



Larry Bloch, owner of Wetlands.

your stamp on your ex-wife," says Cornelis Craane, executive director of Club Expo. "You do that, and she's ruined."

"I have no idea how you would do that," says attorney Daniel Ross, executive director of the Manhattan Tavern and Restaurant Association. "It seems impossible."

John McDonald, owner of the Merc Bar, just smirks. "It's just too weird," he says. "Why doesn't he get Greenpeace to do it? Get them off that boat."

"It's not crazy, not to people who believe in it," Bloch insists. "And there's plenty of them." Though, Bloch is finding out, not many who want to run a nightclub. Two months ago, Bloch sent off a business outline to the Grateful Dead, which has been known to bail out other liberal causes. But the Dead's manager, Cameron Sears, says that's not likely. "What Larry has done is unique," says Sears. "But it's not a business we're into." Ben & Jerry's, which funds dozens of environmental activist groups, said it might consider a proposal, though Bloch has not yet approached it. "Traditionally," said company spokesman Brent Campbell, "we deal with ice cream."

As his target sale date of July 1 draws near, Bloch dodges the issue of whether he will eventually give up and merely sell to whomever will pay him. "I haven't faced that question yet," he says. A mirror ball throws swimming diamonds across his face. His intense brown eyes actually blink back tears. "I guess I'll deal with that when it happens."

KEVIN GRAY

Business

THIS CLUB WAS YOUR CLUB, THIS CLUB WAS MY CLUB

ON THE FLICKERING VIDEO MONITOR, A MAN cuts open a live cow and sticks his arm in all the way to the elbow, accompanied by Pink Floyd.

Twenty or so frowning individuals sit in a dark TriBeCa nightclub on a sunny Saturday afternoon, breathing in sour beer and old smoke and watching, just now, a man wringing a mink's neck. One, two, three tries, then *crack*. A middle-aged woman in the front row, wearing a cream dress and a butterfly pendant, lightly touches her own neck and makes a small sound.

So goes the typical off-hour at Wetlands, the eco-activist space on Hudson Street that at night becomes a trippy, environmentally correct dive bar. Free space for right-minded groups has been part of the nightclub's charter since it opened and introduced recycled toilet paper to the downtown bar scene in 1989; this PETA presentation is perhaps the fourth time the group has been here. "They like us and we like them," says Dan Mathews, PETA's campaign director.

After the video presentation, freshly inspired animal-rights activists roam through the two-story former food storage warehouse, eating taco chips and ad-

miring the eco-décor—pillows on the floor, SAVE THE WHALES posters—and the psychedelic VW bus filled with unbleached, organically-grown cotton Bob Marley T-shirts and QUESTION AUTHORITY buttons. "This place is great," gushed Julie Bolkin, a senior from Sarah Lawrence. "I never knew it existed."

It may not for much longer.

Wetlands owner Larry Bloch is 42 now; his shoulder-length hair is gray; he has a 9-year-old son. He wants to move to New Hampshire, but that will require selling this place. "I want somebody who's not going to sell out," Bloch says, using the phrase figuratively, rocking cross-legged beneath the first-floor mural of hippies dancing barefoot in a field. "Is that so impossible?"

It may be.

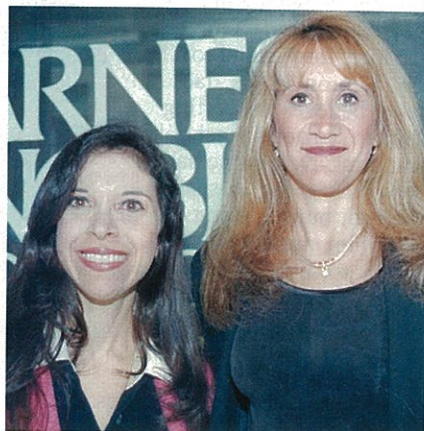
Bloch is asking potential buyers to take over a laundry list of projects, which cost \$100,000 a year to maintain: a paid environmental director, weekly meetings for activists, organizing protest mailings and sit-ins, and boycotting corporate malefactors. So far, no one's biting. "I think," Bloch says, walking amid crates of bottles in the backstage/recycling area, "it freaks some people out."

In an industry where clubs are gutted and reconceived all the time, most doubt that Bloch will be able to have his Wetlands and sell it, too. "That's like leaving

Culture

MEN DON'T MAKE PASSES AT WOMEN WHO TAKE CLASSES

"I DO NOT WANT MY FACE ON TV!" ONE BY one, semi-polished, professional women holding goblets filled with Diet Coke approach Sherrie Schneider and de-

Mrs. Schneider and Mrs. Fein, authors of *The Rules*.

mand that the camera crew from *CBS This Morning* be banished from this tiny, second-floor conference room of the St. Moritz Hotel. Sherrie, a tiny, dark-haired woman with a penetratingly nasal voice, is one of the writers of *The Rules*, a slim volume of dating advice that has improbably gone through seven print runs since it was published by Warner Books last year and, even more incredibly, has just been optioned for a film by *Forrest Gump* producer Wendy Finerman. (As co-author Ellen Fein—frizzy bleached hair, deeply tanned face, plenty of makeup—puts it, “We’ve just been indulged with phone calls!”) All of these women have paid \$14.95 (hardback) or \$5.99 (paperback) for the book and are now paying \$40 to \$50 for additional man-snaring guidance. None, however, wishes to relinquish her anonymity.

“I recommend the book highly,” says a perky, 31-year-old blonde who refuses to divulge even her profession. “I’m one of those assertive, ex-career types.” (She’s gotten results, she says—been dating someone exclusively for the past eight months.) “I own my own company, and let me tell you, if you’re not tough, people will steamroll right over you,” pipes in a fortyish executive who asks to be identified only as “Sparky.” “But I’ve accessed that passive side of myself.”

“I read *Getting to ‘I Do,’* and they said to do that!” adds the blonde. “If you’re aggressive, you know what you’ll wind up with? One of those sensitive, artsy types.”

Sherrie takes to the podium, and a reverent hush falls over the room. After she assures all present that they will not be photographed, she launches

into a brief synopsis of *The Rules* (“Be unavailable”) and a profile of the *Rules* girl (“always happy and busy”).

Then Ellen takes the podium to initiate the Q&A session. Ellen reinforces their credentials—“This book came out in German; it’s, like, in *awl* countries”—and the games begin.

“You know, I’m having a hard time getting off the phone in ten minutes,” says a small, plain blonde, referring to Rule No. 6, which advises one to get off first and get off fast. “I mean, I thought you had to be friends first.” Ellen, voice brimming with sympathy, replies, “Men don’t marry their friends. If they do, ten years down the line they hook up with a

HYPE

Theater of the Absurdly Famous

Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman were in town recently—*Mission: Impossible*, \$75 million first six days—but the pair also made news simply by going to see *Rent*. In fact, since it opened on Broadway in April, the musical has become such a star magnet that the handicapped facilities at the Nederlander Theatre have been christened the “celebrity bathroom,” and new sightings appear in the papers on a daily basis. The show’s publicist, Richard Kornberg, refuses to take credit for all the *Rent* mentions and points out that even with five paparazzi stationed outside every night, the fame quotient has been so high that some of the less-celebrated celebrities get overlooked. The night Warren Buffett attended, for example, “was the same night as Prince,” says Kornberg. “So nobody cared. Nobody recognized him anyway.”

RENT

ROBIN HAZELWOOD



KIDMAN AND CRUISE



JODIE FOSTER



WALTERS AND GEFFEN



MICHELLE PFEIFFER



RICKI LAKE



PATRICK SWAYZE



PAULEY AND TRUDEAU



CHRISTIE BRINKLEY

SPOTTED BY

People magazine:

Paul Allen, Ricki Lake, George Clooney, Mel Gibson, Jodie Foster, Ralph Fiennes, Jennifer Aniston, Jerry Seinfeld, Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman, Prince, Paul Allen.

Daily News:

Michael Eisner and Michael Ovitz, Sylvester Stallone and Jennifer Flavin, Patrick Swayze, Christie Brinkley, Michelle Pfeiffer, Jerry Stiller, Chazz Palminteri, Barbra Streisand, Dustin Hoffman, John Lithgow, David Geffen.

New York Post:

Sigourney Weaver, Isaac Mizrahi, Isabella Rossellini, Jane Pauley and Gary Trudeau, Gloria Steinem, Princess Firyal

of Jordan, Nan and Tommy Kempner, Sid and Mercedes Bass, David Bowie and Iman, Edward James Olmos, Danny DeVito and Rhea Perlman, Chazz Palminteri.

New York Observer:

Leonardo DiCaprio, Kal Rutenstein.

Newsweek:

Harrison Ford, Peter Guber, Harvey Weinstein, Arnold Rifkin, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Steven Spielberg.

Entertainment Weekly:

Barbara Walters.

Attended but, until now, unmentioned:

Robert Altman, Anna Wintour, Matt Dillon, Joel Schumacher, James Ivory, Sally Field,

Harry Anderson, Regis Philbin, Warren Buffett, Connie Chung and Maury Povich, Lorraine Bracco, Al Pacino, Dennis Quaid and Meg Ryan, Ken Olin and Patricia Wettig, Shirley MacLaine, Billy Joel, Robert De Niro, Kevin Bacon and Kyra Sedgwick, Halle Berry, Wendy Wasserstein, Sonny Mehta, Claudia Shear, Sting, Amy Irving, Kate Capshaw, Sydney Pollack, Mike Nichols and Diane Sawyer, Bridget Hall, Steven Meisel, Mary Ellen Mark, Bill Paxton, Joan Plowright, Dr. Ruth Westheimer, Ron Silver, Bronson Pinchot, Georgette Mosbacher, Lanford Wilson, Jeffrey Katzenberg.

