved in a brilliant art project, Beth Stephens and Annie Sprinkle invite you to their Yellow Wedding. "Come have fun and celebrate love!"