



Art and Artists

101

1-6-02

The Gail Rich Awards 2002

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✓ **W**ith the turn of a new year, it's time again to step back and recognize those who give Santa Cruz County its unique personality: our artists.

Each year we honor the arts legacy of this imaginative place with the Gail Rich Awards, named for the beloved arts supporter who helped conceive the awards the year she died, 1996.

This year, in keeping the overall themes of loss and taking stock that dominated our culture in 2001, we look back in sadness at the loss of Smith Dobson, one of last year's honorees who was killed in April in a car accident.

But in his spirit, we also look ahead in gratitude at the artists and entertainers on these pages who make this town and this time worth celebrating.

For more **GAIL RICH AWARD WINNERS**, see **PAGE B4**

Suzanne Schrag

ACTOR, COMIC

Suzanne Schrag has been a central figure in two of the most visible theater companies in Santa Cruz. The roles nicely fill out the yin and yang of the actor's craft: comedy and drama.

Schrag was one of the founding players of the locally famous improv troupe Um...Gee...Um, now moving into its eighth year of performing free-wheeling, of-the-moment, look-Ma-no-hands stage comedy.

She was also one of the founders of the Friends of Gus, the ambitious group of women performers who've brought provocative fare to local theatergoers for five years now.

Friends of Gus has given Schrag some of her more memorable performances, starring roles in such plays as "Night Mother," "Kindertransport" and, most recently, as Lizzie Borden in "Blood Relations."

She has trained extensively in the art of stage acting, and her diligence has paid off with appearances in Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Cabrillo College and Monterey's Unicorn Theater. Last year, she got to sink her teeth in one of the most expressive roles for a woman in theater, Blanche in "A Streetcar Named Desire."



Geoffrey Dunn

WRITER, HISTORIAN, FILMMAKER

Geoffrey Dunn probably has deeper and more widespread roots in Santa Cruz than all but a handful of ancient oak trees.

Scion of the county's old-line fishing families, Dunn is not only a Santa Cruz native, but spent his entire educational career — from kindergarten to graduate school — in Santa Cruz schools.

Dunn's local roots aren't incidental to his life. They've informed his life's work as a writer, filmmaker, teacher, community organizer, editor, historian and city commissioner.

Author of the warm and evocative memoir, "Santa Cruz Is in the Heart," and a major player in the history of Santa Cruz's alternative press, Dunn is known widely for his documentary films, which include "Dollar a Day, 10¢ a Dance," "Miss ... or Myth?" and many others, as well as the feature film "Maddalena Z."

He's currently editing a book on the work of old-time Santa Cruz photographer George Lee, directing a documentary on the magic of the Calypso tradition of Trinidad, and writing a play that examines the relationship between John Steinbeck and Doc Ricketts.

All that and he still finds time to run Community Television of Santa Cruz County and lecture at UC Santa Cruz.

He's pictured here with his son, Dylan, aboard the Catherina G., a boat owned by his cousin Victor Ghio.



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Jim Urban

ARTIST, DESIGNER, SIGN PAINTER

It's difficult to make your way around Santa Cruz County and not come upon Jim Urban's work somewhere. When businesses, musicians or art groups want some art rendered, Jim will often get the call.

The enormous banners, decorated with scenes from Shakespeare Santa Cruz's plays, which hang around the UC Santa Cruz theater complex during Shakespeare season, are among Jim's larger-format works.

He's been a familiar presence on campus for years, painting the theatrical signs on the barn at the entrance of the campus.

Jim has also designed or painted some of the most iden-



table of the county's commercial symbols: the old Saturn Cafe logo on Mission Street, the grinning cow of Dharma's vegetarian restaurant in Capitola, and store signs for Paper Vision, Discount Records, Chocolat and countless others.

An admirer and student of the poster art that emerged from the 1960s, Jim has also designed posters and logos for bands and musicians, as well as illustrations in the local press for more than 20 years.

Dror Sinai

BUSINESSMAN, RHYTHMATIST

Anyone who believes that downtown Santa Cruz is like a thousand other downtowns hasn't visited Rhythm Fusion.

Dror Sinai's music store, tucked into a picturesque alley off the north end of Pacific Avenue, is one of a very few places like it in the world.

The shop specializes in percussive and rhythm instruments from around the world — beautiful, authentic, handmade items from South America, China, Africa, Pakistan, Turkey and other locales.

An Israeli-born Jew of Yemenite descent, Sinai has performed as a percussionist since he was a child. In Santa Cruz County, he played in area schools as part of the SPECTRA program, while shopping drums and other instruments (some of which he made himself) to local shops on consignment.

After the Loma Prieta earthquake, Sinai opened his own place in the makeshift tents that were fixtures of downtown Santa Cruz in the early 1990s and later moved into his present digs, where customers come from all over the world to check out his wares.

Though his business may seem a rarefied specialty, Sinai feels strongly that rhythm is as fundamental to life as breathing — which, he points out, is a rhythm all its own.

Mary Ann & Albert Kent and Tom Miller

MUSIC LOVERS, COMMUNITY BUILDERS

Henfling's Tavern in Ben Lomond used to have one kind of reputation; now it has another.

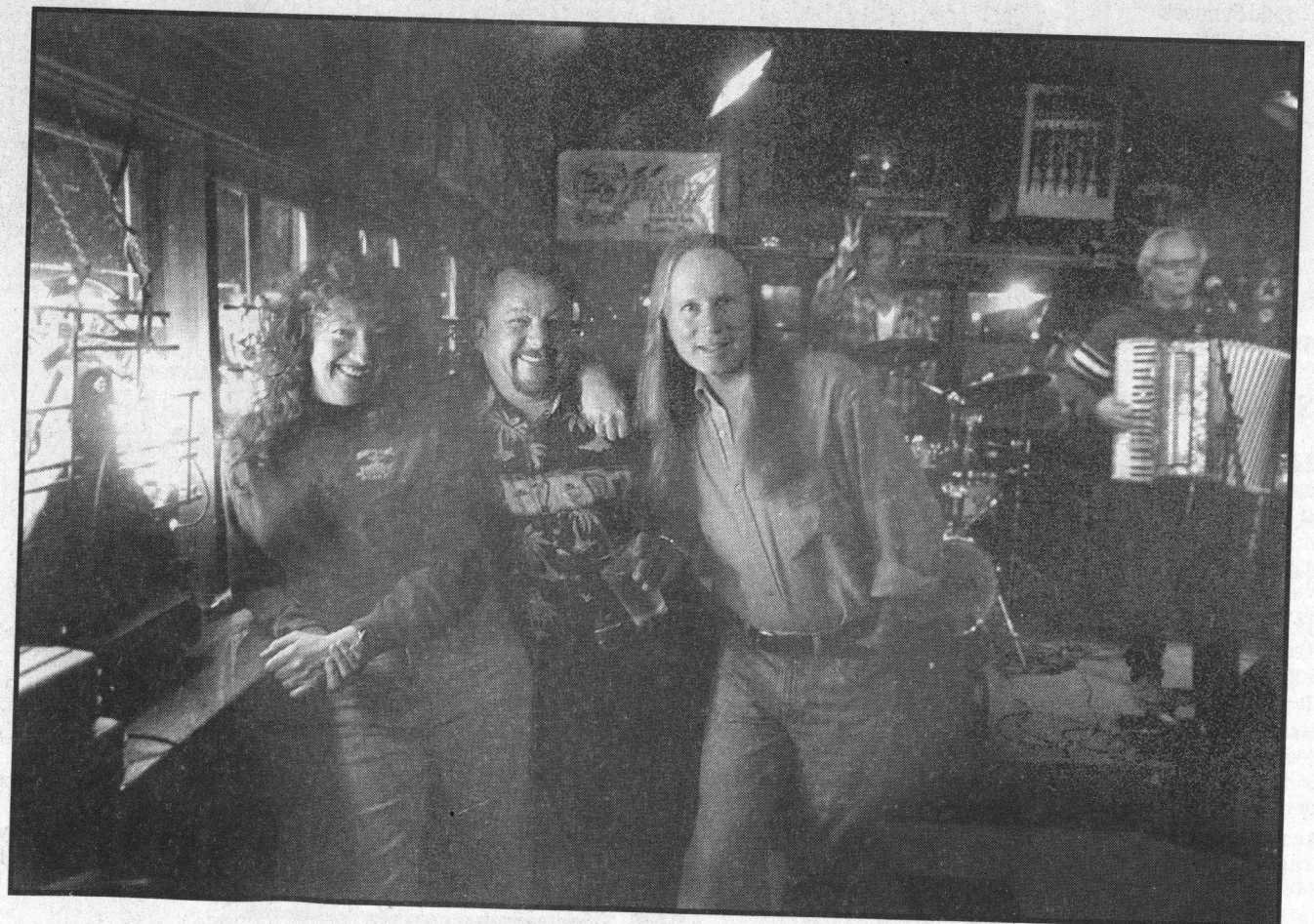
Once an intimidating dive known for heavy drinking and rowdy behavior, Henfling's is now one of the most adventurous and hip music clubs in the South Bay/Monterey Bay region, thanks to its owners, the husband/wife team of Albert and Mary Ann Kent and the club's tireless booker, Tom Miller.

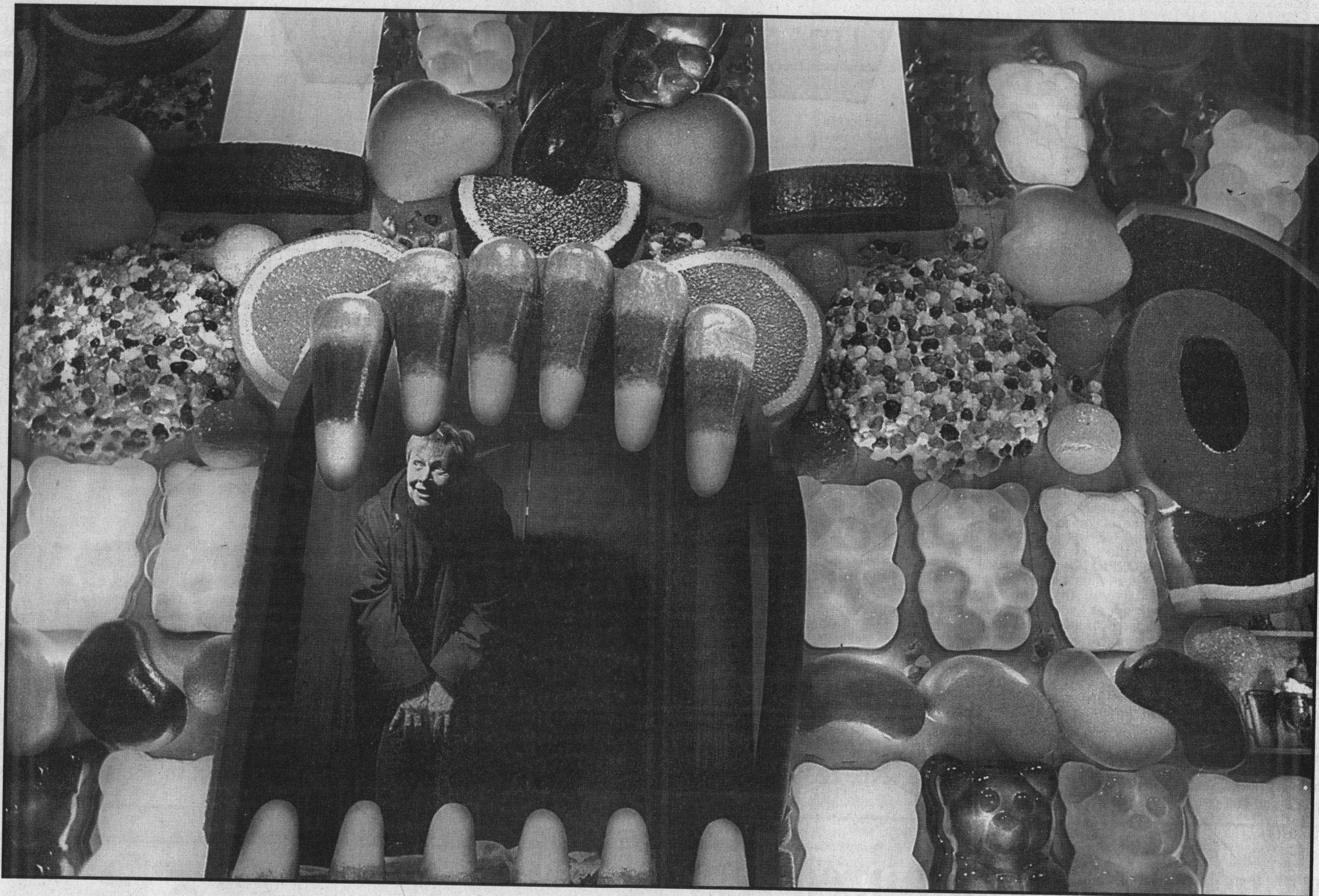
Even before Henfling's, the Kents were big names in the San Lorenzo Valley arts scene, as primary players in Ben Lomond's Mountain Community Theatre. Albert had grown up in the area; he had even visited Henfling's as a kid with his dad. Mary Ann had a background as a circus performer before her long string of acting credits at MCT.

Tom Miller came to Henfling's after years of creative booking at the now defunct but still fondly remembered Santa Cruz club, O.T. Price's, as well as venues all around the county.

Together, the three bring cutting-edge performers to Henfling's — from Americana standard-bearers to exotic folk musicians from Europe and Asia, with appropriate food to match the tradition of the evening.

By doing so, they put modest little Ben Lomond on the map that all discerning music lovers know by heart.





Audrey Stanley

DIRECTOR, SCHOLAR,
PIONEER, ICON

Casual fans of Shakespeare Santa Cruz might remember Audrey Stanley as the bold casting choice to play Puck in a 1991 production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

That's like remembering Einstein as a pretty good violinist.

In fact, the beloved annual tradition of Shakespeare Santa Cruz would not exist without the guid-

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ing hand of the British-born scholar and Shakespearean interpreter.

Stanley was staging Shakespeare in Ashland, Ore., in the mid-1970s when UC Santa Cruz dean Joe Barber recruited her to develop a Shakespeare program here (she had taught at UCSC).

In 1978 Stanley directed a production of "Dream" at UCSC that was experimental in nature and performed outdoors — both ideas became artistic hallmarks of SSC.

As the festival's founding artistic director, she established many of the artistic values that still sustain the area's most successful theater enterprise.

As the company's only permanent board member, she provides the continuity and artistic spark to keep it thriving in its third decade.

She's pictured here on the set of Shakespeare Santa Cruz's holiday production of "Gretel & Hansel."

Gail Rich Award winners

1997

Rick Walker
The Troxell family
Holt Murray
Bob Lowery
Laura Ellen Hopper
Sara Wilbourne
Eric Schoeck
Joe Ferrara
Philip Collins
Guillermo Aranda
Tracye Lea Lawson
Bud Kretschmer

1998

Bruce Lee
Kate Hawley
Nikki Silva
& Charles Prentiss
Sean Seman
Mary McCaslin
Thom Zajac
John Orlando
Laurie R. King

1999

Linda Arnold
George & Gail Ow
Ann Morhauser
Manuel Santana
Claudia Villela
Wilma Marcus Chandler
William Coulter
Salvatore D'Aura

2000

Kathleen Bartlett Abood
Sista Monica Parker
Ralph Peduto
Larry Hosford
Patrice Vecchione
Josh Gitomer
Vern & Carol Bowie
Bill Welch & Phil Lewis

2001

The Dobson family
Jim Phillips
John Sandidge
Sister Barbara Long
R.R. Jones
Suzanne St. John
Ikuyo Conant
Richard Hoover

2002

Helené
Geoffrey Dunn
Audrey Stanley
Suzanne Schrag
Susie Bright
Jim Urban
Dror Sinai
Albert Kent
Mary Ann Kent
& Tom Miller



Helené

DANCER, TEACHER, WORLD TRAVELER

She grew up in London, learning English folk dancing as a girl, but the artistic curiosity and passions of Helené were not to remain in England.

For 15 years, she has been our area's premier student of belly dancing, a term with which she is uncomfortable, and for good reason. It's just too small to contain her interests.

As a performer and teacher, her focus has been steeped in the folk dance customs of Egypt, Morocco, Turkey and countless other traditions in the Arabic world.

Her performances embrace reverence for the culture from which they sprang. As a result, her dances are opportunities for cultural exchange.

She's been bringing her love for North African and Arabic dance into Santa Cruz County schools for more than a decade.

She also performs regularly in eldercare centers, teaches workshops for area women, hosts performers from all over the world, travels to Europe every year and has recently helped raise money on behalf of the children of a nation she once visited that's been on her mind in the last few months: Afghanistan.

SusieBright

WRITER, PROVOCATEUR, SEXPERT

Considering that she served as "technical consultant" for the 1996 S&M movie "Bound" and once was a contributing editor to the infamous Penthouse Forum, it's hard to begrudge Santa Cruz writer Susie Bright the title of "sexpert."

Sex and its power to shape our behaviors — for good and ill — have been the focus of Bright's astounding body of work.

She's written and edited a dozen books, including her newest title, "How to Write a Dirty Story." She's written columns for Salon.com and Playboy online, articles for countless periodicals on every conceivable aspect of sexuality, and she's widely appeared on film and television.

Bright is a tireless traveler and lecturer, appearing at universities across the country to present her "Sexual State of the Union."

Her message is not one of cheap exploitation, but of starting a healthy, frank, fearless dialogue on the one subject that remains taboo and the desire that lies behind it.

