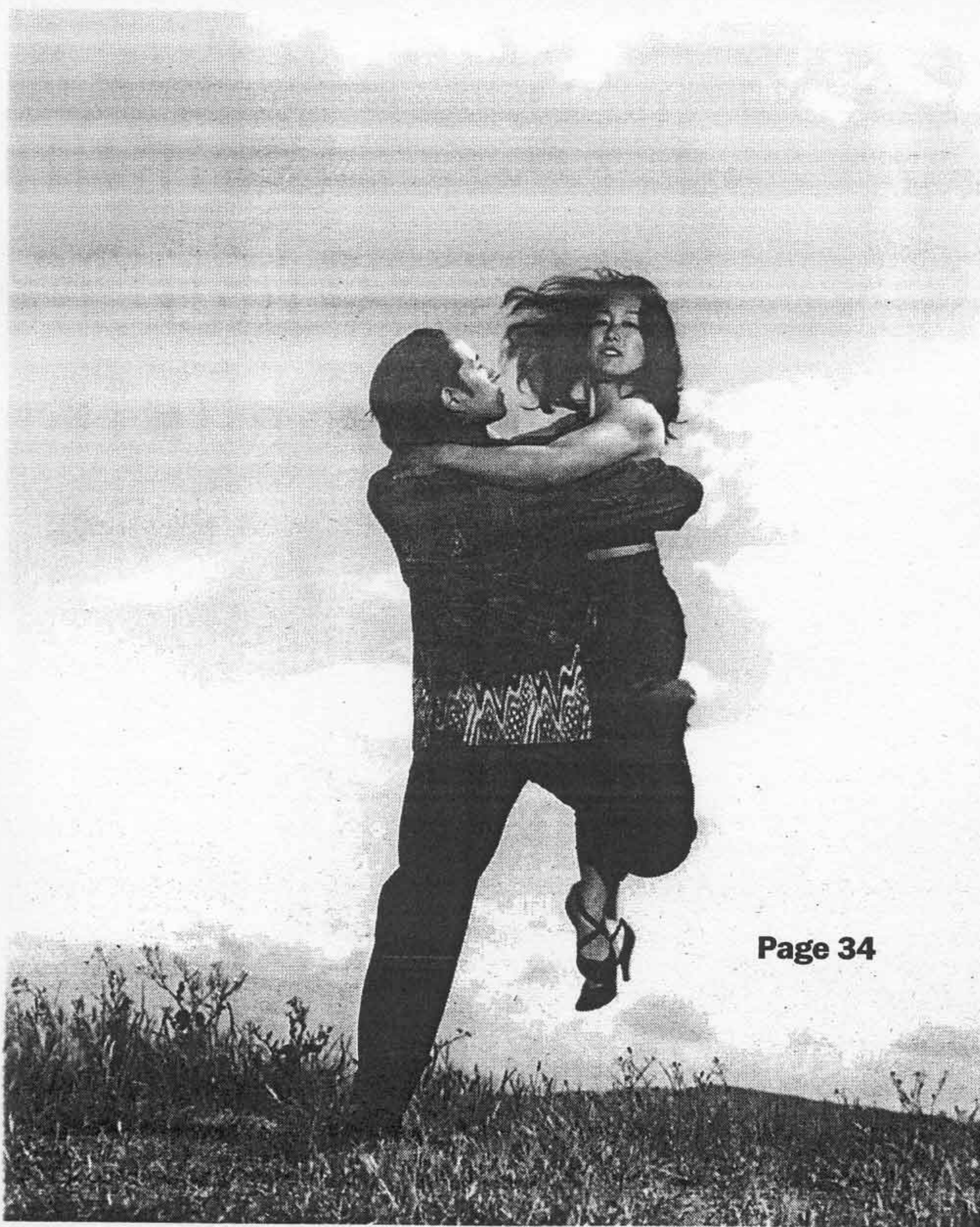


Inside



Page 34

7	Letters	
	<i>Red Meat</i>	7
11	Matt Smith	
14	Night Crawler	
18	Dog Bites	
	<i>Puni</i>	18
30	Night & Day	
	Urban Experience...	34
	Sports/Outdoors	36
	Kid Stuff.....	37
	See/Be Seen	38
	Performance	39
32	Getaways	
41	Stage	
43	Books	
47	Film	
	Reel World.....	52
	Capsules.....	57
	Showtimes.....	59
61	Eat	
	Social Grace	62
	Listings.....	64
	Jonesin'	71
73	Music	
	Listings	81
	The House of Tudor..	97
	Club Directory	98
99	Music X-change	
101	Romance/Wild Side	
103	Savage Love	
112	Classified	
119	Free Will Astrology	

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Queer as Folk

Pride Month kicks off with a Ball of fun

BY JACK KARP

Two of the most vibrant and active communities in San Francisco (aside from those who voted for Ruben on *American Idol*) are

undoubtedly its gay population and its artists. For the next month, these groups come together with all the color, electricity, and excitement of a fireworks show at a Crayola factory for the sixth annual **National Queer Arts Festival**, which is for

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5/31

many people the pride of Pride Month.

Like the diversity it celebrates, the National Queer Arts Festival includes something for everyone. There'll be art exhibitions, films, dance performances, drama, and even trapeze at each of the nine participating venues across the city. Highlights of this year's fete include stand-up comedy by three of the country's premier Latina queer comics — Marga Gomez, Monica Palacios, and Carmelita Tropicana — and the return of last year's hit cabaret *Fresh Meat*, which serves up a performance pupu platter of homo hip hop, tranny glam rock, and what's billed as the world's first transgender gospel choir. Of course, there's also a drag contest.

The festival kicks off on Saturday with the **Q Ball!**, an opening-night "gay-la" featuring live appearances by past and present performing artists, plus receptions for arts collective Point Blank's

ELIZABETH GORELIK



Jose Navarrete and Debby Kajlyama in *Fresh Meat*.

photography exhibition and Rudy Lemcke's large-screen video installation, *The Forgetfulness of Being*. The party starts at 6 p.m. at the SF LGBT Community Center, 1800 Market (at Octavia), S.F. Admission is free, but donations are welcome; call 865-5611 or visit www.queerculturalcenter.org for a complete schedule.