

Dare to bare it all!

Live Oak Ranch invites public to explore nudism

By Yvonne Salce

Even before Jim Butler became a nudist, he never liked to wear clothes.

The tall, slender sportsman/writer preferred to don just the bare essentials — maybe a pair of shorts while fishing. But in any case, he would have dropped his restricting, binding clothing in a New York minute.

Now surrounded by bare bronzed bodies, Butler takes pleasure in feeling the cool country air breeze against his butt.

"It's a liberating feeling to be so free," said Butler, as he escorted curious guests around Live Oak Ranch, a family nudist recreation center, during National Nude Weekend, July 13-14.

Once a year nudist camps, affiliated with the American Sunbathing Association, open their doors to the outside world and invite non-nudists to explore what goes on behind these fenced-in colonies, innocently hidden in the countryside.

Live Oak Ranch, located in Washington, Texas — about 40 minutes outside of College Station, had a tremendous turnout of visitors for National Nude Weekend.

Larry Hilderbrand, owner of Live Oak Ranch, said about 800 people toured the camp each day. Hilderbrand views National Nude Weekend as an opportunity to open people's minds to social nudism.

"People love to talk about things they know nothing about," Hilderbrand said. "There are non-nudists who look down their noses at nudists, but then refuse to come when I open my door for free."

"Those non-nudists who do come out here, leave with a different perspective."

Whatever gets the non-nudist out to Live Oak Ranch — be it curiosity or an adventure to try new things — Butler finds that 98 per-



Jennifer Wooten, 7, visits Live Oak Ranch with her family during National Nude Weekend.

cent of newcomers do come back. "It's the greatest stress-releaser in the world," Butler said. "The people here are friendly and are like family. Unless you see it for yourself, you just can't under-

stand." Though the majority do have tanned bodies, not all nudists are sunbathers, Butler said.

He added that a large percent of nudists are conservative Republicans, with careers anywhere from

said. "Live Oak Ranch is not a swinging sex club. The camp is family oriented and promotes nude recreation as a family activity."

Most everyone agrees the environment at Live Oak Ranch is asexual. Walking, playing volleyball and eating in the nude leaves little to the imagination, as compared to a skimpy bathing suit or sexy lingerie.

"Even still, the No. 1 question asked by men is," Butler said, "What if I get an erection?"

"Well that just doesn't happen. A bunch of people with naked skin is not sexual."

With women, their main concern is "Do all the women have

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— Jim Butler, nudist

teachers to doctors. "And as far as this being a place, where you have big orgies — that is definitely not true," Butler

said. "Live Oak Ranch is not a swinging sex club. The camp is family oriented and promotes nude recreation as a family activity."

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Comedy, music show planned for Central Park on Saturday

By Holly Becka

Quips, shenanigans and tomfoolery will highlight the City of College Station's final concert in its summer series.

The College Station Parks and Recreation Department will feature a comedy showcase with T.C. Hatter and Marcianne, Miguel, and Jeff Schilling from 8:30 to 10:30 p.m. Saturday in Central Park.

Park festivities actually get underway at 7:30 p.m. with a music concert by Eugene Eugene and the Solid Foundation Band. The comedy showcase begins afterward.

Sheila Walker, comedy showcase coordinator, says the parks and recreation department

"just had to try comedy again" after last summer's comedians received a good response during the concert series.

"Comedy is an important element in everyone's life, especially so in the heat of summer," Walker says.

Saturday's comedy showcase is free. The concert series is funded through the City of College Station budget to improve the quality of life in the local area and attract people from outlying towns to our community.

Walker says the showcase is

for everyone. Much of the comedians' material will be family oriented.

"I have a friend in Houston who owns a comedy bar, and she keeps in mind comedians who will be good for concerts in the park here," she says. "Sometimes it's hard to find comedians who can focus on family-oriented material, but I think we've found some good ones. These won't be acts you would see on cable comedy shows."

T.C. Hatter, a performance artist originally from Minneapolis, is a silent storyteller who uses hats and other props to get his messages across. T.C. stands for "the clown," and Hatter obtains the full effect by wearing clown garb, complete with a red

rubber nose. He is accompanied by his wife, Marcianne, who adds to Hatter's every move with clarinet music.

Miguel, who goes by his first name, describes his style as "clean and to the point." In his press release, Miguel says his favorite comedians are Dennis Wolfberg, Emo Phillips, Brian Regan and Sinbad. He loves to perform comedy to make people laugh, feel better and look at the humorous side of situations.

Jeff Schilling describes

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— Sheila Walker, comedy showcase coordinator

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Summer Heat Productions offer 'Orpheus Descending'

By Julia E.S. Spencer

Summer Heat Productions, a local theater group affiliated with Stage Center, has aptly chosen Tennessee Williams' sultry 1957 drama "Orpheus Descending" for its annual midsummer show, opening Thursday at 8 p.m.

Williams' play, 17 years in the rewriting after a disastrous Boston premiere, opened on Broadway in 1957, and was subsequently made into a movie called "The Fugitive Kind," starring Marlon Brando, Anna Magnani and Joanne Woodward. The play's recent Broadway revival, starring Vanessa Redgrave and Kevin Anderson ("Sleeping With the Enemy"), was also filmed, this time as a cable movie for TNT.

About a messianic young drifter whose arrival in a small Southern town is the catalyst for a tragic outburst of bigotry and xenophobia, "Orpheus" is a play that producer Jimmy Schooley feels is a "perfect statement for right now."

Citing the Ku Klux Klan's recent march in Hearne as evidence of continuing racism in this area, Schooley says that the play's anti-racist message preaches tolerance for people of different ethnic and racial backgrounds, and is still timely today. Director Rick Landmann agrees, saying that the play, which contains a kind of Greek chorus of Klan-type bigots who call themselves the "Mystic Crew," speaks toward the issue of prejudice in an accessible and meaningful way.

When handsome Valentine Xavier (Michael Gonzales) comes to town, he meets Lady Torrance, (Cathy McWhorter) the 40ish Italian-American storekeeper, whose demanding husband Jabe (Donnie Wilson) is slowly dying of cancer. Val begins working for Lady in the store, and soon they are carry-

ing on a clandestine affair. Their liaison turns dangerous, however, when the town folk inevitably find out.

The women, who are also attracted to Val, are jealous of Lady, and the men, who resent the effect the young man has on their women, are jealous of Val. This sexual jealousy, coupled with their prejudice against Lady, who as an Italian immigrant is a "furriner" in their eyes, and Val, who is an outsider, rises to a fever pitch, with tragic results.

The cast also includes newcomer Juliette Bouchard as Carol Cutrere, an embittered civil rights worker turned party girl, and Chris Wilson as painter Vee Talbot, the child-like, visionary wife of the Sheriff.

The original play was in three acts, so Schooley did a considerable amount of rewriting to reduce it to two and clarify the dialogue, which was written in a frequently incomprehensible "hillbilly vernacular." In the process, he added some scenes which underscore the work's relationship to the Orpheus myth, an aspect which Landmann wished to emphasize. (Val is guitar player whose last name, Xavier, suggests the word "Savior," Schooley says.)

In the tradition of the myth's Bacchae (a cult of women who worshiped Bacchus, the god of wine), the local women get drunk on wine in one scene and gossip about the scandalous nature of Val and Lady's relationship. In re-working the dialogue, Schooley decided to put the "P" word into Jabe's mouth, not so much to shock the audience, but to convey the foulness of the man's bigotry.

This production marks the debut of the rebuilt Milton Franklin Furniture building as a theater space, Schooley says. The Summer Heat crew did most

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'Boyz in the Hood' mimics Lee's films about racial tension in inner-city neighborhoods

by Timm Doolen

In a manner similar to Spike Lee, the director of "Boyz N The Hood" analyzes the problems of the black race as it exists in America today.

Movie Review

But where Lee concentrates on New York City, young and upcoming writer-director John Singleton focuses on South Central Los Angeles, drawing from his own experiences as a youth.

Because of this, the movie is more autobiographical than Lee's, and although the story is supposed to be fictional, there is a feeling that the main character Tre Styles (Cuba Gooding, Jr.) is in fact Singleton.

The story begins in the early '80s with Tre in his pre-teen years. As a youth he encounters the normal childhood adventures, such as dead bodies by the railroad tracks, street fights, gang violence — normal fare for South Central Los Angeles.

Shortly after Tre's friends are introduced into the storyline, "Boyz" jumps to seven years later, when Tre is a senior in high school, and childhood buddies are ex-cons and drug dealers.

But life is not all bad — Tre's best friend Ricky is a talented football player with a good chance at a scholarship from the University of Southern California. And Tre's stern but lovable father is a solid, guiding force in his life.

The director maintains this story is not about violence, but rather a group of neighbor-



Tre Styles (Cuba Gooding Jr.) clings to his girlfriend Brandi (Nia Long) shortly after being harassed by two Los Angeles police officers, one of them black.

hood ('hood) boys growing up in the '80s and '90s, and coping with the problems of being a black youth in modern civilization. Many others, including critics of the film, claim the movie is predominantly about violence and how Singleton unintentionally promotes violence in

an attempt to condemn it.

In truth this movie has many facets and is more complex than either of the views noted above. And to combine the ideas, one could say that it is for the most part a story of how a group of boys can grow up in a neighborhood in the face of an extremely violent world.

As such, it is an intelligent and thought-provoking film, but not on the level of Lee's "Do The Right Thing." In fact, Singleton isn't half the writer or director that Lee is, and Lee has better actors in his movies than those in "Boyz."

One part of the movie that was disturbing was when Tre's father, Furious Styles (Larry Fishburne), makes a speech about how white men are trying to get black men to kill themselves and in the mean time are stealing money from them. I really wanted to believe that Singleton was putting this in as a sarcastic statement in the movie, but everything else led me to believe that this was to be taken seriously, as Furious is the most respectable man in the film.

Despite acting flaws and a few awkward scenes, I would recommend this movie to almost anybody just on the basis of seeing what all the controversy is about. As a film, it is above average, and as a first film from such a young director (Singleton is only 23), it is an incredible achievement.

Though it should be warned that this movie is not for those who will be offended by four-letter words or a little gratuitous violence.

Hopefully in his future films it will be easier to see whether there is some genuine, long-term talent in Singleton or whether "Boyz" was just a lucky break based on his memories of growing up in a rough "hood."