

*Slingbacks and Syrup*

Russell Dreher

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***Slingbacks and Syrup***

***Meet the girls of Beaver Pond and the boys who play them.***

Deep in the very rural "northeast kingdom" of Vermont lies the mythical town of Beaver Pond. *Slingbacks and Syrup* tells the true tale of a young man who moves to Vermont to study neurobiology and instead discovers *The House of LeMay*, a family of drag queens who live in the Hot Damn Trailer Park of Beaver Pond. This new documentary, explores the citizens of Beaver Pond, the creative team that rose above their roots to develop this unusual stage troupe, and the positive impacts that they have made upon their community through laughter and leadership.

*The House of LeMay* is a comedic drag performance team that has been working together in Vermont for over 10 years to bring live theater to the community. Founded by actor/writer Bob Bolyard and actor/costume designer Michael Hayes, *The House of LeMay* developed from its origins at a private birthday party to become a well known performance group throughout the state. *The House of LeMay* has led the members of the Vermont community to raise many thousands of dollars for VT CARES, the Vermont People with AIDS Coalition, Pride VT, a Vermont school's theater department, and many other important causes. They have also increased awareness of GLBT issues in Vermont, taught their audiences about social and political matters using the power of comedy, and developed from a fringe performance group to a well known and respected team of comic actors in Vermont. (Their website and blog can be found at <http://www.houseoflemay.com/>).

For a number of years, award-winning New York filmmaker Russell Dreher has been working with *The House of LeMay* to create video segments for their stage shows. During that time he began to collect footage of the LeMays. Additionally, Russell conducted extensive interviews with both the members of *The House of LeMay* and the

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fans of their work. This material was used to examine *The House of LeMay* and its many contributions to the community in the new documentary, *Slingbacks and Syrup*.

## **Director and Cast Bios**

### Director and Editor

When Russell J. Dreher set out with the LeMay's to create *Slingbacks and Syrup*, he had no idea that his plans would involve unemployment, cancer, and a Toyota pickup truck recall. Along the bumpy road to the film's completion, Russell was laid off from his job of 8 years, he was diagnosed with cancer, and his film was partially funded by money from the recall of a Toyota pickup. That's a lot for one small film to deal with, not to mention one filmmaker, but he finished the film despite all of this. In the less bumpy part of his life, Russell is a member of the award-winning filmmaking team, NY Street Films. Working with NY Street Films, Russell co-wrote, co-edited, and acted in three award-winning short films, *Il Cane* (Winner Best Picture at Cinemasports NYC), *Local Call* (Winner Best Picture at the NYC Midnight Run) and *XXXXVIII* (Winner of the Audience Award at the 48 Hour Film Project, NYC). Russell has recently edited two new short films, "Don't Call Us" (an official selection of the Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival, 2008) and "Night of Adventure." In addition, Russell has been working with *The House of LeMay* for a number of years to create video shorts for their stage shows. Russell did his undergraduate studies at Franklin and Marshall College and his graduate work at the University of Vermont. Russell may be reached at [tgtotu@earthlink.net](mailto:tgtotu@earthlink.net) or 646.232.3636.

### Members of *The House of LeMay*

Bob Bolyard is the co-founder of *The House of LeMay*. As Amber LeMay, Bob has been running the house for over ten years in his spare time. Bob writes the jokes and songs for the house, and generally acts as house mother. Bob has been performing onstage for

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most of his life, and puts all of that experience to good use with *The House of LeMay*. He currently is the coordinator of the South End Art Hop in Burlington, VT, a karaoke DJ, and a medical model at the University of Vermont.

Mike Hayes, Marguarite LeMay, is the co-founder of *The House of LeMay*. He works at a fabric store during the day, a job that plays nicely into his role creating costumes for the citizens of Beaver Pond. Mike has many years of experience in the theatre, both on and off stage. His outrageous costumes supply *The House of LeMay* with a good portion of their color.

Johnnie McLaughlin plays Lucy Belle LeMay, the southern cousin of the Sisters LeMay. Lucy Belle is a foreign exchange student from Mississippi, and her southern charm goes a long way towards getting her what she wants. By day, Johnnie is a nurse for the Visiting Nurses Association, a job that helps to pay for Lucy's wigs and dresses.

Michael Glidden, is Liza Little, the loud and obnoxious manager of the Edna St. Vincent Lemay Memorial Laundromat and Lint Museum in Beaver Pond. By day, Michael is a barista at a well known college in Vermont, and when he has time he perfects the character of Liza Little by hunting for new and more offensive looking teeth for her to wear.

Matt Viens plays Bibs Fisk, the outspoken mayor of Beaver Pond. Bibs uses her position as mayor to speak out about local and national political issues and sometimes to talk about more domestic issues such as how soon to remove your holiday decorations from your trailer. Matt is a lawyer and works for the state of Vermont when he is not busy collecting antiques and decorating his own home.