MARCH 1999 • COMPLIMENTARY

OutSmart

Houston Gay & Lesbian Monthly Magazine



MARCH 21-27, 1999

equality begins at home

GAY & LESBIAN TEXANS MARCH FOR EQUAL RIGHTS IN AUSTIN

aLso: tv montrose • HIV vaccine • andrew tobias • the dianas

THE DIANAS-First of a Kind



UNCREDITED

Famous "Mommie Dearest" Number, 1983

by George Rimmey

The year was 1953. McCarthyism was in full swing, and thousands of gay government workers left the District of Columbia for the West. Houston was a pit stop on their way to California.

This was a very dark period for gays in Houston. Since many gay bars had opened in the 1940s, Montrose was developing into an enclave of the right people. Baptists and conservative leaders did not take kindly to our progress. Persecution of gays was a top priority and raids were an everyday occurrence. The police entered bars, lined up patrons, and took every other person to jail. The police also invaded private homes to arrest homosexuals. Gays were treated like common criminals and charged with "drinking after hours at an alleged homosexual gathering." These tactics only ended with the civil rights and hippie movements in the 1960s.

In the midst of that background of terror, and the fact that it was open season on gay people, a dozen or so friends met at the home of David Moncrief. It was the night of the annual Academy Awards, and it was not so common then, nor is it today, for a group of our community to get together to enjoy that festive night. Since Houston was becoming a mecca for gays, and more and more outrageous and/or elegant events in our community were becoming common occurrences, the group decided that Houston needed to have its very own Academy Awards.

Leader Charles Hebert and the group decided that an annual "Academy Award" would be given to the most outrageous and/or most ridiculous performing "gay star" of the year in Houston. There was no formal organization established at that time. It was simply a group of friends getting together to have fun.

The annual event was first held in private homes, with more and more people joining in the fun each year. Even though some of the group were still caught in raids, the annual Houston Academy Awards had a charmed existence in this unhappy era.

Others in the community soon noticed the fun and revelry of this group of well-educated individuals with a lively interest

TIMELINE 1969-72

Each month OutSmart will feature sections of the Houston gay history timeline.

1969 Couple David Stewart and Pat Petty started the outlandish, sometimes comic Miss Camp America Pageant in their home, where Petty often crowned himself with the dubious title. This spoof of the national pageant was founded as a social club for those who had "a natural penchant for theatrics," but evolved into a nonprofit foundation in support of AIDS-related charities. Don't miss the entertaining queens at the Deb-U-Not Ball at Picasso's, Mar. 7, followed by Rhinestones & Studs in July, a pre-party to the annual beauty pageant in September. **1970** Shimmering entertainment continued when Krewe of Olympus co-founders Ben Jones and Bill Walters hosted this royal bead-tossing Mardi Gras-esque celebration. This royal presentation of rich costumes and festive fashions in February has blossomed into a premier black-tie event supported by fundraisers held throughout the year, including the popular FoDoDo Party. The Krewe first made headlines in the *Nuntius*, a monthly gay rag founded in the same year by editor Paxton Goff (alias Phil Frank). But these frolic starts of the disco-era shared the glory with community activism. In response to the Stonewall riots in New York during the previous year, young radicals of the Houston Gay Liberation Front demanded an end to local police harassment. The group met on the University of Houston campus but never gained official university sanction because of its controversial nature. It hosted a gay pride conference featuring gay activist Frank Kameny, who proclaimed that "Queen Victoria was dead, the Puritans long gone, and now was the time to move toward a more balanced notion of morality." Swaying from this radical calling to restructure society was Integrity Houston, which survived and thrived for more than a decade. Just as the Gay Front began to fold, Integrity was at the peak of its political movement, which included a meeting with mayoral candidate Fred Hofheinz. **1971** The Hi Kamp bar featured some drag queens with raw, sassy talent who performed in masses. Former loyal patrons still remember this dizzy little place near Downtown, just one block from Main Street, as one of the campiest hotspots ever. **1972** Located at Fairview and Whitney, the Montrose Gaze Community Center was a promising attempt to serve the community. But over-ambitious goals and financial difficulty led to the anarchic center's immediate demise. Although the gay community had social and political outlets, it was lacking spiritual resources. Escaping the same destiny as the short-lived center, Dignity Houston focused on spiritual development and education for gay and lesbian Catholics. Its simplistic goal to foster social progress has contributed to its lasting existence today. Even Mary's Bar survived past the strong-willed group. This Westheimer landmark near Waugh still caters to the riskiest and wildest of men, some probably of the former Houston Motorcycle Club, founded during the same time. For even more highlights of the gay community, pick up *OutSmart*'s April issue for what happened between 1973-1975.


the NUNTIUS 40¢
& OUR COMMUNITY
HOUSTON, TEXAS
TEXAS PRISONS X GAY MAIL
DALLAS GAY PRIDE PARADE SUCCESS
Stonewall vs Times

Cover artwork for *The Nuntius*, July 1972

Timeline provided by the Houston Gay and Lesbian Community Center and Steve Brown of the Botts Memorial Library of MCCR. Research obtained from "Twelve Fighting Years" by Bruce Remmington.

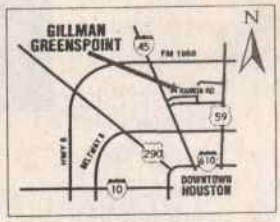
UNCLOTTED

SINCE 1938
Gillman
ACURA MITSUBISHI MOTORS
Wake Up And Drive.


HAL BURRIGHT

START THE NEW YEAR OFF WITH A NEW
Gillman
ACURA OR MITSUBISHI
IT'S STILL THE ONLY WAY TO GO!

GREENSPOINT
Rankin Rd. @ I-45 North
Exit 62 - Exit North of Greenspoint Mall
(281) 821-1100
Toll Free 800-288-9180
www.gillmanauto.com



Premier Victorian Homes



New Construction
Victorian Homes in the
Historic Houston Heights
Large front porches, wide plank wood floors,
antique detailing with
modern amenities.

Call Paul Gomberg at 713.862.7999.
Web: www.premiervictorian.com

in the theater, ballet, and the arts (which brought them all closer together).

Many outsiders soon established, in their minds erroneously, that this was an elite gay social group, since the group often met in bars and were often seen together. Jealousy reared its head, and outsiders dubbed these individuals as the snobbish "A Group." Nothing could have been further from the truth.

To erase this stigma, group members searched for a name to honor its annual celebrations. Original member Tom Adams' self-appointed title as "Diana, Goddess of the Hunt" helped give birth to the group's notorious name: the Dianas.

With a real name, the Dianas began to grow, and private homes became too small to hold the annual event. The award show had become so large and popular with elegant costumes and sets, coupled with the hiring of professional directors and choreographers, that tickets to the event had to be sold to defray costs. Some of the early shows were held at the Windmill Theater at the Town and Country shopping center; an adult movie house in the Village; the Sheridan Lincoln Hotel; and the Tower Theater.

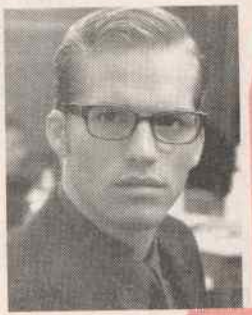


Kathy Whitmire number in 1985

The Dianas annual show also became a black-tie event. There are many black-tie events in Houston today, but the Dianas was a first.

The annual show began making a profit early on and the group, even though they were not a nonprofit organization, donated proceeds from the event to the community. One of the first recipients was the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts. Many of the members enjoyed being on that selection committee. It was always their hope that a student who received a

spectacles
ON MONTROSE



GRAND OPENING

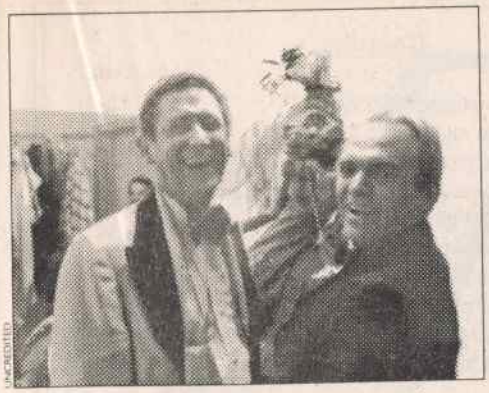
Distinctive Eyewear
eye exams • contact lenses
Dr. Evan L. Mapes
4317 Montrose Blvd. #2
713.529.EYES

TRAVEL THE WORLD
Phone: 713.682.4972
JIM JADLOSKI

NEW ORLEANS
Gay owned Guest House just outside French Quarter. 1 Bedroom Suite: $75.00 the first night, $60.00 for each additional night. Suite contains Living Room, Bedroom, Private Bath, Private Entrance, refrigerator, microwave & breakfast basket. Also available: 2 Bedroom, 3 Bedroom, or the entire house, which sleeps up to 22 people. Owner is great resource.

SOUTH BEACH, MIAMI & KEY WEST
Unbeatable packages, great locations, Air & Hotel. Call for prices.

MEMBER IGLTA, GHGLCC, TAG



UNCREDITED

David Moncrief (l), in whose house the first Diana Awards was held, is seen here with Wayland Flowers (r) and Madam.

Going to a Diana show is like going to party at Auntie Mame's. If you enjoy making fun of yourself and have a sense of humor, the show is a must. I've always felt making fun of life is not an insult, but a sign of maturity.

The 45th Diana Awards Show will be held this year on Mar. 27, 7 p.m., at the fabulously restored Crystal Ball Room at the Rice. The cabaret-theme show includes a seated dinner and live entertainment featuring Samantha Samuels, an Edith Piaf twin. Proceeds from this year's award show will be donated to Body Positive. To purchase tickets starting at $95, call 713/639-2000.

Don't miss this event; become a part of one of the longest continuously run gay shows in America.



UNCREDITED

"Ava" (center), perennial star of awards show, with fans.

scholarship from the Dianas would go on to fame and fortune just to come back and support the Dianas.

The Dianas was an early buyer of bricks at the Wortham Center, and soon the awards show was held at that opera house. That event drew the largest gay black-tie crowd in Houston history and was capped off with a midnight dinner at the Hyatt Regency. The record number of people attending that event has yet to be duplicated.

Hebert also held the annual "Barbecue at Tara" at his home until his death in 1987. This event evolved into what is now the Dianas annual country dinner held in October at the Polo Grounds inside the park at 610 and Memorial Drive. Live bands, fantastic barbecue, dancing, and an evening when everyone is a cowboy or cowgirl—it's a not-to-miss ticket.

When AIDS appeared on the scene, the Dianas became a nonprofit foundation distributing its profits from the annual award show and country dinner to various AIDS organizations. The Dianas was instrumental in establishing the McAdory House, the first AIDS Hospice in Houston, and also helped form the Assistance Fund.





George Rimmey, pictured at his high school prom in 1946 (top), and at a recent community function, is a community advocate with a long history of charitable involvement. He can be reached care of this publication at George Rimmey@outsmartmagazine.com.

Volunteers Needed For Clinical Trial

HIV VACCINE TO PREVENT HIV



Research volunteers are needed for clinical trials to test a synthetic vaccine to prevent and immunize against HIV (the virus that causes AIDS). You cannot get HIV infection from this synthetic vaccine.

VOLUNTEERS MUST BE:
- 18-60 years of age
- Gay or bisexual males at risk for acquiring HIV
- Females at risk for acquiring HIV
- Negative for HIV by HIV-screening test
- Willing to accept safe-sex counseling

The study involves a double-blind administration of receiving either vaccine or placebo. The chances of receiving active vaccine versus placebo are 2 to 1. HIV testing is anonymous and FREE.

For more information call
The University of Texas Medical Branch Center for Clinical Studies
Houston (281) 333-2288
Galveston (409) 772-1641

UTMB