

## JERRY CARROLL

### *Lively Arts*

# A Midlife Comeback

**S**inger **Lynda Jamison**, one of the most inspirational stories you'll come across, opens tonight at the Plush Room in San Francisco for a two-week run. She's built a sizzling career since she started six years ago. Jamison was 46 then and weighed 320 pounds. "Just don't pinch me," she tells me. "I'm about to release my second album, and I don't wanna wake up." When she was 20, she had a shot at showbiz but turned it down for marriage and children. Always those questions afterward about whether she could've made it. **Margaret Whiting** coached her when she made the midlife plunge. Life magazine did a spread, ABC's "20/20" had a feature. Her fame grew and she hasn't looked back. "I hope San Francisco remembers they like me. I vowed I'd never be a nervous diva, but I'm as bad as the rest of them." She's shed more than 110 pounds and is looking to lose more. Jamison sees herself as more than a singer. "I believe somebody upstairs wants me out there to show people it's never too late."

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Quite a party Sunday night at the French Laundry in Yountville. The "As Good as It Gets" cast was upstairs whooping it up: director **James L. Brooks**, **Jack Nicholson**, **Helen Hunt**, **Greg Kinnear** and **Cuba Gooding Jr.** **Woody Harrelson** was also having a good time. Gooding led a parade of celebs downstairs to pay homage to the kitchen staff . . .

tween Pacifica Radio — KPFA is its local outlet — and on-air personality **Larry Bensky**. He's been away on medical leave. There's other trouble. "He wants things the network may or may not be able to give," said a Pacifica official. The old guard there is slowly disappearing.

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Turns out that collectible plate the Hamilton Collection is selling in the National Enquirer isn't connected to the Grateful Dead. "It distresses us as much as we feel it must you," says Grateful Dead CEO **Peter McQuaid**. It's a **Stanley Mouse** item. The art is associated in the public mind with the band, but that's as far as it goes . . . From **Matt Regan**: "To honor **Clinton's** arrival in Africa, giraffes will raise their necks and elephants will drop their trunks" . . . Oakland drummer **David Rokeach**, who plays with **Charlie Musselwhite's** band, will see a little more of the world. He'll fill in this week with **Aretha Franklin's** group at a series of Florida gigs . . . The New Marine World theme park opens in Vallejo on Friday with \$40 million in new rides, including two roller coasters, shows and attractions. I liked the old Marine World/Africa USA, but it was losing money.

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In the past 25 years, Silicon Valley has created 7,000 millionaires, Forbes magazine says in its latest issue. Whew . . . The Asian