houston voice

Staying gay in Galveston

Island offers two hotels catering to queer clientele

Page 15



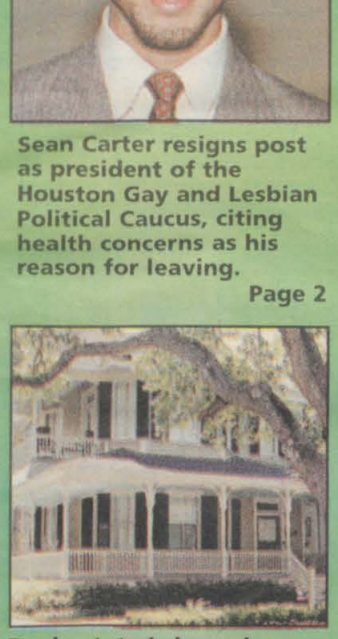
ISSUE 1071 www.houstonvoice.com ALL THE NEWS FOR YOUR *LIFE*. AND YOUR *STYLE*. MAY 4, 2001

INSIDE



Sean Carter resigns post as president of the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus, citing health concerns as his reason for leaving.

Page 2



Real estate is booming on Galveston; Historic Home Tour offers glimpse at isle's past.

Page 2, 11



With six to choose from, Galveston's gay bar scene offers something for everyone.

Page 15

Senate committee passes hate crimes bill

Ellis says he's one vote away from bringing legislation before full Senate for debate

FROM STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

A Senate committee passed a hate crimes bill Wednesday designed to strengthen penalties for crimes motivated by race, religion, sexual preference, age and gender.

The Senate Criminal Justice Committee approved the bill on a 5-1 vote after hearing testimony on it and a proposal that would wipe out any mention of specific groups that would be protected under the legislation. No vote was taken on the proposal by Sen. Todd Staples, R-Palestine.

Senators Kenneth Armbrister, D-Victoria; Mike Moncrief, D Fort Worth; Steve Ogden, R-Bryan; Royce West, D-Dallas; and John Whitmire, D-Houston;

➢ Continued on Page 12



Sen. Rodney Ellis, D-Houston, is shown at the side of the Senate floor during the session on April 18, in Austin. Ellis is Senate sponsor of the James Byrd Hate Crimes Act, which was passed by a Senate committee on Wednesday.

Galveston going gay



Rainbow flags abound in Galveston and the city's tourism bureau wants mainlanders to know their business is welcome on the island. The Galveston Island Convention & Visitors Bureau is about to launch a marketing campaign to attract gay men and lesbians to the Gulfside city which boasts six gay bars and two gay hotels.

Island set to launch marketing campaign to attract gay tourism

by D.L. GROOVER

Galveston wants you! Before you can say Seawall Boulevard, a hefty campaign is soon to debut courtesy of the Galveston Island Convention & Visitors Bureau, and you are the target.

- Gay B&Bs on isle Page 15
- Six gay bars in Galveston Page 15
- Real Estate booming on island Page 2

In the trade it's known as the "alternative market segment," we call it gay men and lesbians. The printed brochure is imminent. Galveston wants your

➢ Continued on Page 13

INSIDE

NEWS
Health news 4
National news 3
Police news 6
Southern news 5
Quote/unquote 10
Bunnies distribute monies 7

VOICES & ECHOES
Minicucci: Day in the life of a gay islander 8
Murphy: Home again, this time on the isle 9
'Dykes to Watch Out For' 9

OUT ON THE BAYOU
Staying gay in Galveston 15
Gay bars abound on isle 15
Home Front: Container gardens 16
Eating Out at Fish Tales 20
On Stage: Armed and dangerous 21
Bayou Calendar 19
Community Calendar 22-23
Occasions 26
My Stars! 27

CLASSIFIEDS 24-25

Issue 1071

houston voice

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Sean Carter resigns presidency of HGLPC

Deborah Rogers appointed interim president until July elections

by MARIA MINICUCCI

EDITOR'S NOTE: In an exclusive interview with the Houston Voice, *Sean Carter spoke about his decision to resign as the current president of the Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus.*

Sean Carter announced his decision to resign as president of the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus at a Caucus meeting on Wednesday, May 2, citing health concerns as his reason for leaving.

"I have had a wonderful time working with this organization. As many of you know I am HIV-positive. I have always been a strong voice to others living with HIV, and now it is time to take my own advice.

"The amount of pressure and anxiety that this position requires takes a lot out of a very healthy individual, but it has taken even more out of someone with a deficient immune system."

Carter said he is proud to have been affiliated with the 25-year-old political organization.

"When I became involved in the Caucus in 1998, I was awed by the group of passionate people involved and I quickly became one more of those passionate people."



Sean Carter submitted his resignation as president of the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus at the group's May 2 meeting, citing health concerns as his reason for leaving.

Carter was elected president of the Caucus in 2000. At that time, he viewed the organization as continuing to be quite viable and began his term with a set of goals and a vision.

"When I became president, the Caucus had some obvious priorities: increase membership, fund-raising, solidify voter registration."

Eighteen months later, Carter acknowledges the success of making the Caucus financially solvent and the successful voter registration process. He adds that the membership did not increase and attributes that mainly to the changes, positive changes, in the community over the years.

"We have seen the expansion of political organizations in Houston with the Stonewall Democrats, Log Cabin Republicans, Progressive Voters in Action. Of course, this spreads the resources around, particularly the volunteer base to several places."

Carter was quick to clarify any misperception about working against Progressive Voters in Action (PVA) or the Caucus becoming obsolete.

"We see our work as very compatible and have always been eager to work with them. I think they are doing a great job—they are well organized, have paid staff and we are on the same page as far as our goals and our mission."

Carter also negates the suspicion that the Caucus may be obsolete.

"Absolutely not! This upcoming city election is just one example of our viability. Our endorsement process has a respected reputation throughout the city of Houston. We have been and continue to be consistently fair and clean with regard to screening candidates.

"This upcoming election, we will be on board to continue that process."

Carter also mentioned plans for the Caucus board to organize a joint fund-raiser with PVA in the near future pertaining to the November election.

Carter readily admits that the decision to step down as president was a struggle. During

➢ Continued on Page 11

Galveston real estate offers buyer's market

From historic Victorians to beach front condos, isle has affordable options for a home away from home

by ELLA TYLER

Perhaps your day or weekend on Galveston leaves you wanting more. More sun, sand and water. Or perhaps you want less. Less traffic, hassle and stress. Or perhaps the home tour kindled a desire to restore a Victorian cottage.

All of a sudden, the idea of having a weekend home on Galveston may seem worth investigating.

After driving around with the Sunday Galveston County Daily News real estate ads, which list addresses and prices, the idea seems absolutely compelling.

For example, the Deem Realty ad showed a updated Victorian duplex for $100,000 and a little cottage in the "Silk Stocking" area that was being auctioned with a minimum bid of $30,000—and a closing date for bids of May 1. Sorry.

David Bowers of the House Company also is member of the Galveston City Council. He also is a lawyer and sells real estate. He bought his first house in Galveston more than 15 years ago and commuted to downtown Houston for five years.



Galveston is home to many Victorian-style houses, many of which have historic designation for surviving the storm of 1900.

"The drive wasn't any worse for me than for people who were coming in from Sugarland and Katy."

Bowers said a lot of people who buy weekend houses in Galveston are like he was. "They're buying the house really to see if they would like living here full time. They come down Friday nights and go to work from here on Monday and eventually this house becomes their primary residence."

Bowers said many people are attracted to Galveston because of its stock of vintage

➢ Continued on Page 11

around the nation

San Fran becomes first city in country to cover sex-change operations

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—San Francisco has gone one step beyond offering domestic-partner benefits by becoming the only city in the nation to offer insurance coverage to transgender employees seeking sex-change operations. The measure passed the city Board of Supervisors 9-2 Monday and will go to Mayor Willie Brown for a signature before the benefits would begin July 1. "It is landmark legislation," said Supervisor Mark Leno, who has worked two years to have the benefits added. Supervisors Tony Hall and Leland Yee were the only two to vote against the benefits Monday. "To set one group apart and factionalize our society creates more animosity, more hatred, more bigotry," Hall said. The city currently has 14 identified transgender employees out of its 37,000 workers. The added benefits would cost workers $1.70 each a month. There is a $50,000 lifetime cap for each employee. The state of Minnesota offered similar benefits, but the program was phased out in 1998.



San Francisco Supervisor Mark Leno's proposal makes the city the only one in the country with the benefits.

VT House committee continues plans to repeal the civil union law

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP)—Vermont's House Judiciary Committee voted last week to continue working on a bill that would repeal that state's civil unions law. The committee is one vote shy of approving a bill that would repeal the law that grants same-sex couples most of the rights and benefits of marriage. Committee members who support the law's repeal hope to get an up-or-down vote on the House floor for a bill that would create reciprocal partnerships. If passed, the reciprocal partnership law would repeal civil unions and offer such partnerships to all couples who are currently prohibited from marrying under state law. Meanwhile, more the 150 Vermont residents who have entered into civil unions gathered on the Statehouse steps for a photograph marking the first anniversary of the law. Over the last year, 427 Vermont couples, and 1,556 out-of-state couples have used the law to formally recognize their relationships.

Curators object to toning down of AIDS exhibit by NYC museum

NEW YORK—The curators of a new exhibit at the Museum of the City of New York about a gay health agency's struggle against AIDS are upset that museum officials altered the exhibit's contents, the *New York Times* reported. The exhibit, "AIDS: A Living Archive," opened April 21 minus some sexually graphic materials, said Jane Rosett, who curated the exhibit with her partner, Jean Carlomusto. The exhibit is part of "Gay Men's Health Crisis: 20 Years Fighting for People with HIV/AIDS," and includes art and historical items documenting the fight against AIDS. "It's very disturbing. It seems like real censorship and distortion of history," said Dr. Lawrence D. Mass, one of GMHC's founders. Mass and Rosett said that photos were cropped to exclude images of intimacy between men, and that museum officials excluded condoms and pictures of male genitals from the exhibit. GMCH spokesperson Marty Algaze said the group understood the compromises that were necessary to be in partnership with the museum.

PA man wants anti-gay harassment suit against Coke reinstated

PHILADELPHIA—A Coca-Cola bottling plant employee is trying to get an anti-gay harassment suit reinstated that was dismissed by a lower court judge, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported. John J. Bibby said he experienced a hostile work environment the entire time he worked at the plant because he is gay. But his case was dismissed last year when a federal judge found that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1965 does not protect gays from workplace harassment. Bibby's attorney, Arthur B. Jarrett, told the three judge appeals panel that Title VII must be read to include more than just gender and sexual conduct. Otherwise, Bibby could sue if he is the target of sexual advances by a woman or another gay man, but not if harassed by a straight man. Coca-Cola attorney Michael G. Tierce countered that Bibby was trying to get the courts to give him what Congress has declined to provide, pointing out that other conditions, such as obesity, are also not protected under federal law.

Teen who sued CA school district for gay-straight club sues again

ORANGE COUNTY, Calif.—A bisexual teen who successfully sued the Orange Unified School District to hold meetings for a gay/straight alliance is now suing over her suspension, the *Orange County Weekly* reported. Heather Zetin, co-founder of El Modena High School's Gay/Straight Alliance, said she is innocent of charges that she bit Canyon Hills High School Principal Stanley Pasqual. Zetin was arrested following the incident, but the Orange County district attorney's office declined to prosecute the case. The lawsuit stems from a school board meeting in March 2000. A videotape shows several dozen protesters standing in silent protest during the meeting. When two protesters went to the front of the room and knocked the microphone from another speaker's hand, the altercation erupted. The videotape does not clearly show the biting. Last year, Zetin successfully sued the school district for the alliance's right to hold meetings

—From staff and wire reports

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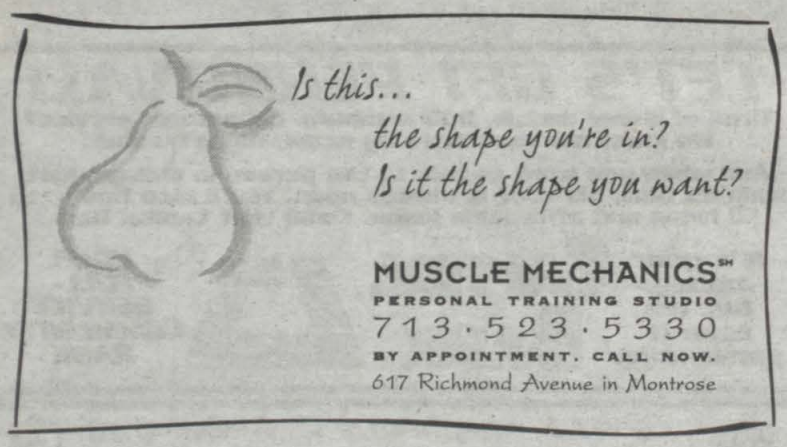
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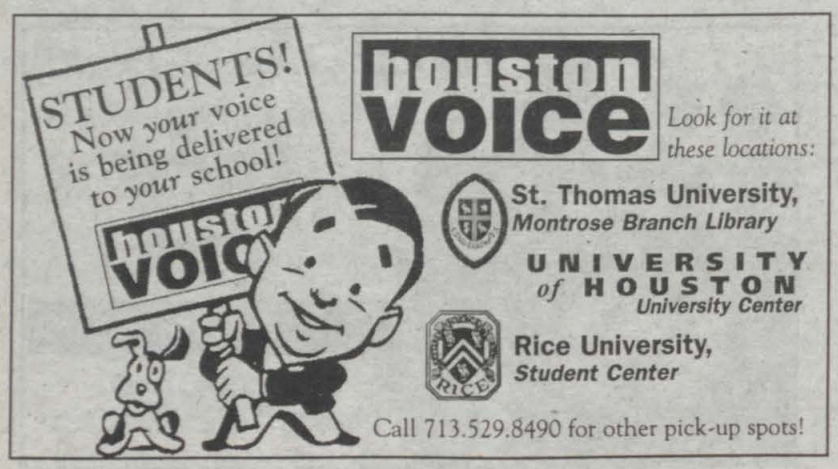
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health news

Typhoid found in gay man, part of overall jump in STDS, feds say

ATLANTA (AP)—Health officials believe that rimming may have contributed to the nation's first sexually transmitted outbreak of typhoid fever. A Cincinnati gay man passed typhoid to seven other men who had sex with him last summer, federal researchers said last week. Typhoid is most often transmitted by swallowing food and water contaminated with human feces. The disease likely circulated by oral-anal contact among the men, said Megan Reller, an epidemiologist with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. Judith Wasserheit, the CDC's STD prevention chief, said the discovery was disturbing but not necessarily surprising. "We are seeing substantial increases in sexually transmitted diseases among men who have sex with men in multiple locations across this country," she said. Typhoid is marked by high fever, weakness, headache and, in some cases, flat, red spots on the skin. About 400 cases are reported annually in the U.S.; nearly 80 percent of the cases can be traced to overseas travel. Typhoid is treatable with antibiotics, but is occasionally fatal for victims who do not seek treatment.

Children of gay parents more likely to depart from gender roles

LOS ANGELES—Two Southern California sociologists are taking issue with 20 years of research on lesbian and gay parenting, suggesting that the sexual orientation of parents does have some effect on children, the *Los Angeles Times* reported. Study authors Judith Stacey and Timothy J. Biblarz argue that the emotional health of children raised by lesbian parents is not significantly different from that of children raised by heterosexual parents, but that the former are more likely to depart from traditional gender roles. The researchers argue that teen boys are more sexually restrained than peers in heterosexual households, while teen girls show the opposite trend. The children are also more open to same-sex relationships, the study found. Stacey and Biblarz suggest the differences have been glossed over because gay parenting is such a volatile issue. Their study found no significant differences between the groups in anxiety, depression or self-esteem in their children. Stacey also said there were some advantages to lesbian parenting, as both partners tended to be highly involved in the children's lives, and more in synch in using parenting techniques. The study primarily focuses on children raised by lesbians, since there are far fewer children raised by gay men.

Lesbians less likely to seek routine gynecological care, survey shows

WASHINGTON—Surveys indicate that lesbians may be less likely to undergo routine gynecological exams because they believe they are not at risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases, the *Orange County Register* reported. A survey by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services found that more than one third of lesbians do not receive routine gynecological care. Fear of anti-gay bias from their health care provider also seems to play a role in their avoidance of scheduling gynecological exams, the studies found. But lesbians may face higher cancer risks, since they don't take hormonal birth control pills, which have been known to reduce the risk of contracting certain types of cancer.

Effort to reduce tobacco use among gays, minorities gets $21 million

WASHINGTON—The American Legacy Foundation announced last week that it will donate $21 million over the next three years to organizations that are working to reduce tobacco use among gays and other minorities. "Accumulating evidence shows that smoking rates are higher among adult and adolescent lesbians and gay people than straight people. What's worse prevention and cessation research and interventions for LGBT are virtually non-existent," said Greg Greenwood, an investigator for the Queer Tobacco Intervention Project. The foundation was established by the 1998 Master Settlement between the tobacco industry and a coalition of state attorneys general. According to the foundation's press release, each group will have access to $3 million in grant money, with $3 million going to agencies that work on collaborative, cross-cultural projects. Information about the grants, to be awarded later this year, can be found at www.AmericanLegacy.org.



Helen Lettlow, director of program development for the American Legacy Foundation, said gays are one of six 'priority populations' being targeted to curb high rates of tobacco use through $21 million in grants.

New studies cast doubt on theory that AIDS spread through polio vaccine

LONDON—New studies have cast more doubt on the controversial idea that AIDS arose from an oral polio vaccine that was contaminated with a precursor to the AIDS virus. For years, some researchers have speculated that the polio vaccine was grown in chimpanzee kidney cell cultures that carried the precursor virus, which was then passed to people when the vaccine was administered in Africa in the late 1950s. But in the April 26 issue of the journal *Nature*, British and Swedish scientists report that they found no chimp DNA in a stock of early polio vaccine used in Africa in the 1950s. Also, an evolutionary analysis of HIV strains in the Congo indicates they trace back to a common ancestor that infected people rather than chimps.

—From staff and wire reports

For more news, visit **www.houstonvoice.com**

around the south

GA court agrees to hear case testing VT civil union in custody case

ATLANTA—The state Court of Appeals will review the first case in Georgia to test Vermont's civil unions law. Atlanta resident Susan Freer, 36, seeks to regain visitation with her three children. Her ex-husband and the boys' father, Darian Burns, charged in court that because she visited the boys in the home she shared with her partner, Debra, she should be held in contempt of a 1998 consent order in which both parents agreed not to visit the children "during any time where [one] cohabits with or has overnight stays with any adult" to whom they are not married or related. The Freers obtained a Vermont civil union last year. "By virtue of the fundamental right to privacy, their marriage should be honored," said Adrian Lanser, Susan Freer's attorney. But Mathew Staver, president and general counsel of Orlando-based Liberty Counsel, the law firm representing Burns, said marriage is only for opposite-sex couples in Georgia. The court is expected to hear the case sometime this fall.

Police in LA label anti-gay slurs in altercation as 'free speech'

BATON ROUGE, La.—Police charged two men and one woman in an April 15 altercation that allegedly involved slurs and violence toward four lesbian LSU students, including one of the women later charged in the incident. The women allege that Regan Ilgenfritz, who was later charged with battery, moved to protect her girlfriend from a physical attack and was beaten while the men called her a "dyke." Michael Holdeman, 18, and Tommy Lott, 36, both of Livingston, also face simple battery charges. Baton Rouge police did not classify the incident as a hate crime, and a police spokesperson said that the alleged anti-gay slurs were a matter of "free speech." The women also complained that police later interviewed them about the incident between 1 a.m. and 4 a.m., waking them from bed. Police said that investigators wanted to dispose of the case quickly.

AL House again okays measure to add gays to state hate crime law

MONTGOMERY, Ala.—The state House approved adding sexual orientation to the state's hate crimes law last week. The measure now moves to the Senate, which let the bill die without a vote last year. House Bill 423, which includes sexual orientation as a protected category—and defines it as heterosexuality, homosexuality or bisexuality—passed the House by a 45-42 vote. The bill's sponsor, state Rep. Alvin Holmes (D-Montgomery), said it simply makes it clear that the right to be free from reasonable fear, intimidation, harassment and physical harm extends to everyone in the state. But the measure faces strident opposition from legislators who argue that it creates a special class of protection for gays.



Alabama state Rep. Alvin Holmes says his gay-inclusive hate crimes proposal, which passed the House last week, would protect all citizens—gay or straight—and should be okayed by the Senate.

LA lawmakers dump civil union ban, consider several gay-friendly bills

BATON ROUGE, La.—A flurry of legislative activity last week directly affects gays, including the failure of anti-civil union bill to pass the state Senate. Lawmakers also introduced a bill to repeal the state sodomy law, which already faces a court challenge, and two competing bills that would ban anti-gay workplace harassment. Another measure would remove gays arrested for having consensual sex under the state's sodomy law from public notification provisions of a sex offender law. On April 26, the Senate failed to pass a measure by state Sen. "Clo" Fontenot to ban civil unions in the state, even though the vote was 17-16 in favor of the bill. The bill needed a two-thirds majority—or 20 votes—to pass. Fontenot brought the bill up a second time on Tuesday, when it again failed to garner the needed vote. The legislative session ends June 18.

SC woman who embezzled from AIDS charity gets 15-year sentence

FLORENCE, S.C. (AP)—A woman who embezzled more than $30,000 from an AIDS charity has been sentenced to 15 months in prison. Karen Rochelle Beckford, 34, was sentenced April 26 for stealing funds from Hope for the Pee Dee, which provides health care services for people with AIDS. The agency receives between $200,000 and $400,000 in federal funds a year. Beckford, who directed Hope for about a year, will serve the sentence consecutively with a sentence she is serving in Arizona related to a 1991 incident in which she embezzled funds from another employer. She also was ordered to pay $30,511.31 in restitution. Beckford admitted typing her name on checks for Lab Corp., a local company that performed tests for the clinic, and depositing them in her personal account.

—From staff and wire reports

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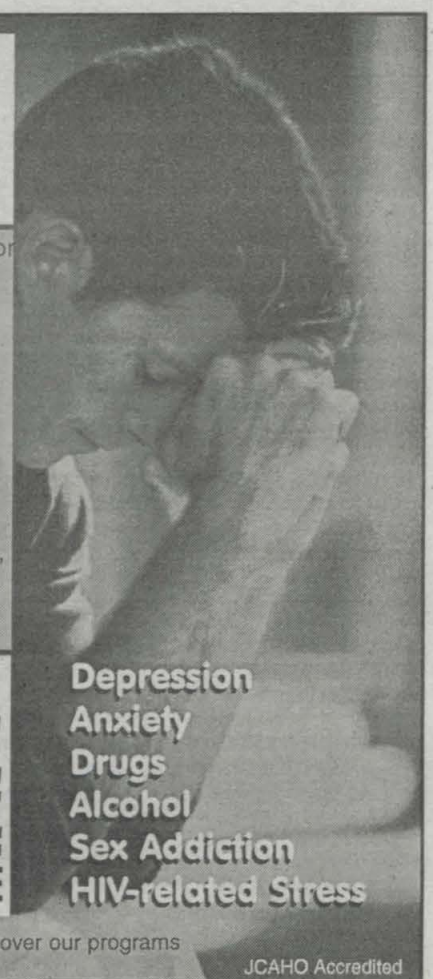
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Saturday • May 12
Breakfast Club 9:30am

Monday • May 14
Eucharist 7:30pm

Friday • May 18
Morning Prayer 10am

Saturday • May 19
Day of Prayer
9am - 3pm

police beat

PA man claims anti-hetero bias prompted grocery store assault

NEW HOPE, Pa. (AP)—A Pennsylvania man who accused a gay rights advocate of discriminating against him because he is straight has been charged in a supermarket scuffle they had March 31, police said. David Vine, 59, was charged with simple assault, disorderly conduct, harassment and stalking for allegedly shoving, shaking and striking store employee Elaine McNeely, who also organizes New Hope's Gay & Lesbian Task Force. McNeely said Vine asked whether she was involved with the task force and told her he thought she was discriminating against him, a straight man. When McNeely tried to leave the store's deli, Vine allegedly "took hold of both of the victim's arms and shook her back and forth while yelling at her," police said. Vine is accused of hitting McNeely twice with his cane and pushing her into a soft-drink display. Vine's attorney Christopher Serpico, said he and his client "look forward to having our day in court."

South African man sentenced to life for killing gay youth activist

CAPE TOWN—A 24-year-old South African man has been sentenced to life in prison for the premeditated murder of a gay youth, *SAPA* reported. Morne Langeveld was convicted of the murder of Johan le Roux Theunissen, who had just recently reconciled with his father, Danie Theunissen, by debating gay rights on a South African television show. The father said the debate had changed his views about homosexuality, and he had moved to be near his son, who was living with a partner at a gay commune. Theunissen told the court that he hoped his son's murderer would be "sent to Botswana, and I want to be the hangman." Langeveld was sentenced to an additional two years for stealing equipment from the commune. "The deceased showed you friendship and hospitality, and your response was to kill him and steal from him," Justice Selwyn Selikowitz said in sentencing Langeveld.

D.C.'s top cop denounces anti-gay, racist messages sent by officers

WASHINGTON—District of Columbia Police Chief Charles Ramsey denounced anti-gay, racist and sexist messages that his police officers sent each other, the *Washington Blade* reported. Ramsey discussed the messages at a hearing of the D.C. Council's Judiciary Committee. Police officials said they discovered the offensive language in March during a routine review of e-mail transmissions that officers send each other from computer terminals in police squad cars. Of the 971,000 messages transmitted over the past two years, a keyword search identified potentially improper language used in 27,000 of the messages, or less than 3 percent of the messages sent. Officials said the officers appeared to have violated police procedures by using police-owned terminals to send unprofessional and improper messages, even though the officers never intended the messages to be released publicly. "There is no place in the [police department] for racist, sexist, homophobic, and malicious speech or actions of any sort," Ramsey said.



District of Columbia Police Chief Charles Ramsey criticized the 27,000 messages fellow officers sent to each other last year that included anti-gay, racist or sexist language.

San Fran district attorney won't fight venue change in dog mauling case

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Although it hasn't yet been requested, District Attorney Terence Hallinan said last week that he won't oppose any attempt to move the trial of Marjorie Knoller and Robert Noel in the dog mauling death of lesbian lacrosse coach Diane Whipple. "We don't intend to fight a change of venue. We want a speedy trial," Hallinan said. The two lawyers charged in the death of their neighbor had their arraignment postponed for a third time while they continued to seek legal counsel, a tactic that riled prosecutors. Knoller and Noel appeared before Judge Herbert Donaldson, who continued their arraignment until May 9. Knoller faces a second-degree murder charge in the Jan. 26 death of Whipple, who was fatally mauled by two Presa Canario-mastiffs under the couple's care. Knoller and Noel both face charges of involuntary manslaughter and keeping a mischievous dog that killed a human. During the court appearance last week, Knoller and Noel never turned to face Whipple's partner, Sharon Smith, who was seated in the front row. Smith and Whipple's mother have filed wrongful death suits against the couple.

CA judge doesn't free gay awaiting hearing on parole case

VAN NUYS, Calif. (AP)—A judge denied on April 27 a request by gay convicted murderer Robert Rosenkrantz to be released from prison while awaiting a hearing next month to decide if he was wrongly denied parole by California Gov. Gray Davis. Superior Court Judge Paul Gutman denied Rosenkrantz's request to be released on bail or on his own recognizance pending the decision. Rosenkrantz is serving a sentence of 17 years to life for the murder of high school classmate Steven Redman, who outed Rosenkrantz to his father. Lawyers for Rosenkrantz have filed a lawsuit claiming Davis has a "blanket policy that all prisoners convicted of murder should never be paroled." Davis has said he has no arbitrary policy against granting parole to murderers. Three religious groups filed friend-of-the-court briefs on behalf of Rosenkrantz last month.

—From staff and wire reports

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Local News

Bunny money distributed

Bunnies on the Bayou contributes $31,000 to area organizations

by D.L. MURPHY

While the annual Bunnies on the Bayou celebration always offers a good excuse to don a frilly bonnet and have fun, the Easter event also is a big fund-raiser for area gay-related organizations.

Bunnies on the Bayou, Inc. announced donations to six area groups totaling more than $31,000 at a ceremony held April 22.

The Art League Houston provides a creative outlet for those suffering with HIV/AIDS. The $4,000 they received will allow them to expand their current programs so that an evening class can now be included.

AssistHers received $5,000 to help fund their ongoing programs to educate the health care community toward being more lesbian-friendly, to continue volunteer education, and to continue to provide vital services to women suffering from acute and chronic health problems.

Bering/Omega Community Services received $2,500 for their adult day care center. The center provides care for those who should not or cannot be left alone during the day. The money will be used to install an awning and ceiling fan on the patio. This will enable those who have become light sensitive as a result of their drug regimens to spend time outside during the day.

The Houston Buyers' Club will use the $2,500 they received to fund an education program concerning treatment information and the use of nutritional supplements to help alleviated the side effects of current HIV/AIDS medications.

The Houston Gay and Lesbian Film Festival plans to use the $5,000 they received to support their unique, six-venue festival beginning at the end of May.

PFLAG is planning the fifth in their series of "Healing the Hurt" conferences. The $5,000 BOTB, Inc. donated also will be used to help fund the various PFLAG public awareness campaigns.

People With Aids Coalition has been receiving grants from Bunnies on the Bayou for several years. This year's grant of $7,000 will be used to continue to provide furniture and household items to PWA's clients.

Bunnies on the Bayou, Inc. hosts the annual Easter party held at the Wortham Center. This past year was BOTB's 22nd party, and set an all-time record for funds raised.

More than 2,000 people helped raise more than $57,000. This was a huge increase over the previous record, $41,000, set two years ago.

Another source of fund raising at the party is the Easter Bonnet contest. This year's winner, the Krewe of Olympus, donated their $1,000 grand prize and the $693 raised in votes to SNAP (Spay Neuter Assistance Program).

Bunnies' nine board members, 30 hosts, numerous volunteers and generous in-kind contributors help insure that every penny collected at the party goes back to the community.

Bunnies' members are beginning to move to year-round community service. This was the second year members provided stuffed bunnies to hospitalized children. The members went bed to bed, personally giving the toys to the children. The Bunnies board hopes to do more of this type of work in the future.



DALTON DEHART

Representatives from the six organizations receiving donations from Bunnies on the Bayou, Inc. gather for a photo. The Art League of Houston, AssistHers, PFLAG, the Houston Buyers Club, Bering-Omega, the Houston Gay and Lesbian Film Festival and PWA shared in the $31,000 raised at this year's Easter event.

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VIEWPOINT

At home in Galveston: A day in the life of a gay islander

by MARIA MINICUCCI



Sure, Galveston is a great place to visit, but would you want to live there? As a gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered person, would you choose a much smaller town lifestyle over the hustling, bustling temperament of the fourth largest city in the country?

This is a glimpse into the life of one lesbian, who, indeed, made a deliberate choice to live in Galveston.

Cindy Lucia is a 37-year-old woman who moved to Galveston 11 years ago from Beaumont.

"I needed to make a major change in my life and leaving Beaumont was among those changes."

Why did she move to Galveston? "I considered all of my options and also took into account the things that were important to me and the kind of person I am and Galveston just fits in with those priorities."

Lucia describes the ease with which you can maneuver around the island. "You can be just about anywhere on the island within minutes." This no-hassle mobility is just one of many advantages.

"I couldn't believe how warm and welcoming everyone was. It was pretty obvious that I was moving in with my female lover and no one batted an eye. They came by, introduced themselves, offered help, brought over food, tools, whatever. In fact, they are still doing that. My neighbor just gave me some watermelons and cantaloupes that they picked up."

Lucia works in the medical field so employment opportunities would be ample almost anywhere. Her first job was at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston. According to Lucia, she had no problem finding employment that she was trained in and that was enjoyable to her. More surprising, however, was once again the openness and acceptance in the workplace for diversity, including sexual orientation.

"UTMB was great as far as not tolerating any form of prejudice. It simply was not a big deal to be who you are. No one feared losing their job because of their sexual preference. This level of acceptance was quite a surprise to me."

Lucia says an "open atmosphere" permeates the entire island.

"You know, I have never, in the past 11 years, really encountered any blatant hostility or rejection against gays."

It is quite common to equate small towns with small mindedness. Lucia has not experienced this and in fact recounts the last election for mayor in Galveston when an openly gay candidate was campaigning.

"Throughout Bowers (David Bowers was the gay candidate running for mayor) campaign , his sexual orientation was never the focal point; it was simply what his political platform was about."

What does Galveston have to offer as far as a "gay" social life? Surprisingly, on an island with a population of around 60,000, there are six gay bars, so if clubbing is your thing, there is quite a choice.

For Lucia, who does not particularly frequent bars, she still claims that having a satisfying social life was not difficult for her.

"I have had a steady group of lesbian and gay friends. We usually plan a different outing every month—dinners, gambling, boating, things like that. And, for the past several years, there is a monthly poker night that is also a time to socialize."

Lucia also explains that gays and lesbians tend to be much more integrated into all of the activities that the island has to offer such as Dickens on the Strand, Mardi Gras, Galveston Home Tours and the like.

"It is just not a big deal. You can virtually go anywhere and be gay without dire repercussions."

Ironically, it is no secret that Galveston has at least as high a crime rate as any large city. However, hate crimes against gays and lesbians do not seem to be among the category of crimes being committed.

"I am not saying that it never happens, but since I have lived here, I do not recall anyone being victimized by a criminal act because they were gay or lesbian."

Is Galveston paradise? Probably, not quite. One of the things that Lucia does cite as a bit of a disadvantage is the limited cultural avenues.

"We have the Opera House, the Strand Theater and other very fine cultural venues, but they are limited by the 'tourist season.' This means that access to theater or concerts is based on a very quick and short seasonal calendar rather that year round.

"That," Lucia says, "is one of the reasons she would make a trip to Houston." Would there be anything else that could lure Lucia to move to the "big city?"

She sits on her patio, sipping coffee, glancing at the star-filled sky pondering this question very seriously. After a couple of minutes, she shakes her head slowly and says, "Well, maybe a fantastic job opportunity, but, actually, no. I love visiting Houston and I love coming home."





VIEWPOINT

Home again, home again... this time on the island

by D.L. MURPHY

My partner and I, in a fit of nesting frenzy, bought a house in Galveston a year ago. This house was bought as hope for the future, since it was not at all inhabitable in the present.

We were excited to purchase a home together, and lovingly planned and began the house's rehabilitation. We envisioned our house as a weekend retreat, as a refuge from the day-to-day stress of the city.

And, as these things always go, we started talking about living on the island full time. I was reluctant to talk about it at all, since moving to Galveston would mean leaving Montrose. I remember when I left Miami, all those years ago, broken hearted that I had lost my home long before I ever left it. Lucky woman that I am, I immediately found a new home in Texas. One look at the Montrose, and I knew this was it. I thought I would be here forever.

Having happily settled in Nirvana, why am I now leaving? And going, of all places, to Galveston?

Galveston is a small place; the population is about 60,000. Okay, for years we have joked that living in the Montrose is like living in a small town, you see the same 300 people over and over and over. So why move? Easy, Galveston is a town, with its richness and diversity all present in one very small geographic space; just like the Montrose used to be; before it began to become an inner loop WASP suburbia.

Galveston reminds me of the Miami I grew up in. Okay, I left South Florida 22 years ago and have not returned, not even once, since. Seems like a contradiction that I long to return? No, not really.



I left Miami in total disgust—the paradise I had grown up in had been invaded by people who did not understand or appreciate what made my home so special. They destroyed the character of a truly beautiful place; eager to remake it into the homes they were leaving, just without the snow.

Sound familiar? No? Then think about the changing demographics of the Montrose over the past three years. Yuppies are eager to make the Montrose just like the suburban neighborhoods they are leaving, just without the daily commute.

My neighborhood in Galveston has a joyful sexual diversity. My street has married couples, married couples with kids, single straights, single gays, at least one gay couple, at least two lesbian couples. My street in the Montrose has my gay neighbor, straight white people, and us. I can't tell you how upset I was the day I realized this.

Our neighborhood in Galveston is one of the historic districts. People have a serious interest in restoring and preserving the grandeur of these homes. They were beautiful before, they will be beautiful again. I cry regularly as I drive through the Montrose and see what has been destroyed so that city tract housing can be constructed.

Galveston is "live and let live." My new neighbors there came over immediately, eager to meet us. They continue to come over when we are there, just to see how we are doing. My new neighbors in the Montrose see me and move closer to their children, eyeing me warily.

People try to talk me out of moving. "But, think of the culture in Houston." Galveston has the 1896 Opera House, summer theater productions, and movies enough to fill my urge for "culture." Besides, for the six times a year I go to the museum I can drive to Houston.

"But everything is so close here." Yes, and I can walk to everything I want in Galveston. It only seems close here because everything else is so spread out.

"But, you'll miss gay life." Nope, this little island has abundant gay culture. And more of us are moving there every day.

"We'll miss you." And, my friends, I'll miss you too. I am too old to blithely think "I'll make new friends on the island." I know I'll make new friends, but they will not be replacements for my companions of 20 years.

I know and trust these women, I know and trust myself. And, as always, we'll find a way to make our lives together work, regardless of whatever choices we make.

"But you'll be bored". Wanna bet? I'll have peace and quiet, so idle time will be restful rather than boring. I'll have the pace and rhythms of a small town, full of all the scandals only the locals know. I'll once again have a sense of neighborhood, of place. I'll have to learn a new library, new grocery stores, new people, new ways.

Crazy I may become, bored I will not be.

And again I'll live some place that feels like home. In some ways like the Miami I grew up in, in some ways like the Montrose I came of age in. And I'll learn the things that make the island special. And I'll love it, just like I loved Miami, just like I loved Montrose.

And, the very most important thing, I'll feel like I'm home again.





"quote/unquote"

compiled by REX WOCKNER



"I know that's the yuppiest thing imaginable."
—Gay writer Andrew Sullivan to the *Washington Post* on the fact that his beagle went to doggie day care that day, April 19

"If you want to be a writer, learn Latin."
—Lesbian author Rita Mae Brown (right) ("Rubyfruit Jungle") to the *Houston Voice*, April 6

"We have a president who was selected rather than elected. He stole the presidency through family ties, arrogance and intimidation, employing Republican operatives to exercise the tactics of voter fraud by disenfranchising thousands of blacks, elderly Jews and other minorities."
—Barbra Streisand at BarbraStreisand.com

"The last time I was in Chicago with Champions on Ice, I walked into [the popular gay bar] Sidetrack and I was mobbed. People were asking me all kinds of things, mostly about skating, and you know, I love it, because I rarely get a chance to meet new friends."
—Skating champ Rudy Galindo to the *Windy City Times*, April 18

"To be forced back into the heterosexual cage of coupledom [via gay marriage] is not a step forward but a step back into state-imposed definitions of relationship. With all that we have learned, we should be helping our heterosexual brothers and sisters out of their state-defined prisons, not volunteering to join them there."
—Lesbian author Jane Rule, who wrote the book that was made into the classic lesbian film "Desert Hearts," to Toronto's *Xtra!*, April 5



"I love my minivan. I'm thinking now of really souping it up and getting some, like, really hot rims for it. Make it some bitchin' Soccer Mom ride."
—RuPaul (left) to the Phoenix gay newspaper *HeatStroke News*, April 19

"By now we've seen women kissing each other on everything from 'Ally McBeal' to 'Buffy, the Vampire Slayer.' For 'Friends,' the idea seems not only old-hat, it smacks of desperation."
—*New York Post* columnist Adam Buchman, April 26, on the kiss shared by Jennifer Anniston and Wynona Rider on 'Friends'

"We live in a Toronto bubble, working 14 to 15 hours a day. We were just trying to figure out where the grocery store is and how to get there. Last week was our first trip to the states as a group and we felt the impact [of being celebrities now]. How did it feel? Amazing. People come up to me and say, 'I came out to my mother because of your show.'"
—Actress Thea Gill (Lindsay on Showtime's "Queer As Folk") in a March 22 appearance at American University in Washington, D.C.



"People already knew me from 'Talk Soup.' It's a little different now knowing that when someone comes up and says, 'I've seen your show,' they've seen my bare butt—they've seen me naked. That's the peculiar part of it. But they're respectful."
—Actor Hal Sparks (right) (Michael on Showtime's "Queer As Folk") in a March 22 appearance at American University in Washington, D.C.

"I timed it. It's like a 5 1/2-second mouth-to-mouth kiss. We haven't seen anything like this before on network TV. ... This is a huge leap and a huge kiss. We might now start seeing physical affection and romance between other gay characters."
—GLAAD's Scott Seomin on the kiss between two male teens May 1 on TV's Dawson's Creek, to *USA Today*, April 30

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Island has rentals for weekend getaways

➢ Continued from Page 2

houses. "We have more than 5,000 pre-1900 structures on the island. There are more shotgun cottages than grand mansions, but they all have character and every house has a story," he said. "These houses are like the California redwoods. Once they are gone, they can't be replaced."

When asked if the prices remind him of prices in the Montrose and Heights in the late '70s, Bowers said, "I'm not sure they are the same, but the prices here are very good.

"We just sold a two-bedroom house with a garage apartment, with central air and heat, in livable condition, for $61,000. We have a raised artists cottage for less than $50,000 and a cute Victorian duplex that needs work for $37,500."

For people who don't want to spend their weekends working on the house, Bowers offers, "a big, fancy, completely restored Victorian for $280,000.

"The market is active right now, but there's things that have been on the market a little too long, and might be overpriced, so we're encouraging offers to see what folk want to do."

Bowers hedged when asked him to compare the cost of buying a weekend place in Galveston to the cost of spending one weekend a month at the nicest hotel in Galveston. "I don't think you can compare them," he said. "A weekend home is a place you can get away physically and mentally, and with all the festivals and events in Galveston, you'll always have friends coming down.

"I think people would use their house more than once a month. New restaurants and coffeehouses are opening. Besides, a house is a long-term investment which may appreciate, has tax advantages and can be rented out."



Galveston has many resort rentals available for summer vacations or weekend getaways. Beach front homes like the one above, range from about $1,500 to $3,350 weekly during the peak summer season, depending on size and proximity to the beach.

Bowers suggested that condos appeal to many. "Places like the San Luis, the Breakers and the Galvestonian have a great beach setting and lots of amenities. These properties have appreciated well, some sell for up to $250,000."

There are many less expensive condos available, Bowers said, and many have rental pools to handle renting the unit.

Bowers said that many second homes can be financed with conventional mortgages with 10 percent down.

"One of the nice things about buying a second home in Galveston is that we aren't in the wilderness," he said. Bowers "We have good local mortgage companies and good local insurance companies and Houston mortgage companies like Galveston business, too. Having a local insurance agent makes a lot of difference."

INFO

www.barneyrapp.com
www.TheHouseCompany.com
www.tramonterealty.com
www.galveston.com/zapp

Election for new Caucus president to be held in July

➢ Continued from Page 2

the Caucus meeting, Carter shared that "three weeks ago, I was in Denver, Colo. and had some time to step away from the daily, almost hourly, responsibilities of the Caucus. This was not an easy decision to make."

At the same time, Carter also acknowledges the ups and downs of not only an all-volunteer organization, but one that revolves solely around political issues that more often than not are a hotbed for conflict, strife and as Carter does not fail to include, passion.

Carter said he feels that he is leaving the Caucus in good shape and in good hands.

Deborah Rogers was voted to become the interim president until elections are held in July. Jessica Redman, the current vice-president declined the position. Rogers has been serving as secretary.

Carter offered praise for Rogers abilities and commitment to the Caucus.

"Deborah has been a longtime supporter of the Caucus and was on the board during the 1985 referendum on non-discrimination in Houston. She has a history with the Caucus, she has a strong voice and much needed energy to this year's agenda."

Sue Lovell, among several esteemed past presidents of the Caucus was at the meeting on May 2 when Carter resigned. Lovell applauded Carter's efforts and decision leave and added, from experience, "Being the president of the Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus is the toughest job in the GLBT community."

Carter's resignation speech not only moved people and encouraged their ongoing support for the Caucus, but it also exemplified Carter's approach to life as he quoted Ralph Waldo Emerson.

"Whatever you do, you need courage.... Peace has its victories, but it takes brave men and women to win them."

Carter plans to continue living with the courage of his convictions.

"My volunteer work is where my heart is, so I will definitely not disappear from the GLBT community. I am working with Jack Valinski, (executive director of the Pride Committee) to create a joint data base between the Caucus and Pride," Carter said. "I will also devote my time and energy to AIDS charities."

Galveston home tour starts this weekend

Two-weekend event gives glimpse at eight privately owned, historic homes

by ELLA TYLER

Galveston was once known as the "Queen of the Gulf," and the tour of its historic homes to be held this and next weekend will show how it earned that title. The tour, sponsored by the Galveston Historical Foundation, features eight privately owned homes that are not usually open to the public.

"This is an especially comprehensive tour," said Margaret Doran, chair of the Tour Selection Committee. "The houses span almost six decades of Galveston architectural history and illustrate several different styles of architecture. In addition, they give visitors an opportunity to explore several historic neighborhoods, each of which has its own particular ambiance."

Galveston Historic Homes Tour tickets are $20 each. Each of the homes will be open for continuous guided tours throughout all four days of the event, and tickets may be used during both weekends of the tour. Tour hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays and noon to 6 p.m. on Sundays.

Homes can be viewed in any order. Each ticket provides one admission to each of the homes on tour. Tickets may be purchased at each home on the tour. Two Champagne Tours are offered on the evening of May 4 and May 11. These tours include tours to private homes that are not on the general tour. Tickets are $60 each for one evening or $100 for both evenings, and include a ticket to the weekend Historic Homes Tour.



The Edwin D. Chadick Home at 3328 Ave. O, built in 1909, is one of eight houses featured on the Galveston Historic Home Tour, being held this weekend and next on the island.

Ellis won't support removing specific groups from bill

➢ Continued from Page 1

supported the legislation. Sen. Todd Staples, R-Palestine, voted "no."

"We are one step away from passing this incredibly important act," Dianne Hardy-Garcia, Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby of Texas executive director, said. "This is closer than we have ever been to sending the clear message that Texas will not tolerate hate crimes. Now is the time for Gov. Perry to show leadership on this issue and see this bill through as it is written."

Sen. Rodney Ellis, D-Houston, is the Senate sponsor of HB 587 authored by Rep. Senfronia Thompson, D-Houston, which was approved by the Texas House last week in a 87-60 vote.

Ellis said he would not support any language that would take out the specific groups listed in the bill.

"I am against that language," Ellis said. "I did not take a knee-jerk political reaction in opposing that language, but I have been down that road before. It has been well-traveled."

The James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Act, named for the black man dragged to death behind a pickup truck in 1998, strengthens penalties for crimes motivated by race, religion, color, disability, sexual preference, national origin or ancestry. The sexual orientation part of the bill, which enhances protections for gays and lesbians, has been the sticking point for conservatives.

Shapiro said she is not concerned that gays and lesbians are protected, but she is worried about singling out any group because other states that have hate crimes statutes that list specific groups keep having to update their lists.

For example, she said some hate crimes statutes on the books specify crimes motivated by classes such as marital status or union status or political affiliations.

"States have added to enumeration almost to the point of silliness," Shapiro said.

Her amendment, which still is being drafted, would target the motive of the offender rather than single out certain groups.

Ellis called that argument "hogwash."

Staples said he agrees that the state needs to send a message that race, bigotry and hatred, but "if we're going to have a law, it should apply to all Texans."

Staples' proposal would have added a provision that would have made a crime a hate crime if it was committed with the intent to oppress, harass or inhibit a large group of people.

Ellis said Wednesday he is one vote shy of being able to bring the bill up for debate by the full Senate—the last step before the bill can move to the governor's desk to be signed into law.

He said if the bill is changed when debated on the Senate floor, he will take it to conference committee and restore any stricken provisions.

Ellis again blamed Gov. Rick Perry for thwarting his chance to bring the Senate version up on the floor earlier this session.

Perry had voiced his concern that two Republican senators would not be present for the planned vote on the bill last month. Ellis said he had the support he needed before Perry intervened.

> "This is the bill that the president of the United States, I think, ... when he was governor killed the bill,"
> —Sen. Rodney Ellis

Perry's office said the governor was just trying to bring all groups together on the bill.

"It is unfortunate that Sen. Ellis is not willing to compromise on a bill as important and emotionally charged as the hate crimes legislation," said Perry spokeswoman Kathy Walt.

"Instead, he is resorting to name calling and political rhetoric, which does nothing but further divide people on this issue," Walt said.

Perry has argued that the proposed hate crimes law would create "new classes of citizens" and that all Texans are adequately protected under the current law.

Ellis also lashed out at President Bush. "This is the bill that the president of the United States, I think, ... when he was governor killed the bill," Ellis said. "I can't prove it. It was clearly my impression."

The state has hate crimes legislation passed in 1993 but lawmakers say prosecutors have complained that it is too vague to enforce.

The fire fueling the hate crimes debate increased on Thursday as state senators stood on the Senate floor, pushing for debate on the bill.

The series of speeches was promoted by news that swastikas had been painted at a Dallas church.

"Think about the psychological impact (the vandalism) will have on the kids attending that church," said West. "It's time members to do something about this issue."

The push for the debate on the bill could be the only time the bill is heard on the Senate floor this session. Senate rules require that two-thirds of the 31-member Senate must agree to bring it to the floor. Republicans hold a 16-15 Senate majority. The session ends May 28.

As the lawmakers made a rare series of speeches on the floor, they were joined by more than a dozen House members who came to show their support for the legislation. Among them was Helen Giddings, D-Dallas, who attends St. Luke's Community United Methodist Church.

Ellis, who has been leading the push for the legislation, told lawmakers he did not believe any of the members were homophobic, despite comments he made Wednesday. "This fear of ultra-right wing homophobics is unwarranted," Ellis said Wednesday.

"I am not homophobic," Shapiro said. "I am not in a right-wing conspiracy."

Isle has rich, interesting history

by ELLA TYLER

Galveston, even by Texas standards, has an interesting history. According to the Texas Almanac, in 1528 Spanish explorer Cabeza de Vaca had a shipwreck and washed up on an island he called Isla de Malhado (Misfortune). Many think it was Galveston.

He and his crew encountered Karankawa Indians, who, de Vaca reports, brought them food. The Indians were driven away by pirates and treasure hunters, and in 1817 the pirate Jean Lafitte moved to Galveston and established a fort.

Lafitte left in 1820. Pirates, and later settlers, were attracted to Galveston because it is the best natural port on the Gulf of Mexico between New Orleans and Verzcruz. Mexico built a customs house there in 1825, which was used by Texas revolutionaries.

The town was founded in 1838 by Michael Menard. Galveston became a major port city and immigration center. In 1854, 82,000 bales of cotton were shipped from Galveston. In both the 1870 and 1880 census, Galveston was the largest city in Texas.

By the 1900 census, it was the forth largest. The hurricane that struck Galveston on Sept. 8, 1900, covered the island with a storm surge of more than 15 feet. Six-thousand people were killed in the city and thousands more on the rest of the island and the mainland, making it the United States' worst natural disaster. Property damage was estimated at $30 million and 3,600 homes were destroyed.

Following the Storm, the city reinvented itself. The Seawall, still a visible monument, was built. What is invisible, and little known today, is that the entire city was raised. Between 1903 and 1910, 500 city blocks were raised from a few inches to more than 16 feet.

Some 2,300 structures were raised and more then 16 million cubic yards of sand were pumped from the harbor.



Though not a historic landmark, the Flagship Hotel, standing on a pier in the Gulf of Mexico and alongside the Seawall, is a Galveston icon.

Variety of events planned on isle this summer

➢ Continued from Page 1

money, but they're going to ask politely.

Mark Bellinger, director of the Galveston Island Convention & Visitors Bureau, couldn't be more upbeat about the work his bureau's accomplished, especially sales manager Justin Turner, in getting out the word and targeting our community.

"In fact," Bellinger said about Turner, "he has gotten a lot of the attractions, hotels, anybody on the island who's interested in catering .to the gay community. We've gotten a great response to that. He's actually put his brand new brochure together right now as we speak, and he's getting some good returns down here.

"I think Galveston Island complements that market. We have a lot to offer that community. People are really opening their eyes."

Naturally, families are Galveston's prime resource, but no businessman is going to turn their back to the numerous, cash-filled pockets of the gay scene.

"I know the market very well," Bellinger added. "I think it's going to work out very good. I personally don't have any hesitations whatsoever."

Summer's almost here; watch for that brochure any day now.



The Galveston Island Convention & Visitors Bureau has designed a brouchure and is about to start a marketing campaign to attract gay men and lesbians to the island.

Isle has gay history

Buccaneer Jean Lafitte lived here on Campeachy Island (a.k.a., Galvez Town, later still, Galveston) in the years following the War of 1812 with his probable lover Pierre—circumspect historians stress that Pierre was his half-brother, although there's not a shred of evidence for this familial whitewash.

In their lavish home, the pirate boys dined on yams and oysters, dressed in the finest togs from Paris couturiers via New Orleans, ate their gourmet meals on sterling silver service trimmed with gold, and threw elaborate parties for their famous and infamous acquaintances and friends.

That he was still slave trading and scuttling ships wasn't looked upon favorably by the United States government, which had pardoned him and his roughneck gang before the Battle of New Orleans, so they asked him to leave the island. Burning his fortress city, he and Pierre sailed away from Galveston in 1821 never to be seen again.

Ever since then, there's always been something to do on Galveston, coupled with a laissez-faire attitude toward being gay.

Openly gay David Bowers ran unsuccessfully for Galveston mayor last year, but his open gayness didn't scuttle his chances as much as did political predictability and over-familiarity. Voter ennui helped, too.

Gay on Galveston is no big thing; it just is. It's this island's refreshing outlook that separates it somewhat from the oh-so-conservative mainland. Islands are like that, just ask Lafitte.

From spring through summer, there are more than enough annual events and festivals to make any pirate among you smile.

May

HISTORIC HOMES TOUR. The first two weekends in May (5, 6, 12, & 13) are set aside for interior beauty as the Galveston Historical Foundation sponsors this favorite island event for the 27th consecutive year. What makes this tour especially notable is the fact that these stately houses are privately owned and not usually opened to the public's gapes and envious ahhs.

Among the island's crown jewels of architecture and interior design are the 1873 Elizabeth Ruhl Cottage, a raised Greek revival gem; a peek into recent, state of the art rehab work with the 1879 Henry Homberg Home; the queen of bargework, or what's known as carpenter gothic, in the 1887 Jacob Sonnentheil Home; the 1909 Edwin D. Chadwick Home with its melange of Queen Anne, Craftsman, and Colonial influences—yes, all in the same house; and the clean Spanish mission style seen to exquisite advantage in the 1922 Adrian F. Levy Home. $15 will grant you access to the rich and powerful.

409-765-7834.

OLEANDER FESTIVAL. Exterior beauty gets the once-over as Galveston's official flower is extolled, praised, and downright worshiped. Brought onto the island from Jamaica in 1841, this shrubby poisonous evergreen took on a life of its own in the salty gulf breezes. It's never left.

Although the entire month is devoted to the hardy bloomer, with its own official proclamation, May 18-20 at Moody Gardens is the site of the floral design competition and the art show; while the patio sale on May 26-27 at Bishop's Palace is a chance to buy your own showy plant. Free scenic bus tours are also available during this weekend, just in case you haven't seen enough oleander the previous weeks.

409-770-9077.

MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND. This is the island's summer beginning, and beach parties with loud music are in order. East Beach, to the far right of the island at Seawall & Boddeker, will rock to the DJ hosts from 97.1 FM; while Stewart Beach, the alcohol-free family beach, Seawall & Broadway, will compete with a concert hosted by 106.9 FM.

While the dolphins wash up dead from noise pollution, downtown's historic Strand district jams with a c/w concert and a "Beer and Taco" 1K run, whatever that means. There's also a classic car rally at Pier 21. On Sunday, May 27, Houston's Buzz 94.5 begins its summer concert series back on East Beach, after the dead deaf dolphins have been swept up.

If you like men in uniform, here's your chance to see real live ones. To commemorate the significance of the National holiday, there's an open house on board the USS Cavalla and USS Stewart, docked at Seawolf Park on nearby Pelican Island, accompanied by a WW II naval display.

June

AIA SANDCASTLE COMPETITION. If you remember sandcastles as drizzles of wet sand, maybe a moat, and an off-kilter turret or two, if you were lucky, just wait until you see the fantasy spectacles created by the Houston chapter of the American Institute of Architects. Nobody kicks sand in their faces.

Teams consisting of architects, engineers, contractors, water and sand haulers, shovelers, trowlers, compactors, sprayers, and all purpose slaves are necessary to complete the imaginative designs that are true works of art, if transitory.

Everyone vies for the Golden Bucket award in one of the nation's largest competitions for this sort of thing. Bring plenty of sunblock (and the requisite beer or two) June 2 & 3 to East Beach (at island's far end)for one of Galveston's most unusual parties.

CARIBBEAN CARNIVAL. Hey, Mardi Gras's such a big hit down on the island, let's have another. It's the 9th annual Caribbean Mardi Gras Festival, June 8-10 at Harbor House Park, Pier 20, on the Strand. To commemorate the 1834 freeing of the slaves on Trinidad, this weekend celebrates the culture, food, music, and dance of island living, starting with the party of parties: "Jour Vert," pronounced "joo-vay," a steel drum band competition/parade with some masqueraders in traditional blue paint (the blue devils) or slathered in mud (the mud mas) or topical humorous costumes.

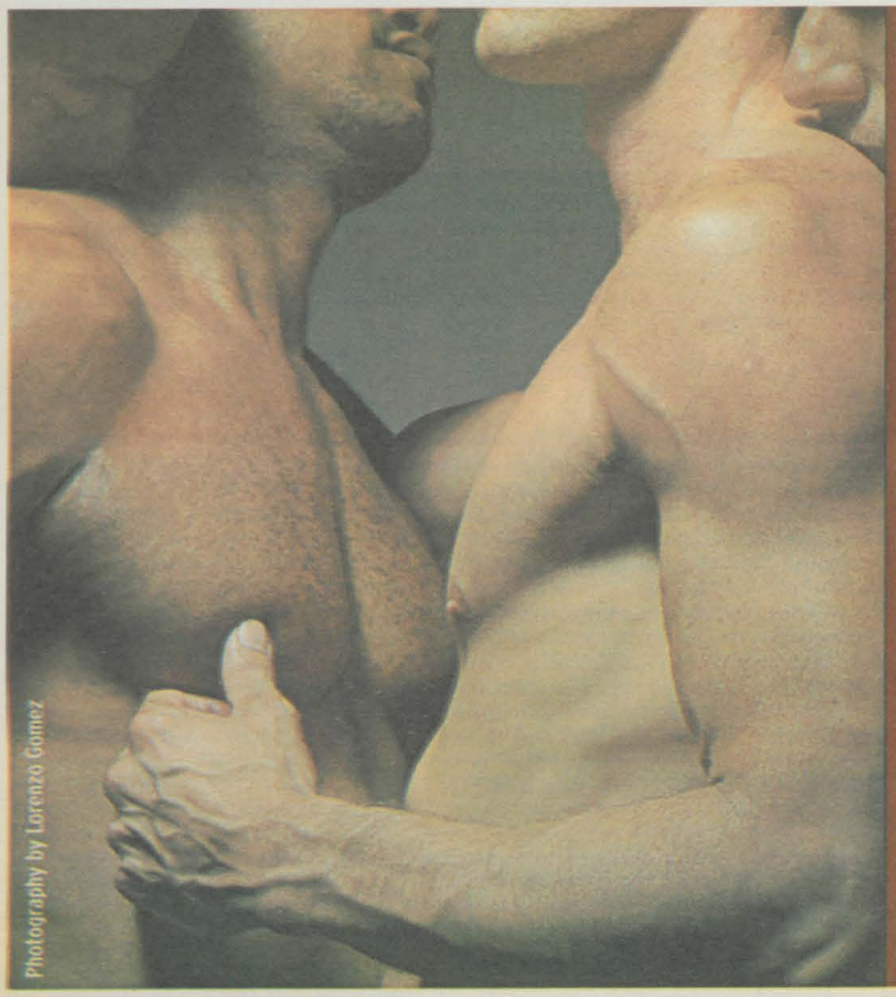
I think George W. may make an appearance this year. I'd say let the good times roll, but that's been appropriated by some other event.

July

WATERMELON FEST AND ICE CREAM CRANK OFF. Usher in our nation's birthday (that's July 4th, you Wiccans) with two of my favorite food groups and a fireworks display at Moody Gardens, a three pyramid science theme park with its own aquarium, rainforest, and white sand beach. Science goes Disney; but the whole place is rather cool, so you end up learning something in spite of the Dancing Waters Fountain. Did I mention, to top it off, there's ice cream!

These are but some of the official holiday events. To truly experience the island and all its glories you must: see the nesting least terns on the barricaded 37th Street jetty; ride a horse on the beach from Gulf Stream Stables; go birding for those nearctic-neotropical migrants at East Beach's Big Reef Nature Park; learn all about oil drilling on the Ocean Star's offshore drilling rig and museum; gamble away your rent money on a casino cruise from Pier 21; see anything at the awesome Galveston Grand Opera House; go dolphin watching; wear down your heels on a ghost tour of the Strand district; relive air combat at the Lone Star Flight Museum; experience the romance of train travel at the Railroad Museum; sweat through a day of deep sea fishing.

Best of all: sack out on the warm Galveston beaches and watch the eye candy. This costs nothing, and the memories, fleeting and insubstantial, seem awfully important at the time.



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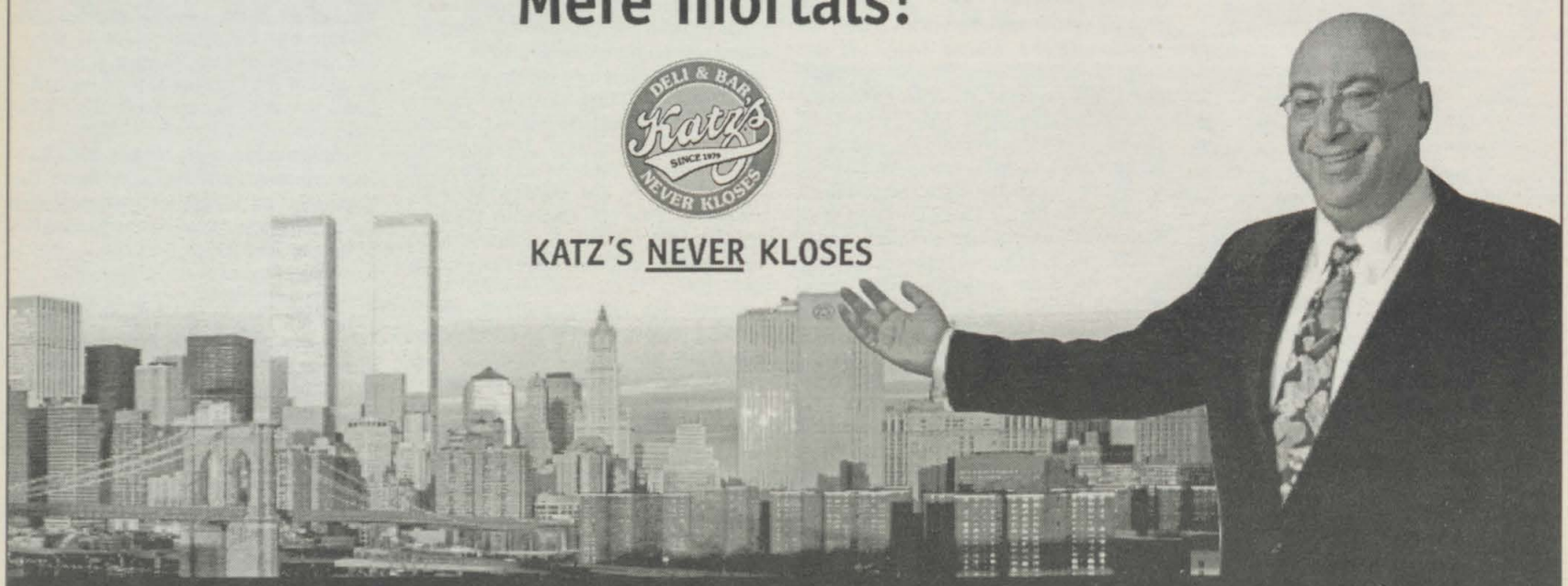
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STAYING GAY on Galveston

Island offers two gay hotels, both with easy access to Seawall, Strand, six gay bars

by D.L. GROOVER

It seems like an event out of ancient history, but it was only three years ago when protesters (i.e., one ubiquitous Baptist minister, a KKK member in hood and sheet—later removed because it was so damned hot and a few unemployed skinheads) picketed the site of the former Silver Sands motel, 3028 Seawall Boulevard, where Bob Wilkins and Sherman Houck, partners from Bay City, renovated the decrepit corner pile and transformed it into Galveston's first gay guest house.

The rainbow flag rising over the construction area was both a symbol of pride and visible heat-seeking missile for the handful of right-wing placard bearers. As usual, especially on this free-wheeling island, the feeble protests came to naught, and **HOLLYWOOD HOTEL** celebrates its second anniversary this June.

Wilkins and Houck have succeeded in keeping its 21 rooms full, its swimming pool clothing optional, and its gay and gay-friendly patrons coming back for more, season after season.

Across the street from spiffy Boulevard Saloon and within spitting distance from the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico, the dun brick exterior of Hollywood still resonates with '40s film noir flair. The first floor office windows that face the heat of the sun have a protective covering that gives the building the look of wearing sunglasses.

There's not much exterior decorative planting to cool the midday, and the building's plain style is downright unobtrusive, so much so you might drive right by thinking the building's unoccupied.

Once you are admitted through the green Seawall-facing door, and read the warning that you are being monitored on video, you enter the two-story atrium-style guest house. The rooms, arrayed in a U, face the center courtyard's large swimming pool and hottub. This type of plan, beloved by the Romans, gives a blank wall toward the street, painted inside with a cinemascope rainbow flag, yet opens up to the sun as soon as you step into the interior.

On the second floor, facing front, is a spacious wooden balcony/deck with a sweeping seascape panorama, where complimentary happy hour commences. This floor

➢ Continued on Page 17



With six to choose from, Galveston has a bar for all tastes

From low-key neighborhood atmospheres to high-energy dance clubs, the isle offers something for every gay tourist and native

by D.L. MURPHY

People often don't realize that the little town of Galveston has six gay/lesbian bars, most within walking distance of one another. The bars usually have a mixed crowd, both men and women. And, because you are in a tourist resort, a fair number of straight people from time to time, especially for the drag shows. Drink prices are pretty much the same across the island, as the club owners try to match one another's specials.

➢ Continued on Page 18



Most of Galveston's six gay bars feature a mix of men and women, but depending on the night of the week, some places, like Garza's Kon Tiki (above), attract a male-dominated crowd.



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Well contained

In a small space, container gardens offer versatility, simplicity and decorative options

by ELLA TYLER



DALTON DEHART

Still under renovation, this historic Galveston cottage on a townhouse-sized lot is ideal for container gardening.

This historic Galveston cottage, sitting on a townhouse-sized lot, is a perfect place to experiment with container gardening. The house is still being restored, so container gardening allows the owners to enjoy their outdoor spaces now. Plants can be moved away from construction areas as needed.

Even when the work is complete and permanent plantings can be made, the majority of the plants will remain in pots because the garden is so small. An amazing variety of plants grow so fast here that you have to watch out that pets and small children don't get covered up while your back is turned. Pots restrict a plant's growth and keep the plant (and its offspring) where it was put.

Containers also add their own decorative colors and textures to the garden, and in a small space, contribute needed height. In addition, the soil can be mixed to accommodate a specific plant's requirements, a particular consideration in Galveston, where the soil tends to have an excess of phosphorus. Many plants will thrive in 5-gallon pots for many years.

The backyard is small and very shaded. The existing brick must be re-laid to correct a drainage problem, so it will be re-set in a more decorative design. The area is too small to put a fountain in the middle, but a small one can be hung on the wall.

Banana trees will be planted outside the fence in the sunny no-man's land between this house and the commercial property in the back. Bananas grow fast and tall and will stay green through most Galveston winters, hiding this ugly view. One side fence is covered with confederate jasmine, which produces masses of fragrant, white flowers in the late spring and is evergreen. The remainder of the plants for the back patio will be in pots and hanging baskets. Few annuals flower in such deep shade, but impatience and wax begonias are reliable performers. Cane and angel wing begonias, which are perennials, like the shade. Gingers will bloom in deep shade and are tall and skinny, but will make a jungle unless contained. Ferns come in a variety of shades of green and many different textures. Caladiums, coleus, and polka dot plant offer colorful foliage. Mints like shaded, damp conditions, if brushed against, smell wonderful.

There is a very sunny deck upstairs in the back. The owners want to grow herbs and vegetables up here. Most herbs will be possible but vegetables might be limited to peppers, small tomatoes, and salad greens. Squash and melons could be grown with vertical support for the vine and fruit.

Dwarf citrus is an enticing possibility for this area. These plants need pots that are at least 15-gallon sized, but some citrus produce flowers and fruit year round. The vegetables and citrus will require frequent watering and, because the watering leaches nutrients from the soil, fertilizing.

If the owners want to get fancy, a drip irrigation system could be set up.

The front of the house gets full sun, so a completely different set of plants will be grown out here. Here, the owners want historical accuracy and a tropical look.

"Why have a house in Galveston that looks like it is in Houston?" they ask. The owners thought that Oleanders, which are the Island's signature flower, would be too big for this yard but there are some dwarf varieties available.

Oleanders were brought to Galveston in 1841 and May is Oleander Month. There are several Oleander events this month including an Oleander Society plant sale May 26 and 27 at the Bishops Palace.

Final plans for the front yard await Historical Commission approval for the removal of several plants, including some sort of fan palm tree. The palm takes up too much room in the yard. Possibilities include bougainvillea, hibiscus, and perhaps some old garden roses from the China family.

The front yard shows outlines of flower beds, a futile attempt to order this small space.

When final plant selections are made, they will be checked against the lists showing date-of-introduction from the book, 'The New Traditional Garden" for historical accuracy.

Also, we will look at the pictures of old gardens at the Rosenberg Library. My preference is for pots that are at least 10-inches (or 5 gallons) because they don't require constant watering. I often use a soil polymer that helps hold water in the soil as well.

Even still, in hot, dry weather, the plants may need to be watered every day, and hanging baskets might need to be watered twice. I raise plants about two inches above the ground to permit air circulation.

I like the looks of clay pots better than plastic pots but they are heavy, breakable and dry out more quickly. Big pots that are good looking, whether clay or plastic, are not cheap.

I have taken ordinary black nursery pots (available used at Teas on Bellaire and new at Southwest Fertilizer) and sprayed them with a faux stone finish and they have lasted quite well. They can be covered with a variety of materials, just do not plug up the drainage.

Paradise and Hollywood offer gay home away from home on isle

➢ Continued from Page 15

also contains the Lucille Ballroom, decorated with all things Lucy and dominated by a black baby grand piano that has been neatly converted with a bar top. It is here where complimentary full breakfast is served, and where Marcy Rae's original comedy and songs entertain most weekend evenings.

The rates run from $79, single, to $399, for a weekend package in king-size suite.

"Normally, it's 80/20," said co-owner Wilkins, explaining the hotel's percentage of gay men to lesbian visitors. "But we've had weekends where it's been the reverse. And we've had wonderful times."

Another sweet smeller is **PARADISE**, 2317 Avenue P (Galvez Boulevard), but again you wouldn't know it from the street. It's another unassuming two-story brick building that could house a dentist office. Only standing on the street at the correct angle do you spy the rainbow flag waving in the protected back yard.

"What you see out front, is not necessarily what you'll see out back," winked Oscar Placker, Paradise's general factotum. Walking through the first floor offices and home of owners Eldridge Langlinais and Tim Jennings, you arrive at the back door, where like Dorothy, the world explodes into Technicolor.



in 1998, Ku Klux Klan members and others protested at the future site of Hollywood Hotel in Galveston. Three years later, the island's first gay guest house, owned by Bob Wilkins and Sherman Houck (inset), is a thriving business and the city's tourism department is now actively pursuing gay visitors to the island.

Pathways, pools, lanais, potted plants, songbirds and koi, besiege the senses as the immense complex reveals itself like an intricate, convoluted bloom of a double hibiscus. It's quite a rush, and Galveston's second-newest gay guest house is aptly named.

This eye-filling backyard houses five suites and two guest rooms. Each suite, three with full kitchens, is like a spacious apartment and can sleep four; while the upstairs singles sleep two. The two smaller rooms share a bath, and are the closest to the Community Room where coffee, ice and sodas are always available, as are extra towels and supplies.

Rates, which change seasonally, comfortably range from $75 to $200/night. All accommodations are decorated in seashore motif, and you have the sense that you're visiting your rich maiden aunt's beachfront cottage.

"We have a tremendous amount of repeat customers," said Placker proudly. A world map in the upstairs gift shop is dotted with pins, testament to the Paradise's international allure: Yugoslavia, India, Norway, Kenya, Argentina, Australia are just a few of their patrons' countries of origin. A couple from Nova Scotia, on their second visit, just left earlier in the day and told Placker they wouldn't think of going anywhere else.

The guest house's allure is growing, and Placker said that summer's no longer their only busy time. "We're starting to pick up at other times. So much goes on down here in Galveston all year, that we stay busy." The Paradise is already sold out for New Year's.

Although their clientele is mixed, this is an "adult facility not designed for children," as their brochure states. Nestled in the shady corner of one of the numerous patios is a one-armed bandit.

"We have a wonderful mix," Placker said, "and everybody gets along. The two couples who were staying up there, one couple was lesbian, and one male. When they were entertaining in their room last night, you should have heard the jokes.

"One thing about Galveston, we don't say we don't have a lesbian bar, or a men's bar, we have gay bars. They're all very mixed. For everybody.

"Once in a while you get that one phone call when we say 'you know we're gay/gay-friendly,' and I've had four people pray for me. 'Wonderful, thank you,' I say."

No, thank *you*, both of you—Paradise and Hollywood. You've given us a gay home away from home: friendly, caring, filled with love, and all those fragrant smells.

INFO

Hollywood Hotel
3028 Seawall Blvd.
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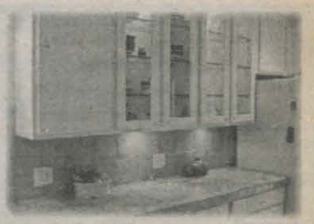
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Galveston's half-dozen gay bars within walking distance of each other

➢ Continued from Page 15

BOULEVARD SALOON
Seawall & 31st
409.750.8571

The Boulevard Saloon is one of the newest bars on the island. It features a great view of the beach, very gay decorations and a clean environment. The bartenders are always friendly. The club is very women-friendly. Special events are scheduled to coincide with other island festivities.

The crowd is generally mixed with regard to gender and age. The bartender, who did not know he was being interviewed for a review, spent a lot of time answering my questions about what was going on around the island. This club is next door to the Hollywood. Overall, this is a nice place to hang out with friends in the afternoon and a great place to party in the evening.

ROBERT'S LAFITTE
25th & Avenue Q
409.765.9092

Lafitte's is one of the island's gay institutions. It features drag shows on Saturday and Sundays. The crowd is mostly men, but women are always welcome. There is a large patio out back, a small pool table up front. This bar wins the prize for being the smokiest smelling bar on the island.

This club is open whenever it's legal to be open, so you almost always have somewhere to have a beer with a friend. This is the place to be if you don't want to drive down to the Strand district.



DALTON DEHART

Robert's Lafitte is Galveston's oldest gay bar. Featuring drag shows on Saturday and Sundays, the crowd is mostly men, but women are always welcome.

GARZA'S KON TIKI
315 23rd Street
409.763.6264

This venerable island hangout has recently changed hands and has been redecorated. Drag shows are scheduled for Friday, Saturday and Sunday. There is a $3 cover for the shows.

Pool tournaments occur every Sunday at 5 p.m. Underage (18 to 21) people are allowed admittance, but are not served. There is a very nice, but very small, patio out back.

VENTURE-N
2405 Post Office
409.762.8088

The club's décor lets you know this bar is owned by the same folks who bring us the Venture-N here in Houston. The club has recently reopened after a fire upstairs. Further renovations are under way, a game room is being added upstairs, a stage is being constructed downstairs. There is never a cover. The bar's crowd is mostly men, but the bartenders are friendly toward women.

EVOLUTION
2214 Mechanic
409.763.4212



DALTON DEHART

Evolution features more modern music and has a younger crowd including gay and straight, as straight people go here for the music, dancing and ambiance.

This club features more modern music and has a younger crowd. The crowd is usually mixed. Women are very welcome. Hours are limited, 8 p.m. to 2 a.m., so this is not a place to go to have an afternoon beer with friends. However, this is the place to dance.

The crowd here is very mixed, gay and straight, as straight people go here for the music, dancing and ambiance.

PURGATORY
2515 Mechanic
409.770.9389



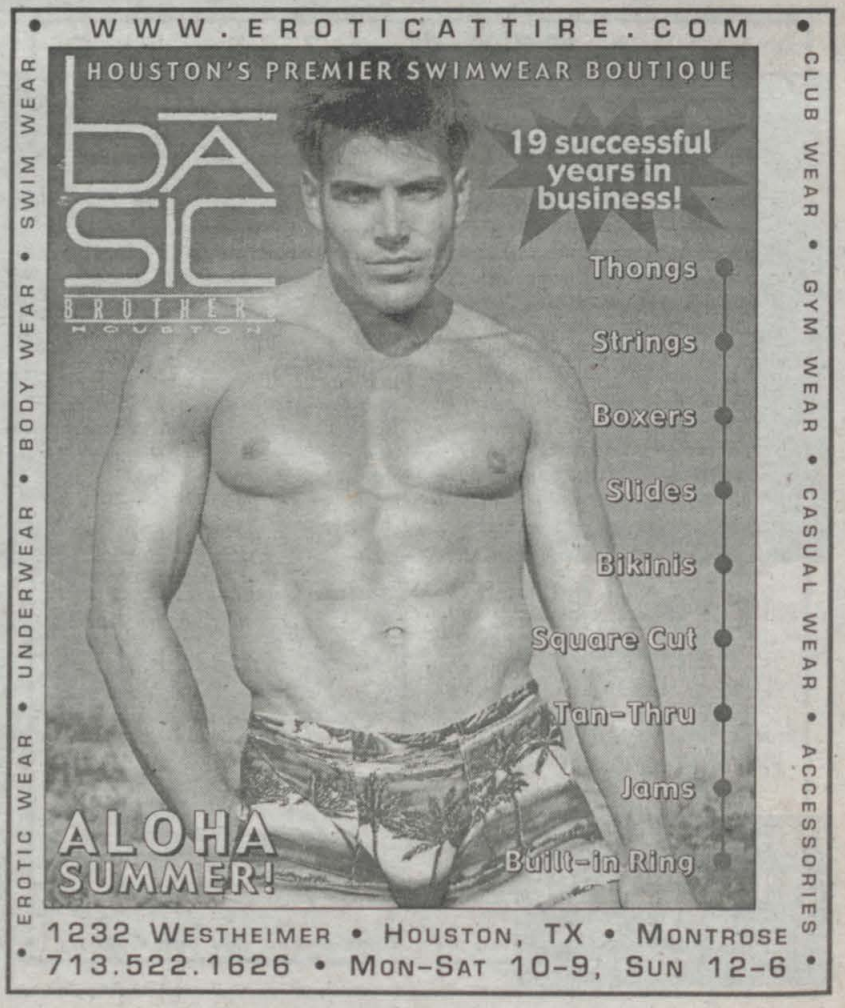
DALTON DEHART

Purgatory is one of Galveston's newest gay bars catering to a mixed crowd.

This is another of the islands newer bars. When asked "why the name?" the owner replied "because everyone is welcome." This club features a large patio for sunbathing, has dancers seven days a week, and offers free cab rides home (on the island) if you are unable to drive.

This club has a mixed crowd, and is the most women-friendly bar on the island. Tuesday is Ladies Night, 8 p.m. to midnight. There is never a cover. Plans are in the works for adding an after-hours diner to the club.





Bayou Calendar

National Clay Court Championship
Jan-Michael Gambill is rated #5 in the world in the men's tennis racket, but his abs are #1. If you haven't seen the full-page ads of buff Gambill shamelessly hawked at the boy bars on Pacific Street, or Jim McIngvale's giveaway promotions at JR's, you'd think this was a promo for a new porn video, "Ball's in Your Court," perhaps. If the marketers are this desperate to court the gay dollar, do they know something we don't, or are they just playing catch-up? Catch J-M and the other hotties Andrew Ilie, Todd Woodruff, and Andy Roddick for this weekend's final matches.
U.S. Men's Clay Court Championship
Through May 6
Westside Tennis Club, 1200 Wilcrest Dr.
713-783-1620

'Three Days of Rain'
Richard Greenberg's three-character study could be called, "Forward to the Past." All three characters (Walker Janeway, sister Nan, best friend Pip) are caught in the inextricable mesh of their parents' past lives; so much so that Act II scurries into yesteryear where the parents' stories unfold, illuminating the present. It's a talky chamber piece, but full of glinting commentary on what we do to our children, whether we mean to or not.
Through May 26
Theater LaB Houston, 1706 Alamo
713-868-7516

'Don Carlo'
Last chance to see, or rather hear, Verdi's sumptuous epic. It's all here in the music: religious fanaticism, state loyalty, family love, unbridled passion. However, the production from San Francisco Opera is a mess: Charles' crypt is busier than Grand Central Station (hey, everybody into the tomb!), and the souls of the heretics being burned alive literally fly to heaven as if on trapezes; but the singing, like Verdi's score, is sublime, especially Patricia Racette as unhappy loyal wife, the ultimate pro Samuel Ramey singing better than ever as Philip II, Béatrice Uria-Monzon as one-eyed fatal beauty Princess Eboli, and Peter Coleman-Wright as the self-sacrificing best friend we'd all like to have.
Through May 5
Houston Grand Opera, Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas Ave.
713-227-ARTS

'Blowup'
Michelangelo Antonioni's 1966 opus to mod London and the swinging singles scene made moviegoing hip and cool and defined a generation that was learning to thumb its nose at authority. Slim, neurasthenic David Hemmings may or may not have photographed a murder, and Vanessa Redgrave is ready to take off her top to get the pix from him. Incredibly tall Verushka could eat most of today's supermodels for breakfast. With Antonioni's dazzling eye and compositions, everything takes on a high mod gloss, except that horrendously over-mimed tennis game.
May 5, 7:30 p.m.; May 6, 7 p.m.
Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Brown Auditorium, 1001 Bissonnet
713-639-7531

'Star Wars: Episode IV—A New Hope'
Our hope is that this incredibly lucrative franchise would just go to a galaxy far, far away and leave us alone. It's no surprise if I tell you there's nothing new here: another tired retread of everything from whatever episode started this whole mess. Personally, give me "Forbidden Planet" or the sight of Buster Crabbe's Flash Gordon. Maybe I'll just click my heels and get outta here.
May 4, 7:30 p.m.; May 5, 11 a.m.
Museum of Fine Arts Houston Brown Auditorium, 1001 Bissonnet
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Image: In A Whisper Dancers: Barbara Bears and Nicholas Leschke Photo: Geoff Winningham
Image: Swan Lake Dancers: Phillip Broomhead and Mireille Hoornebeeke Photo: Drew Donovan

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Eating Out

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Catch of the day

Fish Tales worth the drive to Galveston for great food, courteous service, Gulf view

by ELLA TYLER

FISH TALES RESTAURANT, at 25th and Seawall, got the Houston Voice writers' Sunday afternoon in Galveston off to a fine start. It is easy to find, not only does it have a large revolving fish tail on the roof, it is directly across from the Flagship Hotel.

The Flagship is built on a pier over the water, making it a landmark. And, any lesbian who doesn't notice the busty mermaids in the murals on the front of the hotel, should lose her credentials.

Our waiter earned the immediate affection of David, our usual banker, when he asked who wanted separate checks. This courtesy is appreciated by large groups.

Since it was a Sunday, bar service wasn't available until noon, but our waiter appeared promptly at noon for drink orders. Dalton rated his margarita "Excellent, Four Star" and David just smiled over his "vodka martini—very dry." Our Heineken-drinker noted that her frosted glass was a nice touch. Maria, who thinks iced tea is one of the great inventions of the South, commented that the iced tea, "Very good—nice, full body."

Oysters on the half shell were slurped down with no lack of gusto by several in our party. Wendy noted that they could have been colder, but the overall reaction, including from her, was that they were "wonderful, fresh, grit-free and well shucked." Oysters were $9 a dozen, quite reasonable for their size and quality.

Another appetizer that won rave reviews was the "Hot Combo." This is a mix of shrimp, oysters, calamari and crawfish tails all battered and fried and served over French fries. It costs $14.99. Two of us ordered it for lunch, but it would serve four or six as an appetizer.

"It was a sensuous array of fresh seafood, extremely well prepared, light and not greasy," Maria dictated.

Deb Murphy and I have allergies that can cause problems at seafood restaurants, but we like Fish Tales enough that this is our second trip. She is allergic to shellfish and isn't especially fond of fish, but was pleased with her chicken fajitas ($12.99).

"Unlike most seafood restaurants, they do chicken well," she said. The rice was fluffy and hot, and there were enough tortillas for the chicken, she reported. There are a few items for non-seafood eaters—grilled chicken breast, two steaks and chicken fried steak.

I am slightly allergic to corn, which eliminates many restaurant's fried items from consideration. Our waiter was knowledgeable enough to know which items are cornmealed and which are floured without checking with the kitchen. Here several items, including shrimp, are floured, so I could order one of my favorite foods, a shrimp po-boy.($6.99)

It wasn't quite perfect, but pretty close. I would have liked a bit more lettuce and tomatoes, but there were lots of shrimp, perfectly done. If I had been paying attention, I would have noticed that David was taking the lettuce and tomatoes off his crab cake sandwich ($7.99) Though happy with the crab, pronouncing it "very tasty" he is used to a plainer sandwich.

In two visits here, I have yet to be a part of a group that has had any significant amount of the grilled seafood. On an earlier visit, I tried a lunch special that included grilled shrimp that were very good, but that is the extent of the testing. There are plenty of selections, which look good.

My companions and I have yet to try a dessert. There is an ice cream bar that serves 32 flavors of Blue Bell and makes waffle cones on the spot, filling the place with a delicious aroma. They also have a tantalizing-looking bread pudding and a fluffy key lime pie.



FOOD FILE

FISH TALES

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On Stage

THEATER REVIEW

Three-armed and dangerous

Atomic Cafe goes out on a limb with Albee's critically unacclaimed, under-appreciated play

by D.L. GROOVER

When Tony- and Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Edward Albee's **THE MAN WHO HAD THREE ARMS** premiered in 1983, it received some of the worst reviews in theater history.

Typical of the lambasting was Frank Rich's NY Times excoriation: "...a temper tantrum...of unearned self-pity and abject rancor...Albee makes no attempt even to pretend that Himself is anything other than a maudlin stand-in for himself, with the disappearing arm representing an atrophied talent...a virulent and gratuitous misogyny that has little relevance...the craftsmanship is rudimentary...mostly an act of self-immolation..."

It's no wonder that Albee ran away into the sheltering embrace of regional theater and academe. It would be a decade before he showed himself on the Great White Way with "Three Tall Women" (1994), winning himself another Pulitzer and showing his detractors that he had lost nothing in the interim.

Seeing this legendary play after 18 years, it's hard to fathom why all the fuss, other than the gross disappointment critics felt at Albee for not being more of a success. They seemed to take it personally that the arch of Albee's career had taken a noticeable nose dive. It had been 20 years since "Virginia Woolf," after all, and Albee still hadn't topped that, or equaled it.

To be fair, who could? Shepard, they cried, or Stoppard. The most original wordsmith in the contemporary theater had a sandbag dropped on his head.

Certainly, "The Man Who Had Three Arms" wasn't ahead of its time; Albee's central thesis that celebrity isn't worth the fame wasn't exactly a new idea even in 1983. Maybe the critics didn't like being yelled at so voraciously, vicariously, and with such relish. Himself takes us all to task during his screed.

The play is bold and brash, naked in its simple premise: Himself (Drake Simpson) was the most famous man in the world because of the sudden appearance of a third arm that grew out of his back. Today, he's a nobody, having lost all notoriety and fortune when the arm just as suddenly withered away.

He's a gin-needy replacement lecturer at a nameless plywood-paneled community hall, a last minute and much cheaper stand-in for the announced speaker. He's a mess and he knows it.

Two committee members, Woman (Lisa Marie Singerman) and Man (Ken Watkins), sit on opposite sides of the stage throughout, becoming characters from Himself's life story. His motivational speech, which is the play, gradually dissolves into a dark wail from the heart as he bemoans his fate and our complicity with lacerating force.

Himself's descent into hell is vintage Albee: amazingly funny and bitchy, intelligent and adult, with a brazen felicity for putting words together, and a mastery of theatrical craft. Albee adores the theater, and no other contemporary writer knows how to structure a play with such dramatic instincts, knows when to stick in the knife, knows when to relax.

There's a flow to an Albee play that is musical, no less so in this one. To say, as did the carpers, that Albee lost his touch is totally untrue. He's at the top of his form here: great swathes of comic riffs on the rubber-chicken circuit, the dizzy heights of celebrity, the abyss of self-immolation and deceit, the wounded cries near the end, the rightness of the secondary characters.

It's a deliciously fake world Albee conjures up for us—showy, theatrical, over-the-top, wonderfully sure of itself—a world fit for the stage.

The three actors incomparably embody the many characters Albee paints with such sure, quick insight. In the tour de force role of Himself, Simpson gives a standing ovation of a performance. Just the right age so we get uneasy parallels between Silicon Valley overnight multi-millionaires or overly manufactured movie stars, Simpson, with director Wayne Wilden's sure touch, hits all the emotions full target: depression, elation, pride, lust, envy, pity.

Singerman and Watkins match Simpson every step, whether as solicitous matron, smarmy agent, loving-yet-pushed-to-the-edge wife or clueless parents. They add their own resonance to the distinctive Albee sound.

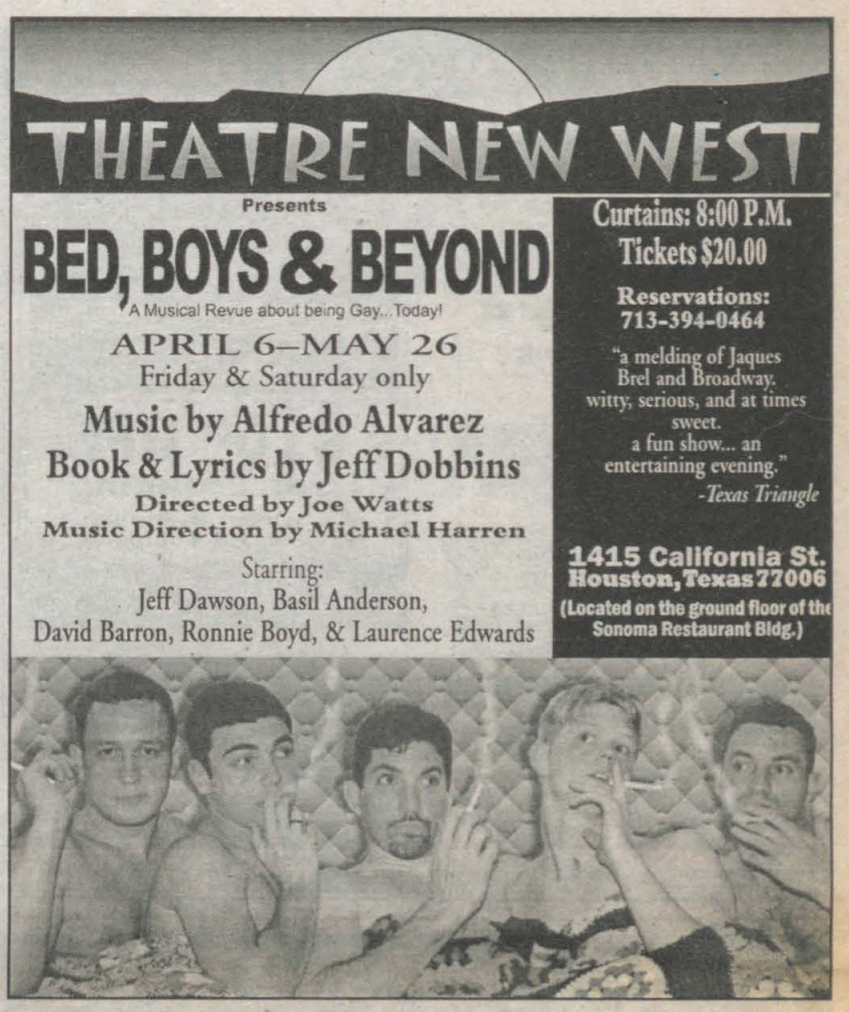
Time hasn't mellowed this play. If anything it's sharpened its meaning. Why blame Albee for what he says here about obsession and fame, blind ambition, naked aggression, emotionless fate. He's only the messenger.



Ken Watkins, Drake Simpson and Lisa Marie Singerman star in the Atomic Cafe production of Edward Albee's 'The Man Who Had Three Arms.'

INFO

'The Man Who Had Three Arms'
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community

saturday, may 5

After Hours. KPFT 90.1 FM. 12 a.m. to 3 a.m. 713-526-5738.

Q-Patrol walks the streets 8:45 p.m. 713-528-SAFE.

Dignity mass. 7:30 p.m. for gay Catholics. 713-880-2872.

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Rosary 8 a.m. 1805 W. Alabama. 713-528-6665.

Houston Chain Gang Bicycle Club. Call for ride locations. 713-863-1860.

Gay & Lesbian Breakfast Club. 9:30 a.m. 281-437-0636.

Houston Wrestling Club. Practice. 1:30 p.m. 713-453-7406.

Rainbow Fishing Club. Meeting. 713-526-7070.713-880-9235.

Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center Drop-in hours noon to 4 p.m. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

Classic Chassis Car Club. Lakewood Wheels & Kneel. 9 a.m. 713-797-8615.

sunday may 6

Rainbow Riders. A bicycle club for women. 713-869-1686.

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Holy Rite Eucharist I 7:45 a.m.; Holy Rite Eucharist II 8:55 a.m.; Education hour 10 a.m.; Choral Eucharist 11 a.m. 713-528-6665.

Maranatha Fellowship Metropolitan Church. Service. 6:30 p.m. 713-528-6756.

Resurrection MCC. Services. 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Adult Sunday School 10 a.m. Youth Sunday School 11:15 a.m. Handbell Choir rehearsal 1:30 p.m. 713-861-9149.

Grace Lutheran Church. Sunday school for all ages 9 a.m. Service 10:30 a.m. 713-528-3269.

Community Gospel. Service at 11 a.m. & 7 p.m. Sunday School for children 10 a.m. 713-880-9235 or www.communitygospel.org.

Houston Mission Church. Service 10:30 a.m. 713-529-8225.

Covenant Church, Ecumenical, Liberal Baptist. Service 9:30 a.m. & education hour 11 a.m. 713-668-8830.

Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Services at 8:30 a.m. & 10:50 a.m. Sunday school 9:45 a.m. 713-526-1017.

The Women's Group. Meeting & Discussion. 10:45 a.m. 713-529-8571.

Unitarian Fellowship of Galveston County. 502 Church St. Service 10:30 a.m. 409-765-8330.

First Congregational Church (Memorial). Service at 10 a.m. Christian Education. 11:30 p.m. 713-468-9543 or fcc-houston.org.

Unitarian Fellowship of Houston. Adult forum 10 a.m. Service 11 a.m. 713-686-5876.

Gay Catholics of St. Anne's-Houston. 5 p.m. worship service. Dinner and social. alexcam@wt.net. 713-623-0930

Thoreau Unitarian Universalist Congregation: Adult discussion 9:45 a.m. Service 11 a.m. 281-277-8882. www.tuuc.org.

First Unitarian Universalist Church. Services at 9:30 & 11:30 a.m. Brunch available 10:30 a.m. Panel Discussion: Bisexuality. 1:30 p.m. 713-526-5200. church@firstuu.org.

Anarchist Black Cross Federation/Anarchist Reading Group. 1 p.m. www.houstonabc.org. 713-595-2103

Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. 713-692-2703.

Houston Gay & Lesbian Community Center Drop-in hours 2 to 4 p.m. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition. • Polyamory Houston Discussion Group. 3 p.m. 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

monday, may 7

Gay Fathers/Fathers First. Support group. 8 p.m. www.GayFathers-Houston.org or 281-505-1788.

Frost Eye Clinic. Free eye exams for people with HIV. 713-830-3000.

HIV testing. STD Exams & treatment. Free. AVES. 1 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. 713-626-2837.

Kolbe Project. Eucharist 7:30 p.m. 713-861-1800.

Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry Open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 936-441-1614.

Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. 713-692-2703.

Lesbian & Gay Voices Radio Show. 8 to 10 p.m. KPFT 90.1. 713-529-1223.

AIDS Mastery. 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.

Grief & Divorce Support Groups. 7 p.m. Bering. 713-526-1017, Ext. 208.

gayDAR. Wellness community. Support Group. 7 p.m. 713-526-1017, Ext. 211.

Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours from 6 to 9 p.m. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

tuesday, may 8

For Mature Audiences Only. Support group. 7 p.m. Bering Memorial UMC. 713-526-1017.

HTGA Support Group. 7 p.m. 713-520-0439.

Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m. to midnight. Club Houston. 713-830-3000.

Helping Cross Dressers Anonymous. Support Group. 7 p.m 713-524-0439.

Bering Support Network. Lunch Bunch Gang 11 a.m. 713-526-1017.

Gay Men's Process Group. 7 p.m. 3316 Mt. Vernon. 713-526-8390.

Men's Network. Discussion group for social, educational development of gay and bisexual men. 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.

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calendar

Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry Open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 281-633-2555.

CPR Classes. 3 p.m. 713-607-7700.

Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. • Lesbian Coming Out Group • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

Gay Men's Health. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.

wednesday, may 9

Free HIV Testing. Thomas Street Clinic. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. 2015 Thomas Street 713-793-4026.

STD Exams & treatment. HIV Testing. Free. AVES. Free. AVES. 713-626-2837.

Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Mary's, Venture-N & EJ's. 713-830-3000.

BiNet Houston. 7:30 p.m. Women's Social. 713-467-4380

Women's Network. Montrose Counseling Center Discussion group for social, educational development of gay and bisexual women. 7 p.m. Montrose Counseling Center. 713-529-0037.

Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 936-441-1614.

Project: Caesar. Workshops. AFH. 3203 Weslayan. 713-623-6796.

Out Skate Rollerskating Club. 8 to 10 p.m. 8075 Cook Road. 281-933-5818.

Rainbow Ranglers free C&W dance lessons. Brazos River Bottom. 7 p.m. 713-880-0670..

Bible Study. Noon & 6:30 p.m. St. Stephen's Episcopal. 713-526-6665.

Spiritual Uplift service. 7 p.m. Bible Study 7:30 p.m. Resurrection MCC. 713-861-9149.

Freelance Art Classes by Kermit Eisenhut for HIV+ individuals, 1 to 4 p.m. Lunch provided. 713-523-9530.

Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. 713-692-2703.

Lesbian Literature Discussion Group. 7 p.m. 713-523-3037.

Houston Pride Band. Open rehearsal. 1307 Yale. 713-527-0931. www.houstonprideband.org.

Bering Memorial United Methodist Church. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. Various Support Groups 7 p.m. 713-526-1017.

Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition • Free HIV testing by the Montrose Clinic 6 to 9 p.m. • 713-524-3818.

Houston Area Bears. Monthly meeting. 7:30 p.m. 713-867-9123

thursday, may 10

Gay Men's Chorus of Houston. Open rehearsal. 7 p.m. 4807 San Felipe. 713-521-7464.

Rainbow Ranglers free C&W dance lessons. Brazos River Bottom. 7 p.m. 713-880-0670.

Hep C Recovery. Support Group. 6:30 p.m. Bering. 713-526-1017, Ext. 211.

STD Exams & treatment. Free. AVES. 713-626-2837.

Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 8 p.m. to midnight. Toyz Disco. 713-830-3000.

Northwoods AIDS Coalition Food Pantry open. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 281-633-2555.

Lambda Skating Club skates. 8 p.m. Tradewinds. Skating Rink. www.lambdaroll.org. 713-410-7215.

FrontRunners. Running Club. 6:30 p.m. 713-522-8021.

HIV Art Therapy Program. 1 to 4 p.m. Kermit Eisenhut. 713-523-9530.

Women's Clinic. Montrose Clinic. 713-830-3000.

Community Gospel. Service. 7:30 p.m. 713-880-9235 or www.communitygospel.org.

HIV Testing. Free. AVES. 713-626-2837.

Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 to 9 p.m. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition 6:30 p.m. • 7 p.m. • 803 Hawthorne. 713-524-3818.

Kolbe Project. Progressive Dinner. 6:30 p.m. 713-861-1800.

Family to Family Adoption. Seminar. 6:30 p.m.

friday, may 11

Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals (H.A.T.C.H.) Meeting. 713-942-7002.

Free HIV Testing by the Montrose Clinic. 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. Rich's. 713-830-3000.

STD Exams & treatment. Free. AVES. 713-626-2837.

Frost Eye Clinic. Free eye exams for people with HIV. 713-830-3000.

Q-Patrol walks the streets. 9 p.m. 713-528-SAFE.

Kolbe Project. Morning Prayer. 10 a.m. 713-861-1800.

Houston Tennis Club. 9 a.m. Memorial Park at the Tennis Center. 713-692-2703.

Positive Art Workshop. 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Patrick Palmer. 713-526-1118.

Lesbian and Gay Voices. KPFT 90.1 FM. 7 p.m. 713-526-5738.

Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center drop-in hours 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. • Positive Art Workshop Photography exhibition. • 803 Hawthorne. • Women's Game Night. 7 p.m. 713-524-3818.

Kolbe Project. Movie Night. "Howard's End." 713-861-1800.

Houston Outdoor Group. Enchanted Rock . 713-528-6174.

Family to Family Adoptions. Seminar. 6:30 p.m.

To list an event, call Carolyn Roberts at 713-529-8490, fax at 713-529-9531, or e-mail editor@houstonvoice.com. Deadline is Friday at 5 p.m.

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TGRA

Texas Gay Rodeo Associations meeting and BBQ May 6 2 p.m. New members welcome • Call Michael 713.523.7663.

QUEER AS FOLK

Looking for QAS aired April 15. VHS. Call David after 2:30 p.m. 936-524-0177.

Auditions

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Travel

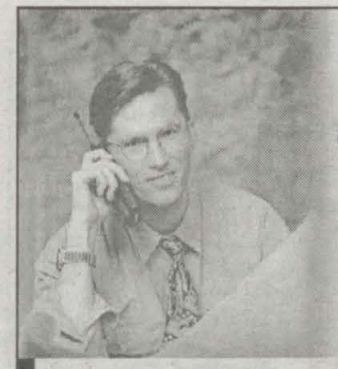
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1 PICK YOUR CATEGORY

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___ Volunteers
___ Non-Profit Organizations
*First 20 words

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___ Auditions
___ Employment-Seeking
___ Pets-Free or Lost & Found
___ Roommates
___ Personal Websites

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___ Business Opportunities
___ Entertainment
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___ Help Wanted-Seeking
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TEXT:_____

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Check Enclosed ____ Charge to my ❑ AMEX ❑ MC ❑ VISA
Card #_____ Exp.____/____
Signature_____

Occasions

Birthdays

Sassy "Patty Duke" spins on the dance floor for his birthday on May 8.

Former General Manager of the Houston Voice and all-around great guy Jack Leonard celebrates his birthday on May 10.

Houston Area Bear member Michael C. peaks out if his den to celebrate his birthday on May 11.



Our pet of the week is Keisha, a 10-year-old Calico. When she's not scheming to get outside and hang out with her feline friend, Mr. Lou, she enjoys giving attitude to her human housemates, *Houston Voice* editor Wendy Mohon and Amie Aaronson.

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YOUR WEEKLY HOROSCOPE

April 27 – May 3

ARIES (MARCH 21—APRIL 20)

You may have to play a push-me/pull-me game with a colleague. You want a definite answer, but one just isn't forthcoming. With the Sun in your house of money, you need to get the concrete parts of your life together before you start pitching wild schemes. A Sag can lead you in an exciting direction.

TAURUS (APRIL 21—MAY 20)

There's no reason for things to remain dull and stagnant when you have it in your power to shake them up. This week could be an intense one for you, thanks to that whopper of a full moon in the romantic sector of your chart. You just may fall for a Capricorn.

GEMINI (MAY 21—JUNE 21)

Saturn is pushing you to break ties (slowly but definitively) with friends and colleagues who are really vipers and leeches in disguise. When you are able to speak about your anxieties, they will surely disappear. An Aries wants to be your confidant.

CANCER (JUNE 22—JULY 22)

Mars goes retrograde on May 11 in your house of body and daily work, which means it's time to re-examine your routine. Take advantage of this relatively relaxed cycle to—drum roll, please—dive into some sexcapades. An Aries should be on your hit list.

LEO (JULY 23—AUG. 22)

It's time to deal with a lingering "issue" that your family started months ago. You don't always have to be so in control. Nor do you have to be the life of the party. Chill with a Scorpio who can ride with you through all your moods.

VIRGO (AUG. 23—SEPT. 22)

Venus in your house of serious relationships could bring you a suave suitor who won't take no for an answer. This is the right time to expect gifts from the outer world. You are owed a little luck. A chance to travel (with a Pisces, perhaps) is very much in the air right now.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23—OCT. 22)

Mars retrograde on the 11th could push you to confront loved ones without thinking first. Resist! This is the right time to fall in love all over again (with a cute Gemini—and more importantly, with yourself). While Venus triggers an emotional breakthrough, allow the intense emotions to flow. Stop repressing, honey!

SCORPIO (OCT. 23—NOV. 21)

The Sun in your house of love mixed with the full moon in your sign (on May 7) could make you run screaming through the town, yelling like Faye Dunaway in Chinatown on crack. Enjoy the drama you can create, and wear the right outfit. You have particular powers over a Cancer.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22—DEC. 21)

If you pay attention to the little details in your life, you can start to figure out what you want in the big picture. Neptune retrograde in your social third house could bring out the super-flirt in you. Remember? The pre-1995 version? You're back and another Sag wants to go toe-to-toe with you (or some other position).

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22—JAN. 19)

Jupiter is bringing you a much-needed dose of vitality. It's time for you to reinvent yourself as a sports nut. Life may take some strange turns during this full-moon week. Be a little wild and let a Virgo fight for your honor—what's left of it!

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20—FEB. 18)

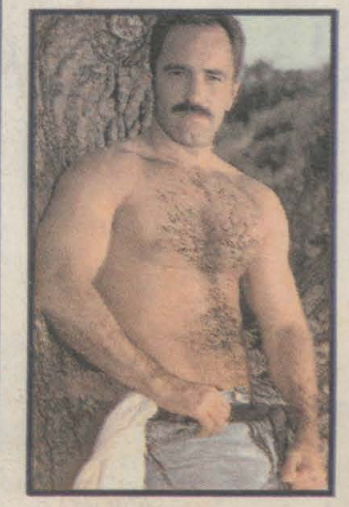
This is a strange time of year for you—one where you are particularly out of sync with everyone else. You could get work doing something much more artistic and exciting while Saturn dances close to Mercury in your fifth house. Dance close to a Taurus and the muse will find you that much sooner.

PISCES (FEB. 19—MARCH 20)

The full moon on May 7 could inspire you to travel to a faraway land (or make plans to) and really change your life. You need to test yourself in a real relationship—one that goes deep. Pull yourself out of your fantasy world and allow a Libra to really know you.

Jill Dearman is the author of "Queer Astrology for Men" and "Queer Astrology for Women." For information on charts and consultations, call 212-841-0177 or e-mail QScopes@aol.com.

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