

Express Will Be Available in 7-11 Stores Newspaper Increases Distribution and Raises Advertising Rates

By Michael James

The Express announced an across the board increase of at least 15 % in all its advertising rates, effective April 1st, 2001. It is the first rate increase in the paper's fifteen month history.

In addition, the paper will now be available in selected 7-11 stores throughout Broward, Dade and Palm Beach County. "It appears to be one of the first times in the country that a gay and lesbian newspaper will be accessible in such a mainstream market. It is an expensive proposition but there is a demand for our paper and we want people to be able to get it anywhere," stated Publisher Norm Kent.

"It is an effort to help people find the paper easier and increase distribution for our advertisers," Kent added.

The price increase, Kent noted, "was regretfully marked by necessity... our rate card is still significantly lower than corresponding tabloid publications."

"For example," Kent said, "New Times Magazine, also printed by Gannett Offset Florida, charges over three times per page what we do."



Corresponding gay newspapers around the country, have a rate card of almost \$1200 per page, Kent noted. "You have to realize that we now have a tri-county distribution, we are printed on heavy, forty pound stock, and we have expanded our use of color advertising, which costs more as well."

Kent also pointed out that more and more free publications are now charged money by distribution networks to be placed in their locations. "Major chains like Blockbuster, Bally's, Eckerd's or retail book outlets only allow contracted distributors into their locations with free publications. Consequently, free papers now have to pay for the privilege of reaching their market. Like it or not, it is a reality we deal with," Kent said.

The Express, which now prints 20,000 copies, is distributed three times in each run. Marked with a press date of Mondays, the paper is normally printed every other Sunday afternoon, and distributed in Broward County to major restaurants and nightclubs on Sunday evenings. Dade County and the businesses in Broward County then receive

their distribution on Mondays.

Even with the rate increase, which brings half page rates to \$400, and full page rates to \$700, the Express will cost less than similar gay publications of equal stature. One-eighth page rates will increase from \$125 to \$150, and one quarter page from \$200 to \$240.

"As the paper is usually gone by Wednesday, we commence a redistribution that Friday, and again the following Wednesday," Kent stated. The Express has over 300 distribution points in Broward, and now 100 in Dade. It is also mailed to a growing subscription base as well as gay and lesbian business guilds all over the country.

"I think it is nice that you can be sitting in the office of a travel agency in Provincetown, and learn about guesthouses in Fort Lauderdale," Kent stated. "It is an expense to be sure, but our goal is to saturate

the glbt market with a wealth of information about gay South Florida."

Kent further indicated that the diversity of columnists, cartoonists, photographers and independent writers that the Express offers each week has contributed to the cost increase: "Every issue of our paper brings together a cast of no less than 25 different players, all contributing their experience and expertise to create diversity and interest. And everyone of them gets compensated in some form."

The Express will continue to honor any contracts signed prior to April 1, but advertisers were greeted by a new rate card, starting last week.



Corresponding Gay Newspaper Rates

Fab! In Los Angeles	\$1294	Full Page, \$774 ½ page
Washington Blade	\$1,300	Full Page, \$680 ½ page
New York Blade	\$1,600	Full Page, \$900 ½ page
Southern Voice	\$935	Full page, \$500 ½ page

Wansiki Foundation: Bringing People Together



Marie Wansiki

By Michael James

This past Friday the Wansiki Foundation began to move their facilities to their new location at 1815 East Commercial Blvd, suite 305. The new space effectively doubles the size of the clinic to 4,000 square feet.

Marie Wansiki founded the clinic in

1989. She said, "I wanted to have a place for people infected with HIV/AIDS who didn't have a dollar in their pocket to be able to get care in a loving environment."

Marie became active in the HIV community in 1982 while living in New York when she began volunteering. When she moved to Florida she began working with a buyer's club to acquire medications from other countries in a black market fashion.

"That was a time when there really weren't any medications available in this country," she said. "We worked in the 'underground.'"

At that time in South Florida there was no place for those infected to go to for help. That's when Marie took over the buyer's club, made quite a few changes and made it into a clinic.

"Then we were able to offer blood testing, counseling, and we got some doctors to work with us," she said. "This was at a time when we were fighting HIV with vitamin infusions, herbs, mushrooms - you name it we tried it."

The clinic was able to help out a lot of different people that would have otherwise have gone without treatment of any type. She stated that they were able to keep a lot of people alive for a long time. She humbly said, "I'm proud to say that some of our original

clients are still around. Long term survivors."

Currently, the clinic receives about 40% of their funding through programs such as Ryan White. The remainder of their funding comes from donations and fundraising events, such as the recent Taste of South Florida fundraiser held at the home of Roger Kooser and Stan Budsinski of R&S Realty house.

Roger and Stan invited people into their home for a cocktail party and silent auction. Over \$7,000 was raised to offset the cost of moving into their new location.

Marie stated that fundraising was getting more difficult due to the fact that "many people have become complacent, believing that HIV has been cured." She went on to explain that the medications themselves are making people sick.

She said that the irony of the entire HIV/AIDS situation is that it brought every segment of the community together for a single cause. She said, "The most heart warming thing I saw was when one of our 8 year-old patients sat in our living room (at the clinic) talking about taking AZT with an older adult patient."

The Wansiki Foundation has grown into an organization that helps thousands of people on a regular basis. They can be reached at 954.565.8284.

"I wanted to have a place for people infected with HIV/AIDS who didn't have a dollar in their pocket to be able to get care in a loving environment."

Marie Wansiki founder of the Wansiki Foundation

Wansiki Foundation Services

- Primary Medical Care
- HIV Testing
- Diagnostic Testing
- Hepatitis Screening/Therapy
- Psychological Counseling
- Infusion Therapies
- Gynecological Services
- Emergency Meds Refills

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