

Tops and Bottoms leaves Jupiter

Café's new owner blames poor sales, not homophobia

GAY VILLAGE

Nathaniel Christopher

JUST OVER A YEAR INTO ITS POPULAR RUN, THE Jupiter Café has closed the curtain on The Bob Loblaw Queer Comedy Troupe's weekly improv show *Tops and Bottoms*, saying it hasn't been good for business.

"They did a good job but unfortunately it didn't make enough to pay rent," says Jupiter's new owner Tony Hedayati, who bought out the café's other business partners in November.

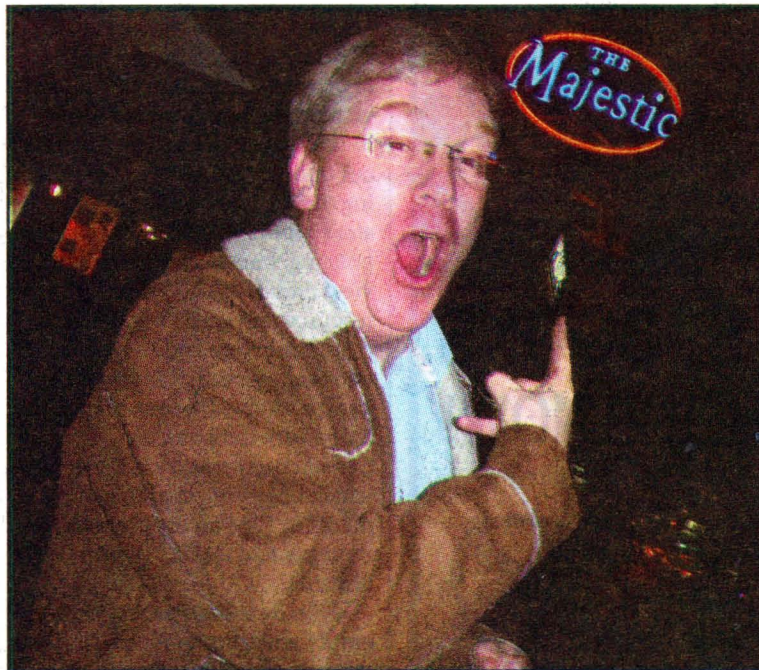
Hedayati believes there isn't enough traffic to support a weekly comedy event, claiming that sales on the nights *Tops and Bottoms* performs fall far below what he needs to ensure Jupiter meets its recurrent costs.

"We were only making \$700 or \$800 on those nights. I pay \$1,500 a month for rent, \$15,000 for employees and \$6,000 or \$7,000 in taxes. If sales are \$700 a night it really kills me," Hedayati says.

"They should have [a performance] only once a month, then it would be so much busier. It'd be good for them and good for me. If it happens every week it's going to die down," he contends.

Jazz performances have now replaced queer comedy nights at Jupiter. Meanwhile, The Bob Loblaw troupe has moved *Tops and Bottoms* to

Continued on page 9



NEW HOME. Presented with new conditions he couldn't accept, Bob Loblaw Queer Comedy Troupe founder David C Jones moved his troupe out of the Jupiter Café and into the Majestic.

NATHANIEL CHRISTOPHER PHOTO

If the Vancouver Pride Society (VPS) has its way, a street music festival will be part of this year's lineup of festivities marking the 30th anniversary of Pride.

The VPS has posted an online survey canvassing three downtown neighbourhoods — Davie Village, Yaletown and the Denman St area — to gauge the level of financial, infrastructural and human resource support for such an event.

Ultimately, says VPS president John Boychuk, the proposal will have to get the nod of city authorities.

"The [VPS] festivals committee wants to put on a Homopolooza music festival on the Friday night of Pride, but put it on the street," explains Boychuk. "So the city has come back to us [with], 'Well, you're going to have to take it to city council first.'

"At this point, the city has asked us to canvass businesses but if there are residents who wanted to, there may be an opportunity for them to put comments in as well," Boychuk says.

Boychuk indicates there's "lots of buzz out there" about the idea of a street festival for Pride. He says "a couple of parties" in each of the three neighbourhoods have already expressed interest in collaborating with the Pride Society.

Survey participants are not only being asked if they want a music festival in their area on the day and at the times

Continued on page 9

Tops and Bottoms leaves Jupiter

Continued from page 7

the Majestic. Founder David C Jones says rumours on the online networking space Facebook that the comedy show was going to be moved or cancelled prompted him to move the event to its new venue.

According to Jones, Hedayati set out new conditions for Tops and Bottoms offering the troupe admission-free performance slots every other Monday or Sunday night. Jones found those conditions unacceptable.

"The fact that he changed it so dramatically struck me as so arbitrary," says Jones, whose troupe has been performing at Jupiter every Wed night for 60 weeks. "We've packed up to 90 people and raised over \$3,000 money for charity."

Attendees of Tops and Bottoms, says Jones, were used to the weekly time slot. A sudden change in times, he says, would dissuade many of his regulars from attending on a regular basis.

Jones is careful not to attribute any of the changes to homophobia, but questions Hedayati's motives.

"When he said, 'I like you guys and stuff,' it sounded like one of those things where they're changing the job description to make it so unpleasant that you just quit on your own as opposed to being fired," Jones alleges.

"However, he has never said that," Jones concedes.

Hedayati stresses that his reasons for the change are purely

financial and have nothing to do with any homophobia.

"My manager is gay. If he's gay how can someone say I don't like gay people? I love Dave, I like the group."

Tops and Bottoms is not the first queer performance troupe to leave Jupiter. \$3 Bill, a local drag king troupe, left Jupiter about a year ago after they were made to feel unwelcome by one of Jupiter's former owners, claims troupe member Julie Stines (Buster Cherry) who has performed in the Vancouver drag scene for the last 15 years.

"They were just very arrogant, and dismissive of us," alleges Stines. "If you're there working or performing they only care about dollars."

Hedayati has no recollection of ever working with Stines or \$3 Bill who quit performing before he became sole owner.

"We had three shareholders here and that didn't work at all," he explains. "The former partners didn't know about the community and there was huge conflict and I bought them out."

It's not just queer acts that are leaving Jupiter.

Patrick Maliha, a local stand-up comedian and television personality who hosts a number of comedy events in Vancouver, hosted a comedy night at Jupiter which was primarily geared to a straight audience. In November, Hedayati asked him to switch his dates from Thursday to Sundays, as well.

"He gave [Tops and Bottoms] the same offer that he gave us: 'Sundays and you just take the door.' That was a horrible deal,"

says Maliha.

Normally Jupiter would pay him a budget plus the door, Maliha explains. "That's how I run all my comedy rooms."

Hedayati says he changed Maliha's performance conditions because the comedy night wasn't bringing in enough money for Jupiter, but Maliha disputes this.

"We had four shows where we were sold out and brought in patio chairs," Maliha says. "I think he thinks the menu will sell the place, but the reason you had comedy in there was because the menu wasn't selling the place."

Hedayati admits that money wasn't the only reason he cancelled Maliha's bookings. "They used to have a stand-up comedy night," he says. "I cancelled that one too, because so many people got offended. But Tops and Bottoms has been so good, there was no complaining about them."

Maliha says he was never told about any concerns. "People can say whatever they want to say; we never heard these complaints in our lives," he says.

For his part, Jones is disappointed with Hedayati's decision to strike Tops and Bottoms from Jupiter's entertainment lineup but he's not bitter about it.

"It's his playground, we're his renters," he says. "It's his bar. We just bought the glove, he owns the bat."

TOPS AND BOTTOMS.

Every Thu, 7:30 pm.
The Majestic, 1138 Davie St.
\$8.

Briefs

Continued from page 7

indicated, but whether they will provide volunteers and financial support as well.

It's not enough, says Boychuk, for a neighbourhood to express interest in hosting the festival without offering management or funding support.

"We talked broadly about the idea of a music festival," says the City of Vancouver's special events supervisor Dave Rieberger when asked if he is aware of the VPS' plans to survey community support for a street festival.

"I'm glad to hear they're talking to the community directly so that they can get a sense of the level of support for the event," Rieberger says, adding that a city council decision about the proposed festival could be made as early as mid-February.

The deadline to respond to the VPS survey is Feb 1.

Boychuk encourages all interested businesses to take the survey so the VPS can determine the community's appetite for a street festival and who to partner with to bring it to fruition.

The survey can be accessed at www.vancouverpride.ca.

— *Natasha Barsotti*

Motion to quash HIV trial denied

The case of an HIV-positive man charged with aggravated sexual assault for allegedly having unprotected sex without disclosing his positive status is still headed to trial, despite his lawyer's attempt to have the case dropped.

Lawyer Jason Gratl told the BC Supreme Court Jan 10 that he felt the

Continued on page 10

OPEN HOUSE



Granville Street Redesign Project

Meet city staff and the design team, view drawings and displays, and share your comments on the final design concept for Granville Street.


The design of Granville Street, from Drake to Cordova, will enhance pedestrian movement, transit and the vitality of the street, restoring it as one of downtown's great streets.

Wednesday, January 23rd, 2008
12-1:30 pm and 4:30-7 pm
Pacific Centre Atrium,
Corner of Georgia and Howe Street

FOR MORE INFORMATION: vancouver.ca/granvilleredesign
or contact Rachel Harrison: rachel.harrison@vancouver.ca
604.873.7757


COME BE A PART OF THE VISION!





MASSAGE MATTERS

Relaxation
&
Deep Tissue Massage
(non-sexual)


Herb Neufeld
778.329.2529
WESTEND 


www.MassageMattersVancouver.ca

BRINGING QUEER FILM TO STUDENTS AND MAKING SCHOOLS SAFER


Learn more, get involved or donate:
www.outinschools.com


Out in Schools






MEDIA SPONSOR

PRESENTED BY 




“Scowl and have wrinkles,
smile and have friends.”
— LEO TOLSTOY



Dr. Dean Wershler

General Dentistry

New patients welcome. Saturday and evening appointments available.



DR. DEAN WERSHLER INC & ASSOCIATES

512 — 1033 DAVIE ST VANCOUVER BC V6E 1M7
T/ 604.688.4080