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JANUARY 2000 • COMPLIMENTARY

Houston's Gay & Lesbian Monthly Magazine

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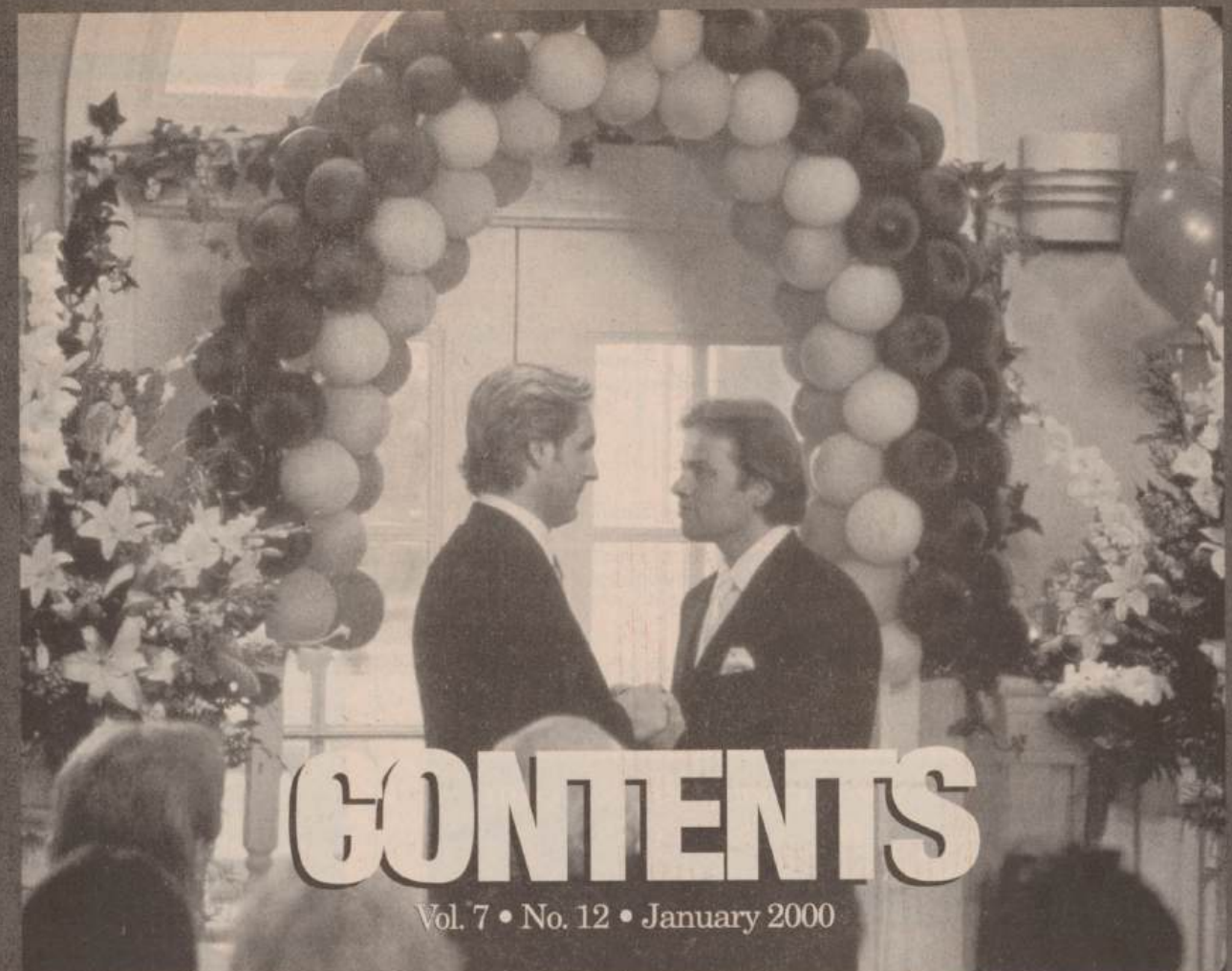
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Vol. 7 • No. 12 • January 2000

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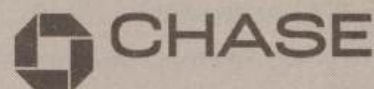
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Letters to the Editor

CONSERVATIVES NIX BUSH

Mr. Carpenter [Dale Carpenter, OutSmart's OutRight columnist]:

I have read your column in OutSmart for some time now and have always found it thought-provoking and sensible. I have been a Republican in the Goldwater/Reagan tradition and only left the

Dale Carpenter replies:

Log Cabin won't make a presidential endorsement, if any, until the Republican nominee is chosen. In the meantime, many Log Cabin members are raising money for Bush's chief GOP rival, Sen. John McCain.

Personally, I have been deeply disappointed in Governor Bush. Like you, I agree with the direction I think he would take the country on most social, economic, and foreign policy matters. But his unwillingness even to meet with a gay political group in his own party and especially his continued support for sodomy laws distinguish Bush unfavorably from McCain and from his potential Democratic opponents.

Like most gays, I am not a one-issue voter. In the past, I have supported candidates who were less gay-friendly than their opponents when I thought they otherwise merited support. But I draw the line on a candidate who won't be seen in my presence and who publicly says I am a criminal because of the sex of the person I love.

NO NUDES IS GOOD NEWS

I was surprised and also upset that at any gay/lesbian event we have to sink to the "lowest" common denominator of nudity. Such is the case at Empower 99 with Basic Brothers' display/booth. Basic Brothers could have used this community forum that included gay/lesbian families to show them and the straight community the professional and legitimate side of the homosexual lifestyle, but instead they had a young man "parade" around the event in briefs and bikini undergarments, and one pair was sheer enough to see through.

Do they not understand that our "community" includes children? ... I know Basic Brothers is geared to men only, but I would think the women of our community were

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From the Publisher

They say, *The only thing that remains the same is change.* Then same we are, because change abounds here at OutSmart magazine.

First off, we would like to welcome our new editor, Ann Walton Sieber. A native Houstonian, Ann comes to us with 15 years experience in Houston journalism. Starting as theater critic at *Public News* in the mid-'80s, Ann has a variety of journalistic experience, including arts editor at the *Houston Press* and managing editor of the Rice Design Alliance's *Cite* magazine. Her career-ing career has included everything from stints as a vegetarian cook at a Buddhist retreat center, to managing the bookstore at DiverseWorks, to facilitating prison workshops on conflict resolution. Ann's specialty is writing human interest features on subjects both serious and less so. Ann says she is excited about working with OutSmart and welcomes input and ideas from the OutSmart community.

Also joining the OutSmart team is Dennise Ryder, our Internet marketing manager. A recent transplant from Alberta, Canada, Dennise brings to OutSmart her extensive expertise in webmeistering. A former sergeant of the Canadian Armed Forces, Dennise is helping us soar to new heights in our completely revamped interactive website, which will debut in February. We're hoping to become the Houston gay and lesbian community's main website.

And while we're at it, I'd like to reintroduce you to our small but dedicated staff who are responsible for producing this magazine each month. There's Blase DiStefano, production and editorial department manager; Tricia Moreau Sweeney, production assistant; Laurie Jones and John Nagy, our advertising sales and marketing team; and Marc Hernandez, our support staff and office Buddha. And myself, Greg Jeu, OutSmart's founder and publisher.

As we continue to reinvent OutSmart, we'd love to hear from you. We're your community magazine, and we want to know what you'd like to see here: More (or less) local news, national news? Features on community people and groups? Arts and entertainment? Columnists? Humor? Opinion? Health issues? Spiritual focus? You can tell us what you *really* think. Something happening in the community you think we ought to know about?—let us know! You can call us at 713/520-7237, or e-mail at letters@outsmartmagazine.com.

Happy New Year from Greg Jeu and the staff of OutSmart magazine.



Greg



Ann



Dennise



Blase



Tricia



Laurie



John



Marc

In&Out

News IN our community & OUT in the nation

OILPATCH BLUES

When Exxon and Mobil merged, the lowest conservative denominator won out

The push for equal rights for sexual minorities has taken a step backward, as the newly merged Exxon Mobil Corporation announced that they will not be offering domestic partner benefits, even though Mobil had given them to their employees. Mobil employees who were already receiving these benefits will be grandfathered in, but new hires and the vast majority of Exxon Mobil's 121,000 employees are out of luck.

In addition, the new mega-company will jettison Mobil's nondiscrimination policy, which spelled out that sexual orientation would be protected. Exxon Mobil's personnel policy does not specifically bar discrimination or harassment on the basis of sexual orientation, although they do list other minorities by name.

Last May, Exxon shareholders had voted down by a 94-percent margin a proposal to grant partner benefits and to bar discrimination based on sexual orientation, following the recommendation of the Exxon board.

The Exxon Mobil policy has been creating an uproar among gay activists, both national and local. A Houston group led by Dan DiDonato is planning a protest and incorporating as a nonprofit group: the Equality Rally.

"The Equality Rally is starting a campaign," says DiDonato, "to let the corporate leaders of the Exxon Mobil corporation know that their action to rescind domestic partner benefits and their retraction of the antidiscrimination policy for the employees of Mobil is not appreciated, and will not be tolerated by the communities throughout our country. The purpose of the Equality Rally is to demonstrate our feelings on this issue in a peaceful manner."

Texas being such an oilpatch state—Exxon's headquarters are in Irving, right outside Dallas—many in

the gay activist community feel an especial obligation to organize opposition against this regressive policy.

"We in Houston/Dallas have an obligation to 'set the pace' for what is likely to be a long, protracted international project," says longtime Houston muckraker Ray Hill.

Nationwide, activists are also preparing for the long haul, planning such strategies as protesting at Exxon Mobil's spring shareholders' meeting.

"This move could become their Exxon Valdez of the new millennium," says David M. Smith of the gay civil rights group Human Rights Campaign. "Exxon clearly hasn't learned from past experience that creating a

company to persona non grata, as its new Exxon Mobil incarnation became the first announced inductee into the GFN's Corporate Hall of Shame. (See GFN's 50 Most Powerful Gay-Friendly Public Companies in Corporate America at www.gfn.com.)

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force has been campaigning for dialogue between Exxon Mobil officials and representatives of the gay and lesbian movement.

"Benefits comprise approximately 40 percent of a worker's compensation," says Kerry Lobel, NGLTF executive director. "This means that Exxon Mobil's decision to withhold domestic partner benefits puts the oil giant squarely at odds with the notion of economic justice in the workplace. Consumers should remember this injustice when they choose where to spend their hard-earned dollars."

Domestic partner benefits are offered by nearly 3,000 U.S. companies, including more than 80 Fortune 500 companies; 52

percent of the Fortune 500 now explicitly ban sexual orientation discrimination in their nondiscrimination and anti-harassment statements. (A complete list of employers offering domestic partner benefits is available at <http://www.hrc.org/worknet>.) Chevron, BP, Amoco, Shell, Atlantic Richfield, and Texaco all have nondiscrimination policies covering gays and lesbians, according to Wayne Besen, spokesman for the Human Rights Campaign.

So far, Chevron has been the leader in showing what a gay-friendly oil company can do. Chevron was sponsor last year of "Creating Change," the annual training and skills-building conference put on by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Chevron's Lesbian & Gay Employee Association even feted their CEO at their San Francisco holiday party, according to CLGEA co-chair, Houstonian Susan Guerrero.

EXXON+MOBIL= 

toxic mess is a lot easier than cleaning up the resulting damage. We urge Exxon [officials] to re-evaluate their actions and pledge to treat all workers equally, with dignity and respect."

At the online Gay Financial Network, Mobil went from recognition as the fourth most powerful gay-friendly publicly traded

THE EQUALITY RALLY

Friday, January 28, 4 p.m.

City Park, corner of Brazos & Pease (verify location, as it's subject to change)

Actions: Bring Exxon credit cards to cut up. Bring or mail receipts from purchasing "community friendly" products/services.

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continued from page 6

HISTORY IS MADE IN VERMONT

State Supreme Court rules gay couples entitled to equal benefits and protections

Thus wrote the Vermont Supreme Court on December 20, 1999: "We hold that the state is constitutionally required to extend to same-sex couples the common benefits and protections that flow from marriage under Vermont law."

This history-making decision has been joyously greeted by gay and lesbian groups across the country.

"This is a legal and cultural milestone," said Mary Bonauto, co-counsel for the couples who challenged the ban on same-sex marriages. "The court recognized that same-sex couples need and deserve the same legal rights and protections other people take for granted."

The ruling was made in a lawsuit filed by three gay couples after each had been denied a marriage license by their local town clerk; the case had been appealed up to the Vermont Supreme Court, which found that limiting marriage benefits to opposite-

sex couples was in violation of the Vermont constitution's "Common Benefits Clause" that the government ought to be "instituted for the common benefit, protection and security of the people, nation or community, and not for the particular emolument or advantage of any single person, family or set of persons who are part of only that community."

The progressive court ruling did not actually legalize same-sex marriage in Vermont; that will be decided by the Vermont Legislature when they reconvene this month. But the court mandated that the Legislature must either expand the marriage laws to include gay couples, or create some other sort of domestic partnership clause that would give gay couples all the benefits and privileges of marriage.

"We are thrilled that the Vermont Supreme Court had the wisdom and courage to hand down this historic, landmark decision," said Winnie Stachelberg, political director of the Human Rights Campaign. "There has never been a logical or justifiable reason to exclude same-sex couples from marrying, and this decision validates the unfairness of exclusion. This is a tremendous victory for gay and lesbian couples in Vermont who are now one step closer to being considered equal in the eyes of the law."

The Vermont Supreme Court left open the crucial question of whether the state would have gay marriages versus domestic partner-

ship agreement. Both gay advocacy groups and the Vermont Supreme Court would prefer that Vermont go for gay marriages, but the court left that up to the lawmakers.

Reaction from Vermont lawmakers has been mixed. Peter Shumlin, the president pro tempore of the Vermont Senate told the *New York Times* that he expected it would be much easier to get votes for a domestic partnership law than one creating full-fledged marriages, but "both are strong possibilities." Vermont Gov. Howard Dean, a Democrat, told the *New York Times* that he thought the Legislature would pass a domestic partnership law. On CNN, Gov. Dean indicated that the Vermont Legislature would not pass a same-sex marriage bill but that he would support passage of comprehensive domestic partnership legislation. According to the Associated Press, Dean said that same-sex marriage "makes me uncomfortable, the same as anybody else."

Now that Vermont has taken such a decisive step toward granting equal rights to gay couples, what does this bode for the rest of the country? Can we all trot up to Vermont, get a marriage or domestic partner license, and come home and enjoy legal protection? You guessed it: Hold your horses, not quite yet.

THE NEXT SECOND BAPTIST?

MCCR plans to move into a new grand facility

Since it started as an informal ministry in 1972, Houston's Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection has met in living rooms, a printing warehouse, even a TV repair shop. Now, the home church for much of Houston's gay and lesbian community has outgrown yet another facility. MCCR's Rev. J. Dwayne Johnson told his congregation on Christmas Eve that the church planned to move from their Sixth Ward home of 20 years to a new larger building, at 2025 West 11th Street near Ella Boulevard. Pending final inspections and congregational approval, the closing is tentatively set for mid-March.

Under contract from the Evangelistic Temple for \$2.35 million, the 37,000 square foot property is grand indeed. The sanctuary has seating for 1,575 people. The church complex includes two chapels, a bridal dressing room (perfect!), a gymnasium, classrooms and offices, a full commercial kitchen, and a full-immersion baptismal tank.

"This is an exceptional opportunity for Resurrection to continue its trend of ministry growth," said Rev. Johnson. With the new large facility, Johnson hopes to expand the church's education, family, and personal counseling programs. It will also allow room for the church's new bookstore, Resurrection Inspirations, and their gay and lesbian archive. "Probably not many people are aware that Resurrection is the

continued on page 10



PHOTO: BLAKE DUBREUIL; CAKE: ADRIAN BAKER



Happy addition: MCCR's new home seats 1,575.

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In&Out

continued from page 8

custodian of the largest gay and lesbian archive in the state of Texas," says Rev. Johnson.

MCCR has been looking for a new home for two years, having outgrown their current building on Decatur Street in the Old Sixth Ward, the historic neighborhood off Washington and Silber just to the northwest of downtown. The Decatur building was MCCR's first "proper church." The congregation bought the former Tabernacle Baptist Church in 1979, renovating the derelict church considerably over the years. In addition to happy memories, the Decatur property also carried the scars of vandalism, broken windows, gang activity, robberies, and even cross-burnings by the Klan.

Teaching an orthodox Christian theology based upon the beliefs found in the Nicene and Apostles Creed, the Resurrection MCC denomination was founded by the Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry in 1968 as a response to homophobia and rejection from other churches. Headquartered in West Hollywood, the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches has a worldwide membership of more than 32,000 people in over 300 churches.



Fond farewell: The Decatur church was home for 20 years.

TIDBITS

• **BLACK TIE DINNER MOST FABULOUS EVER:** The Black Tie Dinner on Dec. 2, 1999, raised \$144,000 with some 1,150 people attending. "This year's event was the organization's most successful dinner to date, breaking previous records in attendance and in amounts distributed," dinner co-chair Tom Mays announced proudly. The money was awarded to 15 local organizations: The Gay & Lesbian Victory Foundation (\$27,800); Montrose Clinic (\$18,120); The Assistance Fund (\$17,592); Bering Omega Community Services (\$15,881); H.A.T.C.H. (\$12,166); PFLAG (\$7,829); AIDS Foundation Houston (\$7,432); Montrose Counseling Center (\$6,831); An Uncommon Legacy (\$6,130); AssistHers (\$5,720); PWA Coalition (\$4,852); Body Positive-Houston (\$3,868); Center for AIDS (\$3,798); Texas Human Rights Foundation (\$3,540); Lesbian Health Initiative (\$2,579).

• **HIV CRISIS IN HOUSTON'S BLACK COMMUNITY:** On World AIDS Day (Dec. 1, 1999), Mayor Lee Brown declared a state of emergency in the African-American community because of the alarming increase in HIV infection. "The HIV infection rate in the African-American community has reached a crisis level," Brown said. "Sixty-one percent of the Houston and Harris County 1999 infection reports were of African Americans. The city and the county must mobilize to reverse this alarming trend."

• **BAYOU BUNNY BENEFIT:** Preparing for its 21st annual Easter party, Bunnies on the Bayou is putting out the call to organizations to apply to be a bunny beneficiary. Bunnies on the Bayou has grown to be a party of thousands, which raised more than \$27,000 last year. Bunnies is once again asking for recommendations from the community in order to locate the most deserving organizations to benefit from the year 2000 event. For complete information, call Jim Taylor at 713/313-1671 or 713/526-9216. The party will be April 23.

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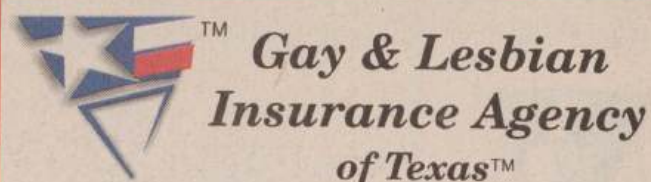


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Business News



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Staff of Brennan & Associates, Attorneys at Law

Jacquie Brennan, founding partner of **Brennan & Associates, Attorneys at Law**, welcomes the addition of six attorneys. **Damon Shadid**, **Brad Scarborough**, and **Joseph Gourrier** have joined the civil litigation section. Shadid focuses on personal injury and consumer advocacy. Scarborough handles estate planning, real estate, and corporate and commercial law. Gourrier focuses on consumer law and probate. **Khue Nguyen** has joined the criminal law section; **Claudia Avalos**, family law; and physician/lawyer **Richard Vanik** will assist with medical-legal issues. Brennan & Associates is located at 2402 Commonwealth and can be contacted at 713/522-1211.

Congratulations to **Loft & Home Essentials** on their recent expansion to Toledo, Ohio. Loft & Home Essentials features extraordinary candles, soaps, lotions, and distinctive accessories. In Houston, you can find Loft & Home Essentials at 1009 Missouri at Montrose. They can be contacted at 713/527-0770.



Tina Sabuco

activities since 1994, Sabuco stated that "integrated arts incorporates activities from all the expressive arts to foster creativity, improve cooperation, communication skills, and

self-esteem." Children role-play and use props, costume pieces, puppets, music, and sounds to create themes in their classes. The classes are for all ages and abilities; adult family members are invited to get in on the fun. Arts Alive also offers unique and custom birthday parties with creative themes like Terrific Tea Party, Insect Invasion, and Monster Mansion. For class schedules and fees please call 713/699-9933, or visit their website at www.artsaliveinc.com. Arts Alive is located at 1811 Heights Boulevard.

Start the millennium with a new look. **K. Noel Gregory**, professional painter of residential properties, has expanded her staff with the addition of **Juan Silva**. Gregory and staff provide the creative advice and skilled precision to give homes a fresh look or a bold new theme depending on the owners' desires. Gregory can be reached at her office: 713/802-2090 or by pager 713/698-7713.



Melissa Moore

Melissa Moore, Attorney at Law, has relocated her office to the Lyric Centre at 440 Louisiana, suite 1212. Moore specializes in business and employment law. Moore graduated from Texas A&M with a degree in political science, and received her law degree from South Texas College of Law. Moore can be contacted at 713/222-9998 or at Melissa@lwdlaw.com.

Mystic Women, clothing made with pride and love, have launched a clothing line for children of lesbian and gay families called **Mystic Kids**. **Stacey G. Harris**, co-founder, says, "Imagine a little girl walking proudly down the street wearing a T-shirt that says 'My Mommy's Rule.'" The collection includes accessories such as hats, backpacks, sippy cups, and bottles. The Mystic Women product line includes 100-percent cotton garments for infants, toddlers, kids, youth, and their parents. "The products are designed with beautiful, empowering, and often humorous images and messages that reflect your family," says co-founder **Jessie Barry-Brewer**. Contact them on the web at www.mysticwomen.com.

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston is now accepting applications for its **2000 Summer Internship Program**. The program offers undergraduate college students an opportunity to learn about museum careers and the different aspects of museum operations. The application deadline is Tuesday, Jan. 18. To learn more about the internship program, check the museum's website at www.mfah.org. Students can also contact the museum's education department at 713-639-7320, or pick up a poster in the lobby of the administration building located at 5100 Montrose Boulevard.

AssistHers presents "AssistHers Heading Into the New Millennium" on Saturday, Jan. 8. This monthly forum of in-service speakers offers AssistHers volunteers and friends the opportunity to learn more about health issues which affect women-identified women. Meetings begin at 10:50 a.m. and finish at noon on the second Saturday of each month. January's meeting will be chaired by AssistHers volunteers **Susan Turell**, Ph.D., who is vice president in charge of volunteers; and **Michelle Garth-Jones**, MSW, who is vice president over client services. To find out the location of the meeting, or if you have any other questions about AssistHers, you can contact them at 713/521-4628.

Muscle Mechanics, a personal fitness training and nutritional guidance facility, has moved to a new location, 617 Richmond. Owner **John-Aaron** tells us that it has doubled in size and that limited memberships are now being offered. The phone number, 713/523-5330, has stayed the same.

Once again this year the **Rotheudt/Dizinger Foundation** is accepting grant applications for assistance to 501(c)3 foundations looking to serve those living with HIV/AIDS-related issues. The RD Foundation was formed in 1990 by William Rotheudt and Peter Dizinger (who died in 1991 of AIDS-related conditions) to assist those affected by HIV/AIDS and let them know that they are neither alone nor forgotten. For general guideline information and grant applications, mail requests to: RD Foundation, 3701 Montrose Blvd., Houston, TX 77006.

Have questions about health and medical management issues? A free Lunch and Learn program will be offered at the Park Plaza Education Center at 1200 Binz, Suite 140, on Saturday, Jan. 22 from 11:30 am-1:00 pm. As in last year's program, a panel of medical experts will be available to answer questions and discuss medical concerns with the general public. Members of the panel will include **Carl Mayberry**, PA, **Larry Harrison**, RPh (Statscript Pharmacy), **Ron Cummings**, CPET, RD (Statscript Pharmacy), and **Fred Walters** (Houston Buyer's Club). At the Lunch and Learn program learn about medical management in detail, and enjoy a free lunch in the process. Sponsored by **Statscript Pharmacy**, **BTG Pharmaceuticals**, and the **Houston Buyer's Club**. For information, contact Larry Harrison at 713/521-1700.

If your big news
affects the community,
we want to hear about it!

Send your news release by the 15th of the month to OutSmart Magazine, c/o Laurie Jones, 3406 Audubon Place, Houston, TX 77006. Fax news briefs to 713/522-3275 or e-mail to: letters@outsmartmagazine.com.



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A Taste of Houston

Tapas-style reviews
OutSmart Restaurant Guide

Baba Yega

2607 Grant St. (@ Missouri St.)
713/522-0042

Definitely funkier 10 years ago, before Dante's inferno. Colossal burgers and expanded vegetarian menu lets carnivores and herbivores eat in harmony. Rare patio dining makes for great people watching. \$

Barnaby's Café

604 Fairview (@ Hopkins)
713/522-0106

Too close for comfort, although you get down-home Luby's fare in the heart of Montrose. A menu straight out of Americana, so come hungry and bring a doggie bag. Everyone's welcome. \$

Boulevard Bistrot

4319 Montrose (just past Richmond)
713/524-6922

Houston's culinary queen Monica Pope delves into culinary wanderlust every time she mixes a drink with her signature fruit-infused alcohol. Her eclectic New American menu includes a Mediterranean sampler plate and salad Nicoise that you'll dream about until your next visit. Come for Sunday brunch, where funk meets haute couture, and taste scones the size of Mars, fluffy fritattas, and a dreamy cherry chocolate bread pudding. \$\$

NEW! Cabo

2187 Portsmouth (@ Greenbriar)
713/527-8226
419 Travis (@ Prairie)
713/225-2060

It's loud, it's boisterous, it's almost always standing-room-only (unless you're there for a late lunch), and it's crawling with twentysomethings most weekend nights. But their killer margaritas, cilantro-infused fish tacos, whopping sandwiches with crispy plantain chips, and mouth-burning shrimp habanero tacos and quesadillas guarantee good eats along with its yuppie reputation. \$

NEW! Café Chino

6140 Village Pkwy (alley between Amherst & Times), 713/524-4433
600 Travis (tunnel level @ Texas)
713/223-1011

Houston Chronicle food editor Ann Criswell was dead-on when she referred to Café Chino's ethereal seared green beans as "a little slice of heaven." Owner Eddie Chen prides himself on his glass-



COST GUIDE

The cost guide reflects the average cost of dinner for one person with one drink and tip. Deduct about 25 percent for average lunch prices.

\$=\$15 and below (inexpensive)
\$\$=\$16 to \$30 (moderate)
\$\$\$=\$31 to \$50 (expensive)
\$\$\$\$=\$51 or more (very expensive)

enclosed kitchen and piping hot wok, and he should: Each dish is meticulously prepared, and—try as they might—no other restaurant can duplicate those famous green beans, or that wonderfully textured cashew shrimp and chicken. And, contrary to its Hunan label, Chen added sushi to his already winning menu early last year. \$\$

Churrascos

2055 Westheimer (@ S. Shepherd)
713/527-8300
9705 Westheimer (@ Gessner)
713/952-1988
1320 W. Bay Area Blvd. (Friendswood)
281/461-4100

The best thing that's happened to carnivorous Dixie since barbecue. The operative word here is beef—mouth-watering, succulent prime beef tenderloin basted with their signature chimichurri sauce (made from olive oil, fresh garlic, parsley, and spices) and char-grilled to order. Great grilled vegetables, empanadas, and seafood, too, but the pièce de résistance is the creamy tres leches dessert, which other restaurants have failed to imitate successfully. \$\$\$

Dessert Gallery

3200 Kirby Drive (behind Café Express)
713/522-9999

A charming haven for dessert addicts, where Sugarbusters devotees and the calorie-challenged enter at their own risk. Convince your dentist to go public, buy up as many shares as you can afford, and inform the public of this after-dinner sweet fest. Put more clearly, their chocolate-dipped cookies make Mrs. Fields taste store-bought. \$

My husband proposed to me over a White Chocolate Raspberry Truffle cheesecake he had flown in from California's premier restaurant, the Cheesecake Factory. Had he proposed over Sara Lee instead, I would still be single.

And had the mother of Cheesecake Factory proprietor David Overton had a penchant for pound cake instead of cheesecake, Overton may have ended up competing with Sara Lee among the vast frozen confections in your local grocery store.

But Mom's coveted family recipe was so beyond your average dessert that it inspired Overton, a teacher at the time, to swap his books for baking. Now, instead of scraping to make ends meet, Overton is



Evelyn's Favorite Pasta: The kitchen sink never tasted this good.

breaking ground for his 34th restaurant—this one in San Francisco—and planning two more Y2K openings in Atlanta and West Palm Beach.

From its first conspicuous Beverly Hills location in the early '80s, it was only a matter of time before Overton brought his wildly popular restaurant to Houston. Amid the fast-food and high-ticket restaurants sprinkled throughout Houston's most popular shopping scene, the Galleria was begging for a place with Everyman appeal. What it got was a California clone that brags better than Texas itself: great food, and more of it, for less than a decent steak.

LIFE IS SHORT

But don't eat your cheesecake first, or else you'll miss the other hearty fare dished up by the Cheesecake Factory

Like many a good Houston restaurant, the wait is long. Even at 6:30 p.m., fairly early for a Friday night, we waited an hour and a half (at least they offer beepers so you can build your appetite while perusing the Galleria). Nabbing a table at the cramped yet well-stocked bar, we figured the wait would be scenic at the very least. Astonishingly high ceilings over the downstairs bar belie the second story, which is the main dining area. The decor is Grecian contemporary, neutral tones with vivid splashes of metallic rust and black, accented by columns. Not exactly understated but very distracting, which comes in handy since you'll have trouble conversing above the din. Then again, with a menu like this, who needs to talk?

Roughly 18 pages of fat-laden appetizers and multi-content salads, chicken, pastas, pizzas, fish, steaks, sandwiches, and breakfast to ponder can propel a normally sane person into an existential crisis. In fact, after reading every tantalizing description, you may be too exhausted to order anything but cheesecake—or too wary to order from a kitchen that tries to accommodate so many different tastes. A cheesecake restaurant from California offering blackened red Cajun chicken pasta does seem a tad suspect ... like IHOP offering Crepes Suzette.

But after poring over the appetizers—two pages worth—you'll be happy the Cheesecake Factory didn't stick to its name-sake. From its fresh Thai lettuce wraps (\$8.95) to its positively luscious sweet corn tamale cakes (\$7.50), these mini meals are enough for an entrée, although you'll be hard-pressed to find anything remotely

entrées are under \$13.95 and can feed two starving diners.)

In the appetizer department, a must-have are the chubby, overstuffed avocado eggrolls (\$7.50), oozing with avocado, sun-



Say cheese! David Overton and his staff.

dried tomatoes, red onion, and cilantro and served with a sublime tamarind-cashew dipping sauce you'll want to eat by the spoonful. Other seemingly unoriginal appetizers all had their own California twist. For example, no reasonable carnivore would contest the meaty buffalo wings (\$7.50); you could eat more than one without numbing your tongue, and they don't drip. Leave it to a California transplant to

**My favorite cheesecake had normally
polite friends reduced to Darwinian
tactics vying for the last bite.**

healthy. This place makes its living off of cheesecake, so don't go thinking they've skimped on fat anywhere else. With appetizers priced between \$5.95 and \$8.95 per massive dish, combine one with a dessert for a filling and relatively inexpensive evening. (It's obvious this place makes its profit from turnaround, since almost all

create a greaseless chicken wing. And the pizza (\$9.95) with grilled portabella mushrooms, caramelized onions, and Fontina cheese concealing chewy bursts of garlic (and served with blue cheese on request, in case you really want to give your arteries a workout) easily rivals its California cousin down Post Oak Boulevard. Even



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A Taste of Houston

OutSmart Restaurant Guide

continued from p. 14

Golden Room
1209 Montrose (@ Dallas)
713/524-9614

True to its name, this gold-gilded Thai-Chinese will have you rubbing elbows with the entire room—literally. Some find it a bit too intimate for private conversation, but the chicken wraps, spicy curries, and flavorful soups are meant for sharing, so dig in. Just don't burn your tongue. \$\$

Gugenheim's Delicatessen

1708 Post Oak Blvd. (@ San Felipe)
713/622-2773

Open wide and you still won't be able to close your mouth around one of these famous triple stackers. Where else but this New York clone can you order a beef brisket "jawbreaker" and have enough left over for the next two nights? Giant matzo balls, crispy potato pancakes served with dollops of sour cream and apple sauce, cheese-filled blintzes, and the flakiest knishes to rival either of those other coasts. Knishes, blintzes, you ask? Don't ask. Just eat! \$

NEW! Hobbit Cafe

2243 Richmond (@ Portsmouth)
713/526-5460

It's open again and we're happy: because this locale actually provides parking. Enter Houston's beloved Tolkien sanctuary and revel in its prolific menu, featuring Fatty Lumpkin and Bilbo the Magnificent (they're sandwiches, but unlike any you've ever experienced). While it tends to cater to vegetarian tastes, even the Birkenstock-deprived will appreciate the sprawling deck and heaping servings. And contrary to its herbivorous reputation, it offers meat beyond the token veggie burgers—such as real bacon cheeseburgers, tuna salad, and jerk chicken. Both the "classic" and regular sandwiches are huge, so you may as well have them doggy bag half before they serve it. The owner actually waits tables, so you know your voice counts. \$

Lai Lai Dumpling House

9262 Bellaire Blvd.
713/271-0080

The best dive on Bellaire, not to mention the best Chinese for the least bucks. No kidding—how about feeding a group of 12 for under \$50? Soothe your soul with the Tofu Hot Pot, chock full o' steaming fresh vegetables and firm chunks of tofu. Or the pork- and veggie-filled dumplings, or the green onion pancakes, or just

about anything on their menu. Top off with a fortune cookie and you're set till your next craving. \$

La Strada

322 Westheimer (@ Taft)
713/523-1014
5161 San Felipe (@ Sage)
713-850-9999

Yes, they do more than Sunday brunch. It's called award-winning cuisine and matching wine list available to the entire population seven days a week. Two hip locations differ in style and mood, but not in the yummy, unconventional pastas or reliable bellinis. \$\$

Niko Niko's

2520 Montrose
713/528-1308

Dishes up authentic Greek food with Kalamata olives as salty as they get. Caters as much to vegetarians as meat lovers. Grab a chicken and spinach pita on the go or chat outdoors over a plate of humus. Bring your own ambience—everything's plastic except the food. \$

NEW! Paulie's

1834 Westheimer
713/807-7271

Step into a little bit of nouveau Continental Italian and plan on settling in until someone kicks you out. After you indulge in fresh panini sandwiches—stuffed with everything from pork tenderloin, to grilled tuna with wasabi mayo, to mozzarella, roasted tomato, and avocado—you'll want to linger over a steaming cappuccino, nibble on something flaky from their in-store bakery, and hang out until dinnertime to sample the equally appealing entrees.

NEW! Pot Pie Pizzeria

1525 Westheimer (@ Mandell)
713/528-4350

Who needs eggs when you can eat their baked potato pizza for breakfast, lunch, and dinner? This gay-owned and -operated neighborhood joint will feed you till you bust. Even better, the nightly all-you-can-eat spaghetti and outdoor patio makes your gorge-fest cheap and picturesque. Perfectly boring normal folks are welcomed with open arms despite its student and bohemian clientele. So come hungry and don't leave till you lick the last streak of trapanese off your plate. \$

the bruschetta (\$5.95) was crisp and flavorful, about as strong a compliment you can pay to a mix of diced tomato, onion, garlic, and basil.

If you like pasta and have room for an entrée, don't miss Evelyn's Favorite Pasta (\$12.95). Evelyn is my hero, her favorite pasta being a salve for us indecisive, orally fixated folks, whose motto might be: If you can't make up your mind between entrées, just combine them all! Perfect al dente penne pasta sprinkled with olive oil, garlic, and Parmesan, tossed with Kalamata olives, sun-dried tomatoes, roasted eggplant, red bell peppers, broccoli, and pine nuts. So simple—yet so hard to keep from crooning with each tender, chewy mouthful.

A little jaunt back a few pages will take you to juicy, thick hamburgers (made with Certified Black Angus beef), grilled portabella, and fresh tuna burgers, every possible sandwich combination outside of a deli, even Mexican and Asian dishes that, not surprisingly, hold their own against their native competitors.

On the lighter side, you won't go wrong opting for any of the bountiful salads, although, again, plan on sharing or leaving with a doggy bag. The Santa Fe salad (\$10.95) comes heaped with lime-marinated chicken, fresh corn and black beans, cheese, tomatoes, and enough cilantro and peanut sauce to keep your fork moving against your

will. The spicy Thai vegetable noodle salad (\$9.95), again with cilantro and a spicy Thai peanut vinaigrette, is a hands-down favorite, as is the herb-crusted salmon salad (\$10.95) served chilled in a wonderfully tart balsamic vinaigrette.

**The plate was scraped
clean within one and a
half minutes, even the
two excessive dollops
of whipped cream...**

But the real jaw dropper here is the dessert menu. No matter what you thought about cheesecake until now, it was a misconception. This stuff will move you like no other, especially their signature white chocolate raspberry truffle (remember the marriage proposal?), the pièce de résistance that propelled the Cheesecake Factory to national fame.

To prove my point, my companions and I conducted a taste test with five varieties of cheesecake. They were all fantastic, we agreed, but my favorite had normally polite friends reduced to Darwinian tactics vying for the last bite. The plate was scraped

clean within one and a half minutes, even the two excessive dollops of whipped cream. Two close seconds were the Kahlua almond fudge cheesecake, with its hint of Kahlua and thick fudge and chocolate-covered almonds; and the coffee Heathbar crunch cheesecake, a creamy, heady rendition of the candy bar.

Given the two-hour wait even after our three blissful hours of oral indulgence, it's safe to say The Cheesecake Factory won't suffer the fate of past Houston restaurants in times of economic distress. And for those of us who live for great desserts, we'll no longer have to ship their famous cheesecake from 1,500 miles away. There's only one minor problem with its Galleria location. You'll need to plan strategically and do your clothes shopping before lunch.

The Cheesecake Factory

5015 Westheimer (in the Galleria)
713/840-0600

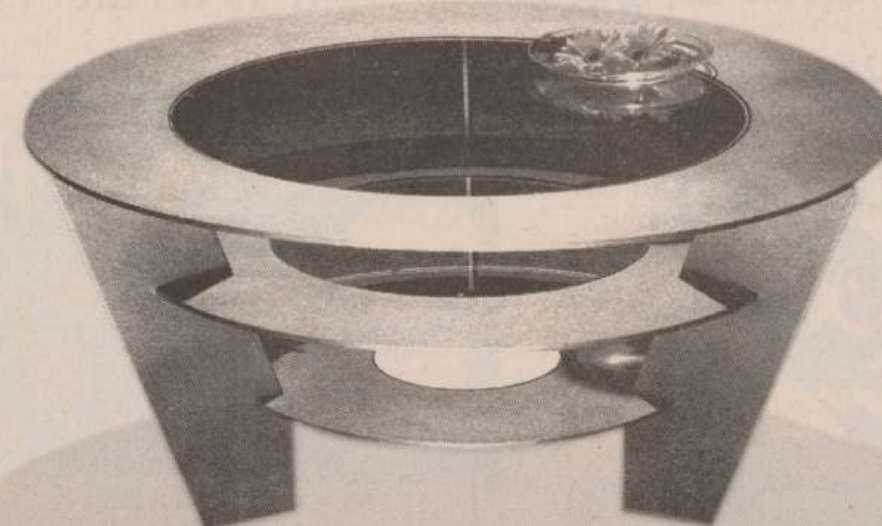
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A Taste of Houston

OutSmart Restaurant Guide

continued from p. 16

NEW! Raven Grill
1916 Bissonnet
713/521-2027

This inconspicuous little dining spot is far more inviting than its Edgar Allen Poe-ish decor and name suggest. Its cozy, casual-chic ambience makes it an ideal neighborhood joint for after-work unwinding. While the food is a bland take on '90s Southwestern, the ubiquitous mesquite grilling—from moist fish entrees and portobello pesto mushrooms to angel food cake—will inspire you to experiment in your own backyard (with your grill: now get your mind out of the gutter). \$\$

NEW! Riva's
1117 Missouri St. (Montrose)
713-529-3450

The brothers Silboye bring you Italian cuisine so unusually well-seasoned you'll notice the pasta as well as the sauce. The simple dinner salad is alive with fresh veg-

etables and a tangy vinaigrette and a pleasant forecast of things to come. These men know herbs, and their fish dishes will make seafood converts out of diehard carnivores. And pastry chef Pierre kneads up some tasty little numbers. \$\$

Sabroso Grill
5510 Morningside (@ Times Blvd.)
713/942-9900

Price-wise it falls between Cabo and Churrascos, but in taste scores equal to both. The absolute best cilantro dressing in town, and you can order it on everything from the giant salads to the overstuffed tortas and tacos. Considering it's one of the few places you can walk in without a reservation or wait, this South American winner is clearly one of Rice Village's (and Houston's) best-kept secrets. \$\$\$

Sawadee
6719 Wesleyan (@ Bellaire Blvd.)
713/666-7872

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The name alone will trigger a Pavlovian response once you've tried this quaint West U. hideaway. Everything on the Thai menu is delicious, but some dishes are so beyond description you'll be hard pressed to stray once you've found your favorites. Mine include the beef or chicken with basil and peppers as well as the lemon-grass coconut soup. Then again, the curried chicken is just spicy enough to induce little beads of sweat on my forehead, and the spring rolls, well...excuse me while I drool. \$\$

Sonoma
1415 California St.
713/522-7066

You've never seen a renovated convalescent home bursting with this much fun and flavor. Wildly eclectic menu features steak pasta, Osso Bucco, and crispy crab cakes (heavy crab with minimal cake). Very reasonable, and a great party atmosphere. Owner Patrick Zane makes the ultimate host. \$\$

NEW! Star Pizza
2111 Norfolk (b/w Greenbriar & Shepherd) 713/523-0800
140 S. Heights Blvd. (@ Washington)
713/869-1241

Who needs Chicago? Like everything else, Texas can out-top and out-dough the country's most famous deep-dish pizzerias. Star's whole-wheat crust is light and chewy enough to lure even the un-health conscious, and Sugarbust devotes it with uninhibited glut-tany. Thankfully, the salads are not an afterthought. So before inhaling a sausage, meatball, pepperoni, and extra cheese, you can clear your conscience with the cauliflower, tomato, broccoli, carrot, and sprout-infused garden salad. \$

Taco Milagro
2555 Kirby Dr. (@ Westheimer)
713/522-1999

Café Express' answer to upscale Mexican fast food enjoyed at a slow, savory pace. Chalupas come stacked with almost every ingredient in the house; salads and enchiladas are exotic versions of their brethren Tex-Mex fare. A salsa bar spanning an entire wall satisfies tastes from mild to muy caliente. Sip a cool one (with salt) to the trickle of two flowing patio fountains. \$

Thai Spice
5117 Kelvin (behind & above Antone's)
713/777-4888

Starve yourself for a day, then gorge on their expansive lunch buffet. Even for buffet skeptics, the four variations on egg rolls and spicy Pad Thai will make a believer out of you. If you're still in doubt, sample the beef curry and satays. You may have a wait, but the place is teeming with locals and natives vouching for its authenticity, so you know it'll be worth it. \$\$\$

NEW! This Is It
207 W. Gray (@ Bagby)
713/659-1608

No other place dishes up soul food like this hearty Fourth Ward spot. Just one foot in the door, and you'll smell pork chops and collard greens like mama still makes. The cornbread is the sweetest, moistest that Houston has to offer. For the uninitiated, display just a hint of down-home naïveté to the gals behind the steam table and they'll give you the skinny on each dish. \$

Tony Ruppe's
3939 Montrose
713/852-0852

Standing in the former Quilted Toque location, Ruppe's California vineyard décor sets a tone of anticipation that escalates with one glance at his fusion menu. Nothing standard here; even the descriptions smack of flavorful humor. Everything from Wok-seared Hoisin Beef Summer Roll and Extreme Cuisines' Wild Half-Moon Bay Salmon to his Blazin' Summer Salad (with a delightful cilantro cream dressing), and Capellini Pasta Baked in Parchment is intricate but not overwhelming. Even the sides of Parmesan Polenta and balsamic vinaigrette-marinated vegetables are off the beaten path. From entrée to dessert, Ruppe is masterful at concealing unspeakable delicacies in parchment paper. \$\$\$

Toopees Café
1830 W. Alabama
713/522-7662

This gay coffee-house hangout is also a full-fledged neighborhood café catering to all people hungry and hip. Stop in for a morning latte or late-evening bonding session, or spend a leisurely lunch with a good book and a great sandwich. Devotees sum it up in one word: scones. \$

NEW! Treebeards

315 Travis (@ Preston) • 713/228-2622
1100 Louisiana (tunnel level @ Lamar) • 713/752-2602
1117 Texas (in Christ Church Cathedral @ San Jacinto) • 713/229-8248

But for the lack of hurricanes, you may as well be whooping it up in New Orleans; so authentic is this Cajun-Creole favorite. The lunch-hour lines move remarkably fast, but we wouldn't even mind waiting for platters of red beans and rice (with sausage, cheese, and green onions), jambalaya, crawfish étouffée, and green beans coated with lemon vinaigrette. In case you didn't know, the bottomless French-bread basket is there to soak up the excess sauce. \$

Urbana
3407 Montrose (@ Hawthorne)
713/521-1086

About as atmospheric as a hospital MRI suite—noisy, echoing, and a décor that screams "minimalist sterile." So why the fuss? The classy menu offers everything Texan and beyond, with barbecue-grilled shrimp, Camal-seared tuna, richly marinated steaks, light pastas, ingenious salads, and interesting deviations on popular '90s sides like mashed potatoes and portobello mushrooms. With food this good you won't care about the stark ambience. \$\$

NEW! Van Loc
3010 Milam (@ Elgin)
713/528-6441

Down-to-earth Vietnamese food (with down-to-earth decor to match) draws natives, families, and downtown yuppies alike. The extensive menu offers fresh, reasonably priced traditional dishes such as vermicelli and bun, and you can even roll your own spring rolls (but unless you've honed that skill, let them do it for you). Their classically strong Vietnamese coffee will put hair on your chest. \$

Vincent's
2701 W. Dallas • 713/528-4313
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10 things you might not know about La Strada

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Best Brunch 1997, 1998, 1999
—OutSmart, Houston Press

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Best Salad 1998—Houston Press

3. We make other drinks besides

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—My Table Magazine

4. We made "celebrating" our middle name.

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—Inside Houston

5. We have a reputation that extends beyond Houston.

Mobil Travel Guide Award 1999

6. We are celebrating our 14th year of award-winning cuisine.

Zagat's Survey of Houston

7. We have food for everyone.

Our pasta is sugarbust-approved.

8. We start the trends.

Houston's first brick pizza oven.

9. We are the art of dining.

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No, Joe Ramos is not Aldo's little brother.

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Calendar of Events

JANUARY

5 & 19

HIV Testing. The Montrose Clinic is offering free confidential HIV testing and counseling, 6-9 pm @ the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 803 Hawthorne. The center: 713/524-3818. The clinic: 713/830-3000.

8 & 23

Winter Fishing Trips. The Rainbow Fishing Club is scheduling two deep-sea fishing trips a month starting in January and running through the end of Red Snapper season. Winter fishing—especially on the new Buccaneer/Cavalier—is great fun with big snappers being caught as they come closer to land in the cold months. Please make \$20 deposit checks payable to John Hubert and send to The Rainbow Fishing Club, P.O. Box 66450, Houston 77266. More info: 713/523-6381.

9

The Reverends' Gay Son. At this general meeting of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG-Houston), Rev. Marilyn Meeker-Williams and Rev. David Meeker-Williams talk about how having a gay son has impacted their ministry and their parenting. Small sharing groups follow the program. 2-4:30 pm @ Christ Church Cathedral, 1117 Texas Ave. at San Jacinto. For more info: www.pflagtexas.org.

14

Jean Yves Thibaudet. Society of the Performing Arts presents this recital of the charismatic, 37-year-old French piano virtuoso. Thibaudet is the antithesis of the stereotypically remote, imperious concert pianist. His interests away from the concert platform invest his prodigious music-making with a passion and a

keen interest in an unusually wide array of composers. His elegant concert attire is tweaked with a typically dramatic Thibaudet flair: his trademark fire-engine red socks. His passion for windsurfing, fine food & wine, Versace jackets & vests, and opera are all reflected in the palette of colors & textures and the elegance & élan of his performances. His more than 20 recordings range from Ravel, Debussy, & Rachmaninoff to an inspired disc of Liszt opera transcriptions and last year's *Conversations With Bill*. 8 pm @ Wortham Center's Cullen Theater. Tickets (\$26-\$36) are available by calling 713/227-4SPA (4772).

14 & 15

Ewe! Duck! Duck, duck, goose! The beloved childhood game has been appropriated by DiverseWorks and re-visioned as "Duck, Duck, Ewe!" The brainchild of artist board member Jane Weiner, DiverseWorks hosted a one-day audition to select the performers. This "12 Minutes MAX!" brings to the stage some of the hottest new works from familiar faces and introduces impressive new talent to Houston audiences. 8 pm @ DiverseWorks, 1117 East Frwy (I-10 at North Main). Tickets \$12 (\$10 students, \$7 members). New 24-hr. reservation line: 713/335-3445.

INFO NEEDED FOR YOUR EVENT LISTING: a few lines of info about your event; date/time; cost; location/address; organization name; AND two phone numbers—one for OutSmart to reach you for questions and one for OutSmart readers to get more info on your event. **Mail info to:** OutSmart Magazine, 3406 Audubon Place, Houston 77006. **Fax info to:** 713/522-3275. **E-mail info to:** letters@outsmartmagazine.com. **NO LISTINGS CAN BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE DEADLINE DATE—FRIDAY, JAN. 14.**



Shirley Horn: see January 21

15

Kitty Carlisle Hart has spent her entire life surrounded by theater personalities & legends and has long been recognized as one of the country's most ardent spokespersons on behalf of the arts. Probably best known for her 15-year run as a regular panelist on television's *To Tell the Truth*, Hart's movie credits include a starring role in the Marx Brothers' classic *A Night at the Opera*; two films with Bing Crosby; and also a role in Woody Allen's *Radio Days*. She even created the title role in the American premier of the opera *The Rape of Lucretia* and has appeared numerous times on Broadway. Now she takes center stage to share anecdotes from the golden age of musical theater with her performance of *My Life Upon*



Hoagy Carmichael: see January 29 & 30

1960s. She has had critical acclaim (*The New York Times* says, "Songs are lucky when Shirley Horn chooses to sing them."), commercial success, and six consecutive Grammy nominations. 8 pm at Wortham Center's Cullen Theater, 500 Texas. Tickets are \$27-\$37 (half-price for students & seniors with valid ID) and are available by calling Da Camera Music Center at 713/524-5050, online at www.culturefinder.com, or through Ticketmaster at 713/629-3700.

21 & 22

Renegade Misanthrope. With this new solo performance, Stephanie Juno creates a startling tour de force that reels in the viewer with humor & insight. She's a crooked crook hiding out in a hospital as she recuperates from a heist gone wrong. Marooned in an overly



Gloria Loring: see January 23

524-5050 or the George R. Brown Education Center at 713/284-8300.

23

Anything Goes is a true milestone in theatrical history as it once and for all established Cole Porter as one of this country's most brilliant songwriters and launched Ethel Merman into stardom. Various revisions were made to the original script, and the most recent revision now stars well-known singer & soap opera star Gloria Loring. 2 & 7 pm @ Galveston's Grand 1894 Opera House, 2020 Postoffice. Tickets range from \$16.50-\$51. For more info/tickets: 409/765-1894.

24

Spontaneous Combustion. Presented by Da Camera Jazz, is a collaboration featuring composer/saxophonist



Kitty Carlisle Hart: see January 15

Saturday, 2 pm on Sunday @ Galveston's Grand 1894 Opera House, 2020 Postoffice. Tickets range from \$14.50-\$26. For more info/tickets: 409/765-1894.

PLANNING AHEAD

February 1

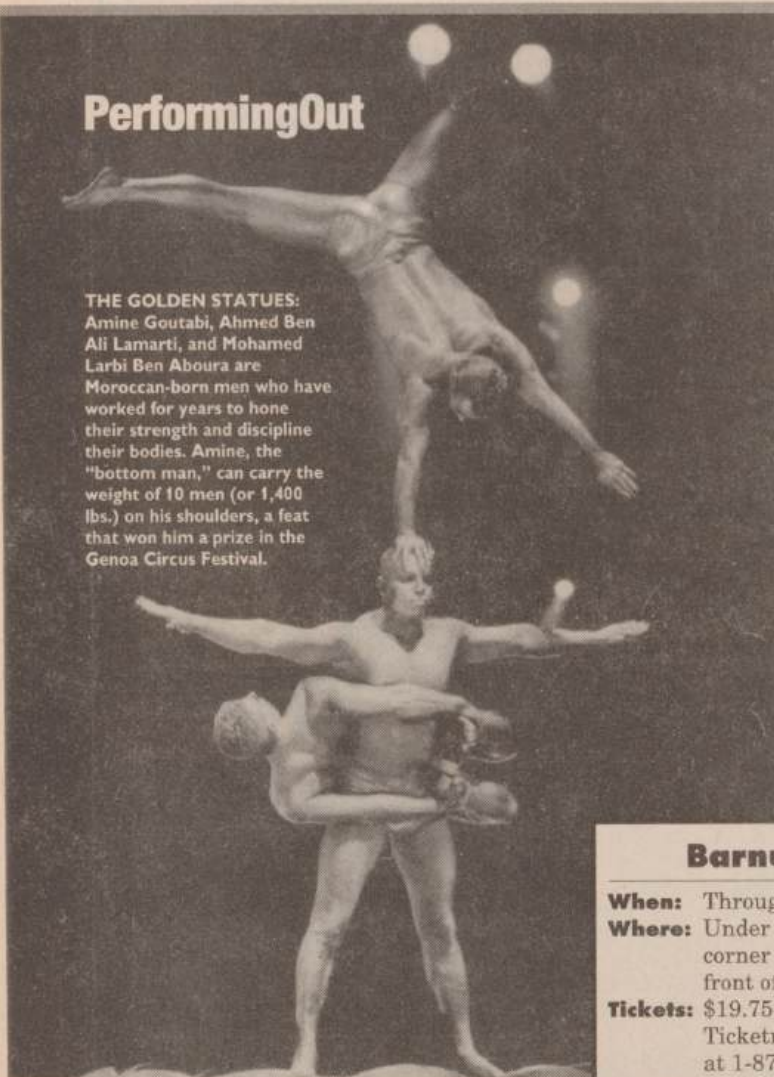
HIV/AIDS in Women Photography Contest. 100 submissions will be selected for exhibition at XIII International World AIDS Conference in Durban, South Africa, July 9-14, 2000. Open to all amateur & professional photographers 18+. Subject matter must portray the impact of AIDS/HIV on women. 35mm mounted slides. No fee. Awards: \$3,500 first prize; \$1,500 second; \$750



Jean-Yves Thibaudet: see January 14

PerformingOut

THE GOLDEN STATUES: Amine Goutabi, Ahmed Ben Ali Lamarti, and Mohamed Larbi Ben Aboura are Moroccan-born men who have worked for years to hone their strength and discipline their bodies. Amine, the "bottom man," can carry the weight of 10 men (or 1,400 lbs.) on his shoulders, a feat that won him a prize in the Genoa Circus Festival.



FUN UNDER A TENT

A circus of kaleidoscopic proportions

The experience of Barnum's Kaleidoscope unfolds under the spires of a dazzling red-and-white circus tent. The magic begins when the first audience member steps from outside into the lobby tent and into an atmosphere of food, frivolity, and uninhibited fun. Here, guests encounter their first opportunity to mingle with performers. From the lobby tent, the festivities spill over into the main tent, with its 1,850 velvet-covered ringside seats, including VIP sofa seating. The evening unfolds with a two-hour, up-close and often interactive performance blending the intimacy of contemporary theater with classic circus elements. Accompanied by a live orchestra playing an original musical score, Barnum's Kaleidoscope marks the first time that a Ringling Bros. production has been presented under a tent since 1956. Features acts from the Europe and the States, including a trapeze artist, a clown, a harlequin, a juggler, plus a virtual cornucopia of surprises!

Barnum's Kaleidoscope

When: Through Jan. 23, 2000

Where: Under a tent in the parking lot at the corner of McKinney & Crawford (directly in front of George R. Brown Convention Center)

Tickets: \$19.75-\$48. May be purchased at all Ticketmaster outlets or charged by phone at 1-877-9-BARNUM (toll-free)

Info: 1-877-922-7686 (toll-free)

the Wicked Stage at 8 pm @ Galveston's Grand 1894 Opera House, 2020 Postoffice. More info/tickets: 409/765-1894.

16

Methodist Health Care Houston Marathon. For the 2nd time in its 28-year history, this marathon will offer bonus prize money for its race. A \$50,000 bonus will be awarded to any entrant, male or female, who breaks the overall record for his or her respective category: 2:10:04 for men and 2:27:51 for women. There's also a fun run at about the same time. Info/entry forms: call Methodist Health Care Houston Marathon office at 713/957-3453 or visit www.houstonmarathon.com. Entry fee is \$60 (marathon) & \$18 (fun run).

19

Keynote Chamber Players. It's a free concert with the three B's—Beethoven, Brahms, and Bach—@ First Unitarian Church, 5200 Fannin. (Donations accepted.) For more info: 713/942-7358 or visit www.kcpservices.com.

21

Shirley Horn Trio. Da Camera Jazz presents this evening with pianist & vocalist Shirley Horn, who has steadily performed and recorded since the early

hygienic hell, this small-time con artist slowly befriends a night nurse with a sly sense of humor. They puzzle over the true nature of good, evil, & Perry Como lyrics. As their relationship develops, this misanthrope becomes a renegade. 8 pm @ DiverseWorks, 1117 East Frwy (I-10 at North Main). Tickets \$15 (\$10 students, \$8 members). New 24-hr. reservation line: 713/335-3445.

22

Trio at the Zoo. Da Camera of Houston continues its free family series at the Houston Zoo with a concert by the String Trio of New York. An hour prior to the concert, children have the opportunity to see, touch, & play instruments featured in that day's performance. Musicians will be on hand to answer questions, demonstrate performance techniques, & talk about their instruments. The concert is free with paid admission to the Houston Zoological Gardens, which is \$2.50 for adults, \$2 for seniors, & 50¢ for children 3-12; children 2 & under are admitted free. 1-2 pm, with the concert starting at 2 @ Houston Zoological Gardens, Hermann Park, 1513 Nth. MacGregor Dr. More info: Da Camera Music Center at 713/

Oliver Lake, the String Trio of New York, and pianist Sarah Rothenberg. This concert explores the boundaries between improvisation & notation, jazz & classical, and features the world premiere of a piece by Lake for saxophone & piano. 7:30 pm @ The Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross. Tickets are \$25 (students/seniors \$12.50). Da Camera Music Center at 713/524-5050, online at www.culturefinder.com, or Ticketmaster at 713/629-3700.

29 & 30

All Shook Up: The Alienation Effect in Video Art. Programmed by Andrea Grover @ Aurora Picture Show, 800 Aurora St. For more info: 713/868-2101 or www.aurorapictureshow.org.

29 & 30

Big Band 2000—Hoagy Carmichael Centennial Celebration celebrates the 100th birthday of Carmichael. It stars musical director and pianist Tom Fay, who will conduct the 14-member Stardust Orchestra, and it will highlight Carmichael's life & music and is a tribute to this great musician & songwriter. He's the guy who wrote "Stardust," the most recorded song of all time with over 2,400 recordings to date. 2 & 8 pm on

third; two \$250 honorable mentions. For an entry form, send a SASE to: Lori Renkl, Univ. of Alabama Continuing Medical Education, 1521 11th Av S, Birmingham, AL 35294; call 205/934-2687; fax 205/934-1939. More details: www.uab.edu.cme.

4

Matthew Shipp. DiverseWorks and KTRU present one of the masters of jazz piano, Matthew Shipp, who will be performing a duo with bassist William Parker. Called "the most significant pianist in avant garde jazz since Cecil Taylor" by *The New York Times*, Shipp will collaborate with Parker in one of the most extraordinary pairings in jazz. The concert will feature music that creates a dense layer of sound spanning jazz's history & rumbling toward its future. 8 pm @ Hamman Hall, Rice University. Tickets \$15 (\$10 students, \$8 members). New 24-hr. reservation line: 713/335-3445.

5 & 12

Black Heritage Month. Houston Public Library offers a variety of events during February. On the 5th (Black Heritage Day), Central Library (500 McKinney, 713/236-1313) features jazz music

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MEMBER ANTHONY RAMOS
BODY BUILDING CHAMPION

by local Houston legend drummer Bubbha Thomas at 11 am. At 2 pm, Central Library will host a performance by Ensemble Theatre. All ages are welcome to these free family events. Ongoing throughout February, Central Library will participate in the African-American Citywide Exhibition sponsored by the Museum of Fine Arts. Paintings, sculptures, & artwork by African-American artists will be displayed on all three floors of the library. On the 12th, from 11 am-3 pm, Johnson Branch Library (3517, Reed Rd., 713/733-1983) features the music of the Anderson String Quartet, as well as providing booths, refreshments, & fun for children of all ages. Individual branches & regions will also observe the month with special events & exhibits. More info: 713/236-1313 or visit www.hpl.lib.tx.us.

25-27

The 14th Annual Texas Home & Garden Show is the largest home & garden show in Texas and covers eight acres of the George R. Brown Convention Center! Stroll through the Lawn & Garden Show, the Home Show, and the Vacation, Leisure & Outdoor Show—without leaving the building. Discover thousands of products, services, and new trends & ideas for your home, garden, & lifestyle. Find the materials & experts needed to get home improvement projects started. You can even book a dream getaway at the Vacation, Leisure & Outdoor Show. Three events for the price of one! Adults \$7, children under 14 free. Tickets may be purchased at the door. \$1 off coupons available through local exhibitors, coporations, retailers, and by visiting www.texas-home-and-garden.com. Friday 2-9 pm, Saturday 10 am-9 pm, Sunday 11 am-6 pm @ George R. Brown Convention Center, Halls A, B, C (level 1), 1001 Avenida de las Americas. More info: 713/529-1616.

PERFORMING ARTS

♦ **The African Company Presents Richard III.** Go back in time to New York City in the early 1800s when the country's first black theatrical group—the African Company of New York—was staging English classic plays and high society satires enjoyed by black & white audiences alike. When an uptown impresario, fearing competition, resorts to manipulative tactics to stop the company's production of *Richard III* and shut down the theater all together, the African Company survives to launch a progressive new chapter in American theater. Jan. 20-Feb. 27 @ The Ensemble Theatre, 3535 Main Street. Info/reservations: 713/520-0055.

♦ **Dial M for Murder**—a thriller by Frederick Knott, the author of *Wait Until Dark*—has been called "a holiday for the whodunit fans" by *The New York Herald Tribune*. The perfect murder is arranged, the plot twists & turns and culminates with a scene of almost unbearable suspense as a guilty husband is trapped by his wealthy wife. Jan. 7-Feb. 12, 8 pm @ The Company Onstage, 536 Westbury Square. Tickets are \$10 (seniors/students \$8). More info/reservations: 713/726-1219.

♦ **Die! Mommy! Die!** From Charles Busch, the author of off-Broadway's biggest hits—*Vampire Lesbians of Sodom*, *Psycho Beach Party*, *Red Scare on Sunset*, and *The Lady in Question*—*Die! Mommy! Die!* is the first production of the hit show that ran four sold-out months in Los Angeles this past summer. It's the story of aging diva singer Angela Andrews Sussman, who plots the demise of her husband to run off to New York City with her gigolo boyfriend, and that's just the beginning of her problems. It's a parody of 1960s gothic films like *Hush...Hush*, *Sweet Charlotte* crossed with the Greek tragedy *Electra*. Jan. 5-Feb. 13 @ Theater LaB Houston,

DANCIN' AND PRANCIN'

Mark Morris hops to Handel



Society of the Performing Arts presents one of the dance world's most inspired auteurs, who focuses his genius on one of Georg Frideric Handel's masterful full-length works and makes it his own. *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*, one of Handel's great oratorios, becomes in Mark Morris' hands a full-scale evening of music/dance-theater with a 30-piece orchestra, four vocal soloists, a 30-member chorus, and a company of 25 dancers.

Mark Morris Dance Group

When: 8 p.m., January 27-29, 2000

Where: Jones Hall

Tickets: \$19-\$51

Info: 713/227-4SPA (4772)

1706 Alamo. Tickets (\$20-\$22) are available by calling the box office at 713/868-7516.

♦ **Houston Grand Opera.** Returning to the Houston stage after an absence of nearly two decades, Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love* is positively infused with memorable melodies. The lovesick peasant Nemorino desperately attempts to win the hand of Adina, a wealthy young woman. Having heard the story of Tristan & Isolde, Nemorino spends his last bit of gold on a magical "love elixir" being offered by the entrepreneurial "quack" Dr. Dulcamara. Jan. 21-Feb. 12. ♦ HGO also presents *Tristan and Isolde*, the greatest love story set to music. Isolde is the Irish princess put in the charge of a Cornish sea captain, Tristan, who is to transport Isolde to her betrothed, King Marke of Cornwall. While on the voyage, they fall in love, a union so strong & forbidden that it can only be consummated in death. Jan. 27-Feb. 11. ♦ Both @ Wortham Center's Brown Theater, Texas Ave. at Smith. Tickets (\$22-\$182) are available by phone at 713/227-ARTS, in person at the Wortham Ticket Center, or on the web at www.houstongrandopera.com.

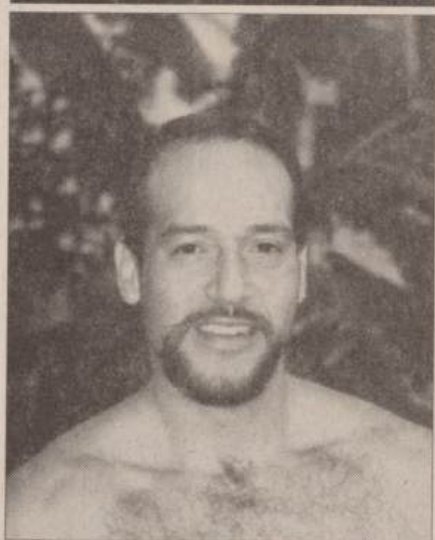
♦ **Jubilee** follows the antics of four members of a royal family who, fearing revolution, decide to pose as commoners. One by one, the royals find romance and fulfill their humblest goals.

Boasting a book by Hart and a score by Porter (including "Begin the Beguine" and "Just One of Those Things"), *Jubilee* reminds us to appreciate life's simple pleasures. Tickets are \$15-\$20. Through Jan. 16 @ Main Street Theater, Chelsea Market at 4617 Montrose Blvd., 713/524-6706.

♦ **The Seat Between.** "Did you ever notice when two straight guys go to the movies, they leave a seat between them? Is that so nobody will get the wrong idea? Or do guys just need a lot of space?" So goes the world premiere of the performance piece *The Seat Between* by Little Room artistic director Richard Laub. Part musical, part stand-up comedy, part cabaret, *Seat* explores the empty seat that sometimes exists between parents & their children, lovers & their lovers, and friends & their friends. Jan. 14-Feb. 5 (Fridays, Saturdays, & Mondays at 8 pm) @ The Little Room Downstairs Theater, 2326 Bissonnet (between Greenbair & Kirby), 713/523-0791. Tickets \$15 (previews \$10).

♦ **Shakespeare's R&J.** Shakespeare's passionate tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* is discovered by four students at an oppressive parochial school for boys. When they perform the forbidden text for their own escape, the timeless tale of dangerous young love heralds a sexual & spiritual awakening. R&J recently received off-Broadway's presti-

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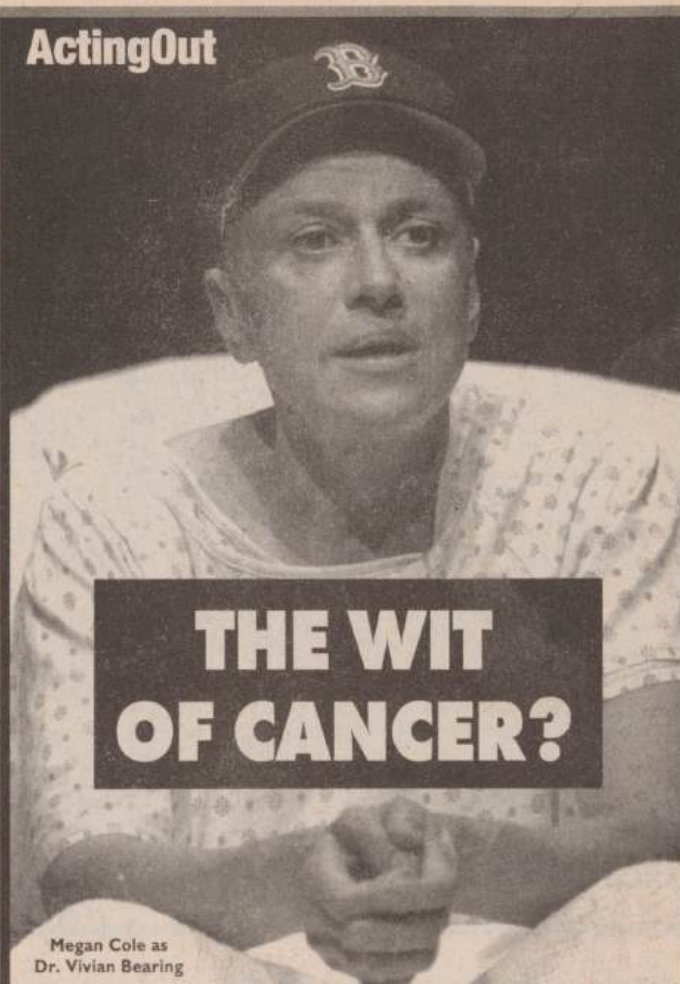
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ActingOut



Megan Cole as
Dr. Vivian Bearing

THE WIT OF CANCER?

Wisdom, humor, and anger

For its first production of the new year, the Alley Theatre offers the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Wit*, Margaret Edson's highly acclaimed play that continues to captivate packed houses off-Broadway. The first play by this Atlanta kindergarten teacher, *Wit* is a moving, insightful, and even funny story about Dr. Vivian Bearing, a professor of literature who discovers she has ovarian cancer. The personal journey that unfolds from her diagnosis to its outcome transforms the show into something above and beyond her struggle with the disease. It's the "kind of theatrical experience of which legends are made," wrote *The New York Times*. • A co-production between the Alley Theatre and Seattle Repertory Theatre, *Wit* unites actress Megan Cole, originator of the role of Dr. Bearing, with Martin Benson, *Wit*'s first director.



Margaret Edson is the playwright of the
Pulitzer Prize-winning *Wit*.

Wit

When: Jan. 14-Feb. 12
Where: Alley Theatre,
615 Texas Ave.
Tickets: \$19-\$49
Info: 713/228-8421

gious Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Special Achievement. Jan. 19-Feb. 13 @ Stages Repertory Theatre, 3201 Allen Parkway. Tickets to preview performances (Jan. 19 & 20) are \$17-\$24; to the opening performance (Jan. 21) \$40-\$46; after Jan. 21 \$26-\$37. Tickets can be purchased at the box office or by calling 713/52-STAGE.

THEATER

Young People

♦ **The Magic Ring-Dang-Do.** This magical children's play combines the nostalgia of a classic fairy tale with some of the optimism of the new year. With the theme of standing by your friends, the young audience is challenged with the antics of a would-be magician, a lonely ogre, a farmer, and the girl of his dreams. Take a lighthearted romp through the land of imagination where good things happen to good people. Complete with music & dance, this children's show takes a fond modern look at classic fairy tales with great fun for kids & adults too. A wonderful lesson for the new century. Jan. 8-Feb. 12 @ The Company Onstage, 536 Westbury Square. Saturdays at 11 am & 1:30 pm. Tickets are \$5. Reservations strongly recommended. Info/reservations: 713/726-1219.

♦ **Sundiata, The Lion King.** In honor of February's African-American History Month, EarlyStages Children's Theatre brings back this acclaimed production. The courageous Sundiata learns the value of loyalty & self-worth on his way to becoming king. This magical children's play is based on the true story of Sundiata Keita, the prodigal son of King Nare Maghan Kon Fatta, who returned from exile to unite the state of Kangaba in western Africa in the early 13th century. This heartwarming African folk tale comes to life with vivid imagination. Jan. 28-March 4 @ Stages Repertory Theatre, 3201 Allen Parkway. Tickets are \$8 and can be purchased at the box office or by calling 713/52-STAGE. All seats are reserved.

RADIO

♦ **After Hours (Radio)** Saturdays, midnight to 3 am. Featuring the QMZ (Queer Music Zone) with Jimmy Carper. KPFT 90.1 FM.

♦ **Lesbian & Gay Voices (Radio)** Mondays, 8-9 pm. Features, news, music, interviews, reviews, and commentary. KPFT 90.1 FM, 713/526-4000.

ART/PHOTOGRAPHY

♦ **Art Classes for People With HIV: The Art League of Houston** is offering free art classes for people with HIV. The ongoing course meets every Thursday & Friday from 1-4 pm at the Art League, 1953 Montrose. Mixed media projects for the artist and non-artist. Constructive art-making in a relaxed atmosphere. Focus is on the healing power of art. More info: 713/523-9530. ♦ **The Museum of Fine Arts Houston** is offering free art classes for those with HIV/AIDS. Patrick Palmer begins his 9th year offering art instruction. Abstract painting, linoleum-cut greeting cards, & ceramics are some of the media offerings for the fall semester. Class is limited to 16. Everything is free, even lunch! The classes meet at the Glassell School of Art every Friday, 1-4 pm, 5101 Montrose Blvd., room 202. For more info: 713/639-7500 or 713/526-1118.

♦ **The Artful Garden** is a new outdoor sculpture gallery exhibition. There will be 17 artists' interpretations of the theme "It Moves," with a wide use of ma-

Getting the Love You Want



Workshop for Lesbian and Gay Couples



From participating in this workshop, you can expect:

- To have greater compassion for your partner.
- To discover how the unconscious forces that attract you to your partner are also sources of conflict.
- To receive new tools for re-romanticizing your relationship.
- To assist each other in healing childhood wounds.
- To learn how to use your relationship for emotional healing and spiritual evolution.
- To rediscover the joy and spiritual potential of being together.

Workshop Schedule

February 4-5-6, 2000
May 5-6-7, 2000
August 4-5-6, 2000
November 3-4-5, 2000

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Keeping the Love You Find

The unique design of this workshop is appropriate for you if you...

- want to understand why you can't seem to meet the right person;
- are tired of making the same mistakes again and again;
- want to learn how to create and sustain a committed love relationship;
- are beginning a relationship you want to keep.

The Workshop brings into awareness your unconscious childhood hurts and the character traits you have developed to protect yourself from those wounds. You will understand how your wounds and defenses reappear in intimate adult relationships and how they are replayed with a partner. You will be given a new communication tool and develop a personal growth plan that will help you attract and deepen the love you find.

Workshop for Individuals

An intensive 20-hour experience for individuals who yearn to discover the positive changes they can make in their lives to achieve the lasting love they seek.



Workshop Schedule

March 10-11-12, 2000
June 9-10-11, 2000
September 15-16-17, 2000
December 1-2-3, 2000

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terials ranging from mylar to concrete to plant material. Expect the unexpected. The gallery, located at 241 Reinicke @ Lacy, is free & open to the public Tuesday-Saturday, 10 am-5 pm and is also visible from the street from sunup to sundown.

♦ **Entres Fronteras: Photographs by Diana Molina** is a collection of photographs portraying Hispanic and indigenous cultures of Mexico, focusing on the Sierra Tarahumara in Chihuahua. The Isthmus of Tehuantepec in Oaxaca, the Yucatan Peninsula, and several Charros in Texas. Images depict borders crossed, not only by division of territory, but also by the influence of ideologies, customs, commercialism, styles, economics, and views of life. Presenting a cultural and sociological representation of various aspects of Mexican life, the exhibit reveals images of traditional festivals, ceremony, and daily lifestyle along with the environment in which the people exist. Through Mar. 12, 2000 @ the Houston Museum of Natural Science in the John P. McGovern Hall of the Americas Temporary Gallery on the 3rd floor, in Hermann Park across from Miller Outdoor Theater. Admission is \$4 adults, \$3 children 3-11 (free to members). More info: 713/639-4629. For info in Spanish: 713/639-4603.

♦ **High Heels and High Performance.** In his first solo show in Houston, Hudson Marquez presents paintings, drawings, & objects inspired by stiletto-heeled shoes and the American hot rod. Currently based in Los Angeles, Marquez is best known for co-creating the *Cadillac Ranch*. He is also a founding member of TMTV, a celebrated Guerilla TV video group that has worked & shown in L.A. for the past two decades. His works have been included in the collections of The Whitney Museum of American Art, The Museum of Contemporary Art in L.A., and the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston. As a member of ANT FARM, the Houston-founded San Francisco-based radical art & architecture collective, he participated in the opening of the Contemporary Arts Museum, and with NOT ANT FARM he co-created the *Thunder Rocket* sculpture that stands guard at the Houston Hard Rock Cafe. Jan. 8-29 @ DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway (off N. Main at Naylor). More info: 713/223-8346.

♦ **Houston-Area Art** by J.W. Sharp features acrylic paintings of rural and urban scenes of the Houston area with a focus on buildings and images from a time gone by. Through Jan. 31 @ Hyde Park Gallery, 711 Hyde Park. For more info: 713/526-2744.

♦ **The Human Race.** During "The Human Race" held on Oct. 10, some of the people actively participated in creat-



Jude Law (l) and Matt Damon star in *The Talented Mr. Ripley*.

GAY GORE

Matt Damon plays gay, but his character is a killer

According to *Entertainment Weekly*, the two studios—Paramount and Miramax—releasing *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, "seem to see Ripley's homosexuality as more of a marketing concern than the fact that he's a murderer." But according to Matt Damon, who plays the title role, "From the moment the decision was made to make this movie, we knew this time was going to come. If it's phrased in a really reductive way—a 'fag serial killer'—then Ripley can't be the audience. He's one of them.... But everyone's felt like

an outsider before. ... I have hundreds of episodes from high school I'd love to replay—but a lot cooler. I was short—like 5 foot 2 until my junior year, so my sophomore year was terrifying." Not as terrifying as the character he portrays, however. Without revealing too much of this romantic thriller, everything Tom Ripley does stems from his love for Dickie (Jude Law). Ripley feels like a complete outsider and even wants to change his identity for Dickie's. For more plot info, read between the lines. Gwyneth Paltrow, last year's Oscar winner for *Shakespeare in Love*, costars as Dickie's girlfriend. • *Now playing citywide.*



Jim Broadbent (l) and Allan Corduner star as Gilbert and Sullivan in *Topsy-Turvy*, directed by Mike Leigh, whose 1996 film *Secrets and Lies* was nominated for five Academy Awards, including Best Picture.

ONE OF 'EM WAS GAY

Was it Gilbert or Sullivan?

William Schwenck Gilbert (Jim Broadbent) is the librettist, writing the words. Arthur Sullivan (Allan Corduner) is the composer, writing the music. Gilbert is the very model of a 19th-century British gentleman, an overly proper married man certain that he knows best—which he often does. Sullivan lives a freer life, almost libertine by comparison; but there is a seriousness of purpose in him. Can you guess which was gay? • For nearly a decade, Gilbert and Sullivan's collaborations delight

the English people. But in 1884, their latest work, *Princess Ida*, receives lukewarm press. Sullivan wants to quit and compose more serious music, but the two are contractually obligated to create a new work. Sullivan rejects Gilbert's next idea as "topsy-turvy," and although Gilbert tries to accommodate him, they cannot agree. • Then Gilbert's wife drags him along to a Japanese exhibition. Exposure to the very different culture sparks inspiration in him. He rebounds, conceiving *The Mikado*. The concept encourages Sullivan, and the production comes together ... which is when the truly hard work begins: the actors must be rehearsed, coddled, and rehearsed again. While striving to cohere as a company, the players' private lives color their work—but no more than Gilbert and Sullivan's own, as *The Mikado* makes the difficult, but ultimately rewarding, transition from page to stage. • *Topsy-Turvy* is scheduled to open Jan. 21 at Landmark's River Oaks Theatre.

PINK FLAMINGOS

Continuing Walt Disney's bold 1940 experiment in sight and sound, *Fantasia/2000* offers an exciting showcase for the talents of a new generation of Disney animators and filmmakers as they visually interpret classical compositions by Beethoven, Shostakovich, Respighi, Saint-Saëns, Elgar, Gershwin, and Stravinsky. Originally conceived as a "repertoire program" with changing musical selections, the film returns in time for the millennium with seven new selections plus "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" from the 1940 classic. • Now playing at the new Edwards IMAX Theatre, I-10 and Silber.



Get ready for the IMAX experience with *Fantasia/2000*.

WOODY'S GOT WATERS



John Waters appears in Woody Allen's latest, *Sweet and Lowdown*.

Woody Allen's latest film *Sweet and Lowdown* is the fanciful biography of a legendary jazz guitarist Emmet Ray, who clashed with lovers, gangsters, musicians, and success itself in the 1930s jazz scene. • Sean Penn stars as the fictional musical genius who, during the Swing Era, was on his way up but could never settle down. Ray forever stands in the shadow of his singular hero, the profoundly passionate Django Reinhardt. • Allen's tale traverses the nightclubs, back alleys, and train yards of the Swing Era jazz scene—yet was entirely filmed within an hour of Manhattan. Ray's travels take him from New Jersey to Chicago and Detroit and even the bright lights of a Hollywood film studio—and took the production to some 85 period-dressed locations. • Besides Penn, the film features a cast that includes Anthony Paglia, Gretchen Mol, Uma Thurman, and the one and only John Waters. • *Scheduled to open Jan. 21 at Landmark's River Oaks Theatre.*

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GrooveOut by Chris Sill

CHER THE WEALTH

In looking back on the music of 1999, our lady of the cosmic comeback tops just about every list in sight.

As much as we all may be a bit burned out on Cher (OK, OK, maybe not all of us), *Billboard* magazine's recent 1999 year-end issue calls attention to the diva's extraordinary success.

She's the comeback story of the year, and arguably of the decade. Her *Believe* CD has reached triple platinum status in the U.S. alone, unheard-of for a dance CD; and her latest single "Dov'e L'Amore" may be her fourth #1 on *Billboard*'s dance chart by presstime.

Along with the dance chart,

Cher also topped *Billboard*'s Club Play Artist chart (followed by Whitney Houston and Madonna) and the Dance Maxi-Singles charts with "Believe."

So, will we see a new CD from the diva in 2000? Sources at Warner Brothers could not comment, but with this year's incredible success, it's highly likely.

Billboard 1999 Club Play Singles

1. "Believe"—Cher
2. "Big Love"—Pete Heller
3. "My Love Is Your Love"—Whitney Houston
4. "All or Nothing"—Cher
5. "I Will Go With You"—Donna Summer
6. "Sexual"—Amber
7. "Situation"—Yaz
8. "I'm Beautiful"—Bette Midler
9. "Nothing Really Matters"—Madonna
10. "You Don't Know Me"—Armand Van Helden featuring Duane Harden



Chris Sill spins tunes at *Rich's*. You can reach him in care of OutSmart magazine or at csill@infohwy.com.

In My CD Player

- Paul Schwartz—*Aria 2: New Horizons* (Astor Place Recordings) ...more operatic grooves
- Dot Allison—*Afterglow* (Arista) ...stunning debut
- Christian Falk—*Quel Bordel* (Atlantic) ...Falk and friends unite for brilliant pop music
- Solar Twins—(self-titled) (Maverick) ...Pop meets drum and bass ...Madonna loves them!

Cher also topped *Billboard*'s Club Play Artist chart (followed by Whitney Houston and Madonna) and the Dance Maxi-Singles charts with "Believe."

GAY LIFE IN SMALL-TOWN AMERICA

Harvey Fierstein, Terrence McNally, & Paula Vogel unite their distinctive voices into one script for this Showtime movie

These three respected gay playwrights combine their talents for *Common Ground*, a drama that depicts how the "small towns" of America may have reacted toward homosexuality over the past 50 years. This multi-generational drama, set in the fic-

titious small town of Homer, Connecticut, explores the 1950s, written by Paula Vogel, the 1970s, written by Terrence McNally, and 2000, written by Harvey Fierstein. *Common Ground* is directed by Donna Deitch, who gave us *Desert Hearts*.

Johnny Burroughs (Eric Stoltz) has lived in Homer his entire life and has watched the characters' different experiences from the center of town:

• "A Friend of Dorothy"—In the 1950s, Dorothy Nelson (Brittany Murphy) returns to Homer and is alienated after the town finds out she has been dishonorably discharged from the Navy when the military police assume that she is a lesbian because she is caught in a raid at a gay bar with fellow sailor Billy Temple (Jason Priestley). Margot Kidder, Mimi Rogers,

Helen Shaver, and Brian Kerwin (an executive producer) costar.

(L-r) Jason Priestley, Brittany Murphy, and Mimi Rogers star in "A Friend of Dorothy," the '50s segment of *Common Ground*.



Eric Stoltz plays the central character in Showtime's *Common Ground*.

• "Mr. Roberts"—In the 1970s, high school swim team star Toby Anderson (Jonathan Taylor Thomas) is beaten by schoolmates who suspect he prefers boys to girls. Toby looks for support from his gay teacher, Gil Roberts (Steven Weber), who initially refuses to "come out" for fear of losing his bid to become principal of the high school.

Jonathan Taylor Thomas (center) is confronted by homophobic students in "Mr. Roberts," the '70s segment of *Common Ground*.



• "Andy & Amos"—In 2000, Amos (James Le Gros) and Andy (Andrew Arlie) have decided to have a same-sex wedding in the town's community center, which is supported by the town elders, but protested by a group of veterans. Among them is Amos' father (Edward Asner), a veteran who helped organize the public protest but is hesitant to follow through. Harvey Fierstein and Beau Bridges costar.

Andrew Arlie (l) and James Le Gros say "I do" in "Andy & Amos," set in the present in Showtime's original movie *Common Ground*.



ShowtimeOut

Common Ground

Where:
Showtime
When:
7 p.m.,
Sat., Jan. 29
**Additional
playdates:**
9 p.m.,
Mon., Jan. 31;
and 8:35 p.m.,
Thur., Feb. 10

ing this photo exhibit. More than 200 disposable cameras were distributed to chronicle the event. These photos consist of the multi-cultural activities along the route, the participants of The Human Race, the various cultures represented, the educational signage, and the post-race celebration of our city's diversity. The purpose of The Human Race was to unite citizens from all ethnic & religious backgrounds in the spirit of friendship & cooperation in a 5K walk/run through a spectrum of Houston's diverse downtown and mid-town neighborhoods. The race provided funds for AIDS Foundation Houston, among many others. Jan. 13-Feb. 28 @ Holocaust Museum Houston, 5401 Caroline, 713/942-8000. Holocaust Museum Houston's mission is to promote the awareness of the dangers of prejudice, hatred, & violence against the backdrop of the Holocaust and to teach mutual respect & understanding among all people.

♦ **Introjection: Tony Oursler, 1976-1999** is the first U.S. survey of this artist's pioneering work in video, which includes blinking eyes, chatting dummies, and talking lights. The exhibition will feature 85 works of art, including a comprehensive selection of Oursler's video sculptures, single-channel videos, paintings, drawings, and performance props, as well as a CD-ROM work which incorporates up-to-the-minute animation technology. Through Feb. 13 @ the Contemporary Arts Museum, 5216 Montrose, 713/284-8250.

♦ **Paintings and Works on Paper.** The work of Perry House, a Houston-based artist, is described as seductive & grotesque, abstract & referential. *Paintings and Works on Paper* focuses on works produced within the last five years, including his *Explosion* series. Whether using acrylic or house paint, cardboard (House will feature a series of never-before-seen paintings on cardboard) or construction paper, House's discretely mixed modes purposely grate on the visual nerves. All of the works are intensely psychological, fabricating a precisely rendered chaos of eccentric form & high key color. Jan. 8-Feb. 19 @ DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway (off N. Main at Naylor), 713/223-8346.

♦ **Positive/Negative** is a show of black-and-white photographs by people living with HIV/AIDS who participate in the Positive Art Workshops at the Glassell School of Art at Houston's Museum of Fine Arts. Houston artist Patrick Palmer teaches the workshops, which are provided at no charge. The museum presented the exhibition last February and plans a 2nd exhibition in February 2000. However, through Jan. 10, 2000, these photographs will be on display @ the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 803 Hawthorne, 713/524-3818.

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♦ **Richie Vegas: A Psycho Memoir** is a selection of drawings from Austin artist Richard Alexander's copious series that explores the psychological intricacies of schizophrenia. This exhibit will continue through three separate rotations of the artist's distinctive works in hopes of making available as many images as possible from the narrative collection that Alexander hopes one day to publish in book form. This exhibition affords the Houston public a rare and private look at the most mysterious & unpredictable manifestations of human psychology in the conscious creations of visual art. Through April 15 @ Lawndale Art Center's new Micro Gallery, 4912 Main Street (in the Museum District), 713/528-5858.

♦ **Vernon Fisher's File 00.** For over 30 years, Texas artist Vernon Fisher has based his work on an interrelationship between image & text. Fisher's personal "File 00" contains the photos, reference materials, & written stories that have appeared & reappeared in his art. Additionally, these make up the viewer's collective memory of his oeuvre. Some of the images & reference materials are appropriated while others were photographed or created by Fisher. The artist's repeated use of these objects has "aged" them into art & artifacts. Jan. 13-March 5 @ the Museum of Fine Arts, 1001 Bissonnet, 713/639-7300.

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5 p.m., Friday, Jan. 14

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Amadeus
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Hotel La Colombe d'Or

Cosi Fan Tutte
Feb. 13-14 7pm
Rice Crystal Ballroom

Once Upon A Toon
April 2-3 7pm Children's
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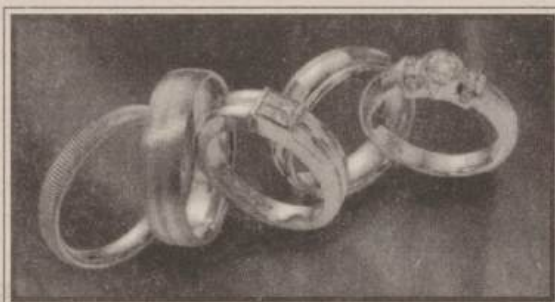
MARK YOUR CALENDAR Montrose Writers Workshop Saturday, January 8 • 3-4:30 p.m.

The popular writing series resumes with a session every Saturday. Read and discuss your work in a creative, supportive environment, trade tips and ideas, and network with your peers. The group is open to poets, fiction writers, dramatists, and nonfiction writers, both published and non-published. A \$3 to \$5 donation is suggested, though as with all events at the community center no one who is unable to contribute is turned away.

The many regular activities at the community center include the Black Gay and Lesbian Coalition weekly meetings, Lesbian Coming-Out Group, Lesbian Movie Night, Men's Coming-Out Group, and weekly computer classes. The *Positive/Negative* photo exhibition is on view through January 10. Call for details.

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Matt Damon (actor)

(The Advocate, 1/18/00, Brendan Lemon)

Brendan Lemon: To go back to you and Ben [Affleck], would it be so terrible if you were a couple?

Matt Damon: The question of whether Ben and I are gay is so awkward in a lot of ways. There is no real right way to answer it without offending somebody. It's offensive to just deny it fiercely, as if there would be anything wrong with it if we were a couple. That would be offensive to the people I grew up with. I don't want to be that person. At the same time, I can't say it's true because it's not.

Billy Bean (retired professional baseball player)

(The Advocate, 12/99, Chris Bull)

"There's something about the gay thing in professional baseball. It's just right there on the tip of everyone's tongue. If you want to get right at it, you call someone a faggot. I've always hated that word so much because that's me: I'm the guy that everyone hates. Even though they liked me for who they thought I was, if they really knew me, I wouldn't be invited to this party. Nobody ever called me that because of the way I acted or walked, but if you are talking smack on somebody, it's 'F--- you, faggot.'"

John McCain

(campaigning for Republican presidential nominee)

(Meet the Press via Entertainment Weekly, 12/99)

"[Jesse] Ventura and I have a lot in common. We were both in the Navy, I was a mediocre high school and college wrestler, and I occasionally wear a feather boa around the Senate."

Tom Caley (professional dancer)

(Out, 12/99, Alan Brown)

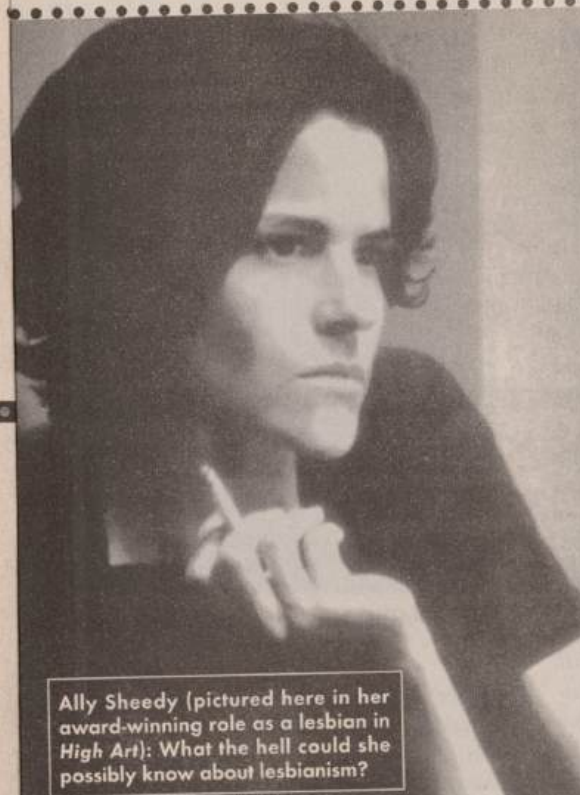
"When some men find out I'm a dancer, they eye me and say, 'Hmm, I'll bet you're flexible.' Actually, they'd have the worst time in bed with me. Everything creaks on me. I'd be lying there, complaining, 'Ow, my back. Ow, my knees. Stop it!' Dance is about stretching your ideas, not stretching your legs over your head."

Illeana Douglas (actor)

(Out, 12/99, Kevin Maynard)

Kevin Maynard: Hollywood has become obsessed with the friendships between gay men and straight women.

Illeana Douglas: After I did *Cape Fear* and *Alive*, I did a low-budget gay movie for Strand called *Grief* with Craig [Chester], Jackie Beat, and Alexis Arquette that was one of the first films that explored that kind of relationship. My agents at the time were horrified. They actually thought of it almost like a porno film because it had two men kissing on screen and one of them is naked. They were like, "What are you doing with your career?"



Ally Sheedy (pictured here in her award-winning role as a lesbian in *High Art*): What the hell could she possibly know about lesbianism?

Queer Quotes

Compiled by Blase DiStefano

Ally Sheedy (actor)

(The Advocate, 12/7/99, Michael Giltz)

[Ally Sheedy] vividly remembers the day her mom sat her down to give a coming-out speech—not the most shocking of revelations, given that Ally, then 18, had already figured her mom was a lesbian.

"She'd taken me out for tea, this special [lunch], and she said, 'Alex, I just want you to know I'm a lesbian and I'm in a relationship with so-and-so,'" says Sheedy. "The thought going through my head was, *How do I give her this moment, which I'm sure she's been preparing for?* I didn't want to take it away from her, but I'd known this for nine years or something. It's just like, 'Duh.' I told her later [that I knew], and she said, 'No, Alex, you did not know; you had no idea.' But really..."

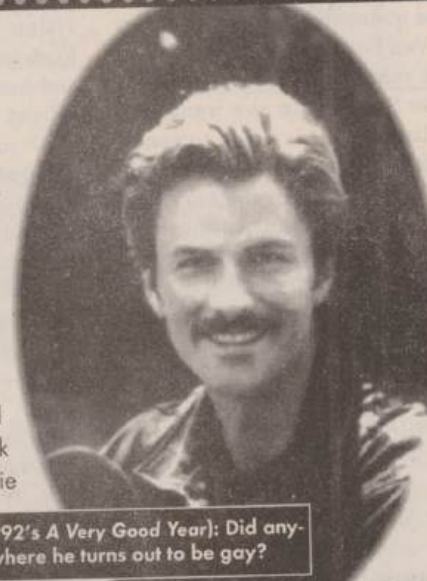
Tim Daly

(actor and brother of Tyne Daly)

(Out, 12/99, Emily Drabinski)

On Playing Gay: "I think I was actually one of the first mainstream actors to play a gay character. I acted opposite Kristy McNichol in *Just the Way You Are* back in 1984. Kristy is a polio survivor who thinks nobody will love her again because she has a limp. I am her boyfriend who turns out to be gay. I didn't think twice about it. Nobody saw the movie anyway."

Tim Daly (seen here in 1992's *A Very Good Year*): Did anybody see a 1984 movie where he turns out to be gay?



Lorna Luft

(singer)

(A&U, 12/99, Dann Dulin)

"While on the sidelines of the gay pride parade one year, Lorna's friend commented to her, 'I don't understand why they're all dressed up as [Judy Garland] and they want respect.' Lorna barely gets the last word out before she has a laugh attack. She continues laughing as she points out that it's commonplace for her kids to see family members as they wade through the Halloween crowd each year. Two Halloweens ago, Lorna was walking down the boulevard when a guy came up to her and in a serious tone said, 'That's good. That's really good! That's the best Lorna Luft I've seen.'"



Lorna Luft (pictured here in *Grease 2*, the 1982 sequel to uh... *Grease*): Has the daughter of Judy Garland ever been tempted to do an imitation of herself?



Illeana Douglas (seen here with Craig Chester in *Grief*): Did she get a lot of grief for taking part in this film about relationships between gay men and straight women?



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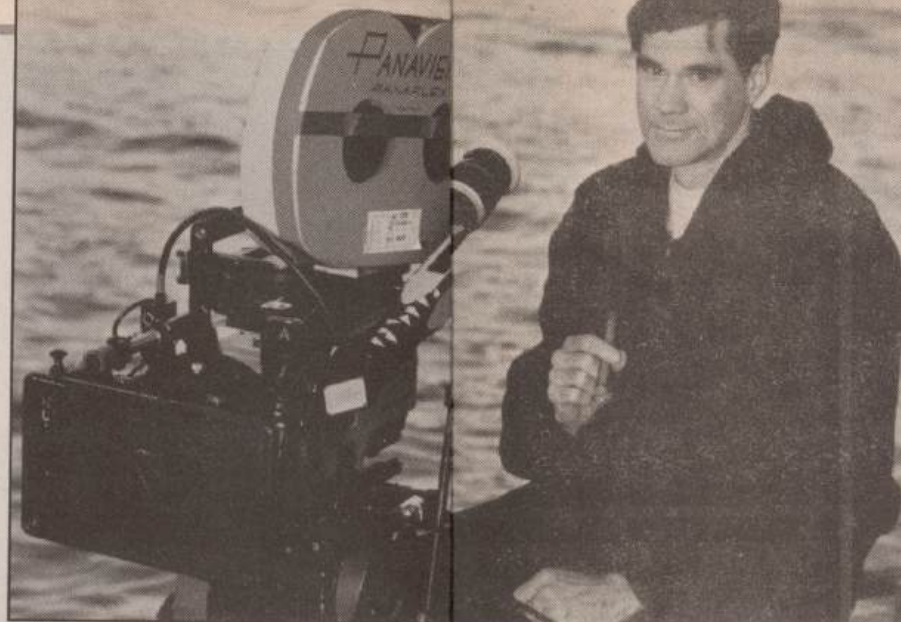
Deep Inside Hollywood

by Romeo San Vicente

Ben May Bat on Our Side Ben Affleck, who has just wrapped production on the hetero-romantic comedy *Bounce* with sometime-girlfriend Gwyneth Whatsherface, is thinking about taking a queer role for his next project. The Boston-bred hunk may be suiting up as a Major League shortstop who finds himself falling in love with a second baseman in the feature-film version of Peter Lescourt's 1992 novel *The Dreyfus Affair: A Love Story*. *Private Parts* director Betty Thomas is set to helm the pic, which is rumored to have guy-guy kisses but no graphic sex (bum...mer). While no deal has been finalized, Affleck, a diehard Boston Red Sox fan, definitely has the inside track. He's very close to Chris Moore, a *Dreyfus Affair* producer who worked closely with Affleck on *Good Will Hunting*. Hmm... now let's see if Ben can convince best bud Matt Damon to share the locker room with him.

Van Sant's Broken Back? *Brokeback Mountain*, the queer cowboy flick that gay director Gus Van Sant has been developing for well over a year, has stalled. Rumor has it that producer Scott Rudin now wants Van Sant off the film since he's failed to generate interest from major stars. Apparently Rudin, queer himself, thinks another director might have better luck attracting strapping young men with marquee value. Perhaps it's because Van Sant was regarded a few years back as a director who was more actress-oriented, although that radically changed when he got critical acclaim (and an Academy Award nomination) for directing *Good Will Hunting*. Maybe it's time for Ben-'n'-Matt to just saddle up and reteam with Van Sant and make everyone happy—especially Romeo.

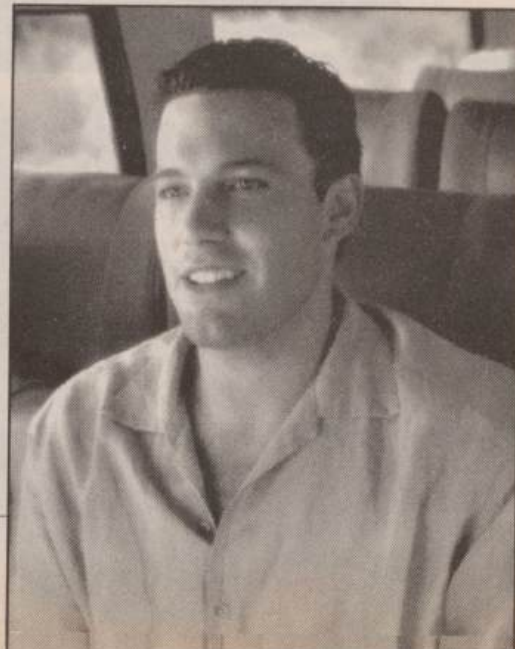
Queer Sundance Lesbian skibunnies and queers who like the cold should book their tickets now if they plan on checking out the Y2K Sundance Film Festival, January 20–30, in Park City, Utah. The Sundance slate has just been announced, and there is plenty of interesting indie fare. Premiering at the festival is director Greg Barlanti's tale about gay pretty boys from West Hollywood who begin to confront their futures; it stars *Go* hottie Timothy Olyphant and *Frasier* star John Mahoney. Keep your eyes peeled, too, for *High Art* babe Radha Mitchell in *Everything Put Together*, director Mark



Van Sant on the set of 1995's *To Die For*.

Forster's film about a suburban woman shunned by her peers when her baby dies at birth. And avowed heterosexual Kevin Spacey will star in the drama *The Big Kahuna*. Competing in the documentary division is *Paragraph 175*, a film by Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman, the husband-and-husband team that gave us the most excellent *Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt* and *The Celluloid Closet*. Their new film (which was originally titled *Pink Triangle*) explores the fate of gays in Nazi Germany during the Holocaust. Playing out of competition is *Punks* by director Patrik-Ian Polk, an extravaganza billed as "the first all-black-and-gay music-driven film." And in the midnight lineup you'll find Jamie Babbit's tale of a homosexual rehab camp, *But I'm a*

Ben Affleck (seen here in the recent *Forces of Nature*): Will he share the locker room with Matt Damon?



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ready for a reteaming with Ben-'n'-Matt?

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Romeo San Vicente wants Ricky Martin to sing to him in 2000. Ricky (or you) can reach Romeo in care of this publication or via e-mail at RomeoDeep@qol.com. For more Deep Inside Hollywood, visit www.popcornq.com, www.gay.com, or www.queery.com.

Gay Men's Chorus of Houston

Dr. J. David Faber, Artistic Director

Y2K is just the beginning! The year 2000 has got us busy preparing Spring and Pride concerts, hosting Schola Cantorosa, the Gay Men's Chorus of Hamburg, Germany for a special July performance, and putting together a smashing concert set for *GALA Festival 2000* in July.

Consider joining the Gay Men's Chorus of Houston. Whether you sing, dance, play an instrument, or use a computer, you can be a valuable part of the chorus. If you have a flair for organizing, you can help us coordinate with our German friends.

Rehearsals are every Thursday at 7 p.m. beginning January 6, 2000 at Grace Lutheran Church, 2515 Waugh Drive (at Missouri Street; parking lot is on Missouri)

On the Internet, visit us at <http://www.gmch.org> or call 713.521.SING

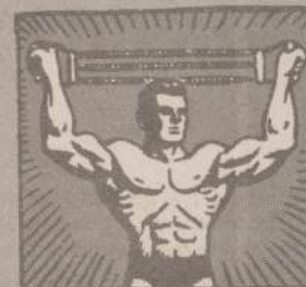
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Choir boys?

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COME AGAIN to the GYM

OutSmart's New Year's Resolution Resource: A roundup of health clubs and exercise programs in the area

by Ann Walton Sieber

Thank the sweet Lord for clean slates and fresh starts. I sometimes make several an hour.

I know many people abhor New Year's resolutions. And others, who I have to work hard not to abhor myself, have no need of them because they're already marvelously disciplined and on top of their lives. Hats off to them, say I in my more gracious moments.

But I love New Year's resolutions, and do I need them. There's something so youthful and buoyant, so hope-springs-eternal, about New Year's resolutions. We've all just had the frenzied joy of the holidays, then the snugly read-all-our-new-books post-holiday lull. We've repeated the same pattern with New Year's, only in miniature: party and shout (or avoid same), then snugly lull. So we're feeling that, at least temporarily, we're sated with both festivities and with quiet do-nothingness. We're thinking maybe,

just maybe, a little healthy routine actually sounds appealing. Maybe just maybe we're ready to start working out ... or, get back to working out, starting afresh once again for what feels like the 3,242 time. But that's OK. We're psyched, it's a new year.

But what to do? Where to go?

So, just to help out with all you fresh-start stars, we've gathered together a resource of many of the health clubs and exercise programs in the area. Finding your gym, or teacher, or trainer is a large part of making the fresh start stick. Some people favor the buff and glam gyms where a little healthy competition is built into the zeitgeist. Others need a more homey, fits-all-sizes place. (And, no doubt we've accidentally left some gyms out, so if you, nicely, let us know your favorites that we didn't include, we'll mention them in future issues.) —Ann Walton Sieber

"You have to remember to make it all over again every day, the Angel said to me. Otherwise it goes all to hell."

(written on a painting in a Chattanooga, Tenn., restaurant)

HEALTH CLUBS

Billy Blank's Tai Bo

This combination of kick boxing, tae kwon do, and aerobics promises an intense workout. Started 12 years ago by Billy Blank in L.A., the tai bo studio opened here just this past fall. \$10/class single; \$8/class (for 15 classes), \$7/class (for 30 classes). 2110 Portsmouth (Shepherd Plaza), 713/528-3200.

Body Rock Houston

A more serious, competitive, and upscale crowd. A mind-boggling array of classes, including an emphasis on the new "Spinning," which we hear is a super-mega workout. Gym membership is \$59/month or \$650/year with free classes, with a \$250 initiation fee; or \$42/month or \$557/year, and you have to pay per class (\$7). 2740 Kirby Dr., 713/522-1958.

Bryan Peters Pilates Studio

Described by Bryan Peters as "mechanized yoga," Pilates is a muscular workout much favored by dancers because it strengthens by elongating muscles, as opposed to contracting them, as with more traditional weight-lifting regimes. \$45/hour session; \$10/Pilates-based

mat and stretch class. Also offers yoga, Tai-Chi, and Nia, massage therapy and other support therapies. \$10-\$15/class. 3701 West Alabama, 713-621-2360.

Downtown YMCA

Friendly, comfortable atmosphere, and a "cornucopia" of body types, one friend told us. The huge rambling structure has room for dozens of racquetball courts, multiple basketball courts, and room for an extensive variety of aerobic programs from KardioKickbox to Body Pump. Lunchtime tends to be the business crowd, while 4:30-7 finds more of the commuters from the 006 zip code. Separate saunas and steam rooms for men and women. Individual membership is \$125 to join and \$42/monthly, or non-primetime \$26/monthly (anytime except M-F: 5-7:30 a.m.; 11 a.m.-1 p.m.; or 4:30-7:30 p.m.). To park in the Y lot is 75¢/hour. 1600 Louisiana, 713/758-9232 (to schedule a tour) or 713/758-9174 (to have a schedule or membership info faxed).

Ernest & Co.

One of the most cutting-edge gyms in town, bringing the newest and funnest workouts to town first. Owner Ernest Perez got into the fitness business in 1987 when he found out he was HIV+; his Latino Step class and "step and sculpt" class to disco music are always packed. With a differ-

ent theme every month, "it's not just an aerobics workout," says Ernest's brother Eliot, who helps him run the studio and is also gay, "it's entertainment." For a real get-your-act-together regime, join E&Co.'s Team Challenge, in which you meet weekly with team leaders who will train and track your muscular strength and endurance, cardiovascular training, flexibility, weight, and lean body mass. Membership is \$45/month. Team Challenge: \$450/8 weeks, \$225/4 weeks. 4006 Bellaire (soon to be moving to the corner of Holcombe and Wesleyan), 713/661-4020.

Fitness Exchange

Gay-owned and -operated for 23 years, Fitness Exchange has been voted best gym three years running by OutSmart readers. The neighborhood Montrose gym, with everyone from the serious focused body sculptors to the queens just in to chat and spectate. Fairly high-tech, with massive amounts of equipment, and an assortment of classes. Membership ranges from \$23 to \$42/month. 4040 Milam, 713/524-9932.

Houston Gym

A medium-size community atmosphere gym where everyone knows each others' names, with more personalized attention than some of the larger health clubs. The focus is on weight training and cardiovascular, with a particularly strong emphasis on free weights and one-on-one attention. It's a serious focused crowd, with a whole contingent of semi-professional body builders as members. "We

Body Shaping

by **Racem Mokhtari**

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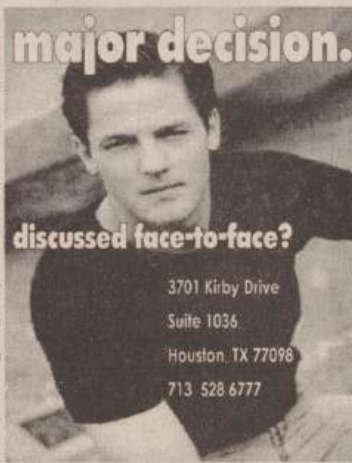
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have every shape, size, and color,
which makes for a fun place,"
says co-owner John Langman.
"We're about 50/50 gay/straight,
50/50 women/men." No classes,
since that doesn't fit with their
one-on-one mentality. No initia-
tion fee; \$298/year or \$28/month.
233 Birdsall, 713/880-9191.

Muscle Mechanics

Run by John-Aaron Villarreal—
who writes *OutSmart's*
"WorkOut" column—Muscle Me-
chanics provides a private, per-
sonalized workout for those who
are not into the more crowded
health club scene; they even limit
the number of memberships
available to ensure against over-
crowding. Hitherto, Muscle Me-
chanics has been strictly a

conditioner Joe Teague (and
with former HB prima ballerina
extraordinaire Janie Parker as
one of the trainers!). Features
the more aerobic east coast
"hard style" Pilates, as opposed
to the more meditative west
coast style. Located in a big
house in the Montrose that has
been feng shui-ed. All sessions
are only two clients per trainer.
\$40/hour session. 1415 Harold,
713-529-1533.

YWCA on Heights

The dowdy funky cousin of the
downtown Y, despite its snazzy
postmodern building by trendy
Taft Architects. You don't have
to worry about it if there's a rip
in your spandex in their
friendly welcoming atmosphere.

We're thinking maybe, just
maybe, a little healthy routine
actually sounds appealing

personal trainer facility; but
starting January, it will move to
a new location and offer member-
ships. John-Aaron says that
Muscle Mechanics tries to pro-
mote a comfortable and non-in-
timidating atmosphere for those
who might be cowed by a sweaty
gym full of "big, buff people who
know what they're doing. Our
target is more for beginners,
maybe even those who have
never thought of themselves as
exercisers." They are also expe-
rienced working with special
health conditions, from high
blood pressure, to HIV, to ar-
thritis. Membership includes
an initiation fee and is \$80/
month. An hour session with a
personal trainer is \$45-\$60/
hour on average. 617 Rich-
mond, 713/523-5330.

Third Coast Fitness

A low-key Pilates studio started
by former Houston Ballet body

Individual membership is \$50
to join and \$29.50/month. 3165
Willia (Heights @ Memorial),
713/868-9922. Jazzercise-More
than just an exercise class,
Jazzercise at the Y is really
more of a 'cult of personality
around dynamic instructor
Jane Luco, who is going into
her 20th year of teaching
Jazzercise to a devoted and en-
ergetic following in the Heights.
Ranging in age from 14 to 70,
the crowd is mostly female, al-
though there are a few hip men.
Although a bit more difficult to
learn the steps at first,
Jazzercise is more entertaining
in the long run, as it tries to get
away from the endless repeti-
tions of the traditional aerobics
class. Class programs vary, but
unlimited attendance is \$33/
month; Y limited membership
of \$25/year required. For more
information, call Jane Luco,
713/688-8192.

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Liza Minnelli

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What will the new millennium bring us? In May, there will be a special lineup of the outer planets that we have not experienced in a while, which promises to bring about a very intense period of energy. We might experience this as disruptive or feel impatient around all that's going on. This period is going to affect the fixed signs the most intensely: Taurus, Leo, Scorpio, and Aquarius. This will be a very decisive period for them.

There is also a special lineup in September which will affect the mutable signs: Gemini, Virgo, Sagittarius, and Pisces. This will be a very confrontive



time for them. They will have to face the truth about themselves and allow others to see this truth.

Every year sees Mercury in retrograde three times. However, we don't have any of the other inner planets going retrograde as we did last year, which should help make the year 2000 a lot smoother.

Most everyone will view this time as a time of new beginnings with the new millennium in place. What will be the goals that you set for yourself? These will be more important than the usual New Year's resolutions. What parts of your life do you want to improve, clean up, or get rid of? This is a great time for a new start.

THE FUTURE IS HERE

Business, family, love ... astrologer **Lilly Roddy** gives a peek into what the stars reveal about your upcoming exciting life

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CAPRICORN

(Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Relationships & Romance

You are interested in commitments this year. You have been reassessing your current relationship status for the last two years and now you are ready to move forward with your plan. If you are currently involved, you will need some new long-term objectives for the next couple of years. If you are involved and not happy, you will be looking for some sort of resolution to those quandaries. If you are not involved, then you can expect to be out there looking for a partnership with a commitment. You are not going to waste your time with those who are just looking for a good time. And you will not be willing to invest your time in anyone who is not serious. Be careful that you don't pass up an opportunity because you are not willing to take some risk. The strongest times this year for relationship energies are January and June.

Career & Social Life You are examining your core value systems this year. As a result, you are changing your friends and business associates, looking for people with whom you can share more of a spiritual value system. You're getting tired of spending your time with people who just want to get ahead in the world—you're looking for friends who want to make the world a better place. This will affect your career intentions as well. Your work and the things that your work does for others becomes a more important part of your life. You will be motivated to work with people who are interested in cleaning up the planet, revising corporate life, or returning integrity back into business. This would be a good time to associate with community groups or business associations that have a collective sense of neighborhood

improvement. You will draw many new friends from these associations.

Family Communications with your family and your family of friends are definitely going to be more important this year.



Director **Todd Haynes**
Capricorn
Born Jan. 2, 1961

You are taking a hard look at the habits and routines that have developed over the years—and are bound and determined to make some improvements. You are intent on having a common vision for the future. You'll find yourself em-

powered and persuasive as you take an active leadership role in healing these familial patterns. You become even more motivated as we enter the last half of the year.

AQUARIUS

(Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

Relationships & Romance

For those of you born January 24-27, you are working on having a relationship with yourself. You have retired from society and partnerships in general in order to take a big step inward. You are finding that you are not as detached as you had thought you were in the past and that your sensitivity level is getting stronger than ever. Being around negative people can really have an impact on you. Those of you born February 5-10 are redefining freedom and boundaries in relationships. You are going to reverse your ideas about what constitutes commitment and freedom regarding relationships. Those of you born before and after these dates are looking for more stability in your life. You will be clearer about what you expect for yourself and more verbal about what you expect from your partner or potential partners. Usually a bit detached, you will be much more involved this entire year.

Career & Social Life Most of you have been working on get-

ting this part of your life organized, cleaned up, and focused. You will keep working on this "beauty and order" in your life in the new year, becoming even more actively vigilant after February. You are going to find

yourself busier than ever. Be careful about which goals and opportunities you respond to—there are going to be a lot out there and most all of them will look attractive. If you don't, you can expect to be overloaded as we enter the month of May.

This will be your time to have a clearer look at what you have decided to accomplish and revise your aims to better fit into your life. Those of you born January 24-27, you will not be as clear and will spend the majority of the year searching for a path to follow. Anything less than soul-fulfilling will not work.

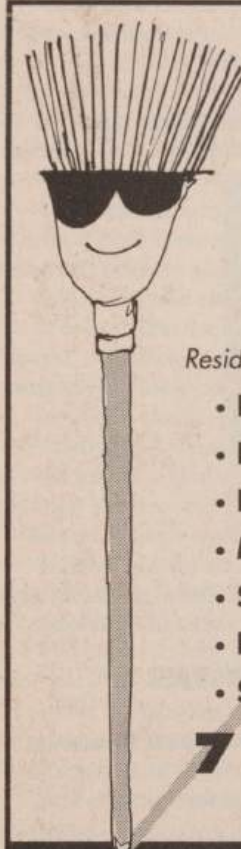
Family Last year, you spent a lot of energy and thought coming to terms with your responsibility to your family and to yourself. You will continue with this course, but with more success—instead of getting bogged

down in analysis, you'll have a real sense of moving forward. If you have young children, you can teach them responsibility this year and expect them to start acting more maturely.

With your parents, you are assuming the adult role in your family. You may be expected to take over the family traditions. You don't have to do them the same way. Other family members may be coming to you for answers and help. This is where you get the power of choice and change within the genetic/karmic destiny of your family. This can also show up in



Ellen DeGeneres
Aquarius
Born Jan. 26, 1958



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your life as you wanting a permanent home, a more emotionally secure foundation, or a clear choice about your life direction. Sounds like fun to me.

PISCES

(Feb. 19-Mar. 20)

Relationships & Romance

You are not clear about who you are this year, and will be looking at how you define yourself in relationships. Normally, you have great chameleon skills to adapt to what-

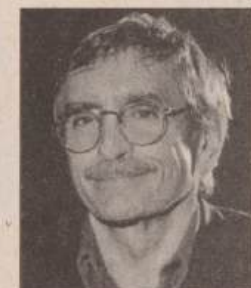
ever your partner could want from you, both on a business and a personal level. You have the ability to be empathetic with someone else's private view of themselves; this empathetic chameleon ability makes you easy to get along with, and you can be a valuable partner. However, you also have trouble being open in

your relationships about what you feel and think. Your feelings do eventually come to the surface, but only when you feel that you have been sufficiently ignored—then you finally feel justified in expressing yourself.

This year, all will start changing as you begin to question your chameleon nature. This is a very different way for you to be. You'll find you have better communication with partners and potential partners. But, you may feel guilty or selfish. September and October are especially

tense times for you in relationships. You are trying to change some fundamental beliefs about who you are—give yourself some time to adjust.

Career & Social Life Your career path is going through a major transformation. You can expect downsizing, mergers, and/or a desire on your part to



Playwright **Edward Albee**
Pisces
Born Mar. 12, 1928



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Queer Astrology Guides

If you need a fun astrology intro guide, and are feeling more lousy than touchy-feely, you might try Jill Dearman's *Queer Astrology for Women* and *Queer Astrology for Men*. Dearman skips the explanations about rising signs and lunar vortices, and cuts right to the chase about how to use the stars to outpsyche your lover (or wannabe lover). She describes each sign's tastes in general and between the sheets, as well as what works to seduce them, how to keep them, and then (oh so important, and oh so often overlooked), how to get rid of them should the need arise.

For example, if you wanted to catch me, a Libra woman, "She's incredibly romantic and surprisingly passionate, when she's in the mood. Since people-pleasing is second nature to this lovely lesbian, you can bet that she will make you feel as if you are the only woman who's ever made her feel that way." Now the secret's out. If you were trying to seduce, say, a Sagittarius man, Dearman tells you, "He fancies himself the smooth Latin lover (even if he's Irish), but may not be fully aware of just how goofy he is. No matter how old or experienced he is, he will always maintain an extremely cute and boyish sexual persona."

Like any good astrologer, Dearman functions as simply a good down-to-earth psychologist, and many of her tips are just savvy relationship sense, regardless of your chart. In addition to writing astrology columns for New York alternative magazines, she's also worked as an HIV counselor throughout the 1990s. In *Queer Astrology*, she bounces along, keeps the tone light, calls her readers "sweetie" at frequent intervals, and promises to go more in-depth in future books.

—Ann Walton Sieber

completely shift your professional life. This has been warming up in the wings for many of you. The end of February and September through October are very significant times for you to make decisions about this part of your life. The question the Universe is asking you is simple, "Are you happy doing what you do?" You have always felt directed in your life. You have not always felt like you had a choice about what to do. This initially can be experienced as confusion, depression, or for some, elation. You have not had the chance to really consider the question, "What do I really want to do?" Take the time. Don't expect the answer to come quickly because you will find many answers this year. Which one is the right one? The answer to that question comes the following year. Explore your career options and leave your job alone. That way you can have security and time to investigate at the same time.

Family This is a time of ultimate transformation for you, and your family life is no exception. Family members are going their separate ways. This is making you explore your own path and not what is expected of you by your family or by your sense of family responsibility. Many of the essential qualities of what you think family are will be tested this year. The basic question is: which is yours, and what was introduced to you when you were young. For those of you old enough, you may want to look back to the early '60s. Those decisions that you made then are being tested now. Some of those decisions were made by a very young child.

And good decisions they were. But now, you as the adult need to revise those determinations. You will feel as though your sense of place and family are being questioned from the in-

side out. And you are right. Clean out those closets, attics, and garages. As with your career choices, you can look for more stability in your family life in 2001.

ARIES

(March 21–April 19)

Relationships & Romance

As the year begins, you are still reevaluating your relationships from 1999, which you will continue to do until mid-February. At that time, you will be looking at long-term commitments and common goals in both your romance and business associations. If those objectives are not able to be agreed upon, then you will be out looking for new partners. You are not interested in wasting your time

this year on partnerships that don't have a future. This is true. Some of the issues that will come up for you and your partner are shared financial goals, common values about the family, and how valuable your partner considers you. You might say that you are wanting to be better friends so that you can be better lovers. May 2000 will test your decisions and resolve. You may need to do some readjusting at that time.

Career & Social Life

You are really going to focus on your money and financial picture this year. You have a strong desire to do something with your money that really adds to your future security. You will be looking at investments and

even consider taking some risks. This will bleed over into your career sector. You have to be paid what you are worth. If you feel that you are being overlooked or taken advantage of, you will be letting those around

you know about it. Some of you are really feeling motivated and will want to be more of your own boss. This can show up as promotions at your current job or starting your own business—if you are being ignored at your job, you may find yourself having conflicts with those in charge. Your current friend base needs expanding. If the organizations that you are in aren't satisfying you, you will be looking elsewhere. You are also looking for a group of friends

that have more of a soul purpose in their connections. Superficial conversations will not interest you this year. You may even choose to spend more time alone if you can't find those deeper connections.

Family

Family connections are not going to be as strong this year. You may find yourself going back to your early life to make some connections with childhood friends as a substitution for what is missing in your own family. This can even show up as you taking some classes or going back to school to find that "family" part of you. This is still about the internal search for common values in family members. You may also not feel as at home in your own house. You could consider selling your house or redecorating it. Travel would be very good for you this year. This can help with your search for inner fulfillment. And it may help with the disconnection that you are feeling at home. Best times for travel this year are in July through December, although be cautious about traveling in September.

TAURUS

(April 20–May 20)

Relationships & Romance

This is going to be an especially active year for the Bulls and Cows. You are going to be full of motivation and a strong desire to achieve something with all

this energy. You are looking at commitment in a serious way this year. You will want to reaffirm the commitment that you have in your relationship. And you will want this affirmation to be public so that everyone around you knows how stable your relationship is. If you are not able to find this with your existing partner, you will go on the search for someone who is. For those of you who are not involved, you will be looking for someone special this year. Your interest in commitment is just as strong. You will not waste your time with someone who just wants to date. All potential relationships will have to have the sense that they are headed somewhere.

Career & Social Life You will be carrying this same sense of purpose and direction into your career life as well as your relationships. And there is going to be a mixed bag of energies for the Cows and Bulls. There has already been a sense of disillusionment in your career sector of your life since last year. This is particularly strong for those of you born April 23–28. Your career has to fulfill a subterranean desire that touches your very soul. Your work has to



Rupert Everett
Gemini
Born May 29, 1959

much middle ground at this time. The rest of you will be more stable and not as dissatisfied with the mundane unless you have planets at these early degrees of Taurus. You will be wanting more from yourself, from your bosses, your clients, and your external needs for satisfaction.

Family Responsibilities to your family will be pulling on your

sense of individuality this year. Any visits back home will remind you of the unconscious motives that are buried deep in your psyche. Some of these things are the very fuels that drive your career goals. You can understand more of who you are this year by looking into this part of yourself. Some therapy or motivation classes could help to uncover many of these parts of you. Within your own family, your children could be playing out the role of the rebel forcing you to be the authority figure, the very thing you have always wanted to avoid. If you don't have children, this can show up in friends that you have a maternal role with or employees in the company that you work for. They may be reflecting your unconscious desire to be more creative and playful. Try to be more balanced with the energy between your internal parent and internal child, so you don't feel trapped in your own parallax.

GEMINI

(May 21–June 21)

Relationships & Romance

During the first half of the year, you are very sensitive to energy fields, to your environment, and

to all people. This can make relationships tense because you will be hearing verbal messages and picking up on intuitive emotional messages. And oftentimes these messages will be in conflict with each other. One thing you have to guard

against is trying to figure out which message is the "truthful" one. Both sides are true and represent the duality that person is feeling. The best you can hope for is that the person is willing to talk about their mixed feelings and the mixed messages they are sending out. Try not to make your job digging out the messages. After July, you are more optimistic



Judy Carne
Taurus
Born April 27, 1939

going to be as strong this year. You may find yourself going back to your early life to make some connections with childhood friends as a substitution for what is missing in your own family. This can even show up as you taking some classes or going back to school to find that "family" part of you. This is still about the internal search for common values in family members. You may also not feel as at home in your own house. You could consider selling your house or redecorating it. Travel would be very good for you this year. This can help with your search for inner fulfillment. And it may help with the disconnection that you are feeling at home. Best times for travel this year are in July through December, although be cautious about traveling in September.



Elton John
Aries
Born Mar. 25, 1947

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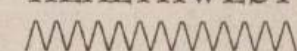
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about your relationships. If you are not involved, you will want to be involved with someone. Your charisma will be strong and people will be drawn to you. During September and October, your relationships will be under stress. This will be a breaking point for any relationship that isn't built on sincerity and honesty.

Career & Social

Life You are in a reassessment period as the year begins. You will be very conscious about what is practical and the return on the investment of your energies. This is a downsizing time for you. You will be cleaning up your office or place of employment. Getting rid of old files, stock that doesn't move, business ideas that don't work. After July, you are into a rebuilding mode. You will be looking at new long-term

goals. Promoting your business or yourself will be a lot easier. So, if you are looking to change your job, change your career, or start a business of your own, then you need to wait until the latter half of July. You will also

feel like spending more time with friends and any business associates. Conserve your energy until then.

Family Any differences you have experienced with your family over the last couple of years, you will be looking for a clear sense of resolution. You

will want things more out in the open. You will be more assertive in addressing these past issues in your life. This will be especially strong by late summer. You are definitely in a clean-out mode regarding your family and your genetic karma. Look to do some major housecleaning by



George Michael
Cancer
Born June 25, 1963

the time September and October roll around. On an external level this could be seen as moving, remodeling your current abode, or downsizing your home life and family altogether.

CANCER

(June 22–July 22)

Relationships &

Romance

This area of your life is in for some real testing of your commitments. You are seemingly driven by a desire to get at the bottom of any differences that you and your partner may have. The reason to do this is to find out if your essences are really compatible. Normally, the Moonkids keep their emotions and feelings to themselves. This often gives the impression that you are detached or distant. The real reason is that you don't want others to know how you



Amanda Bearse
Leo
Born Aug. 9, 1958

really feel about them. As a result, you have drawn distant or disinterested partners to you in the past. Not this year—you will want the truth, in all of its quicksand-like intimacy. The more you know, the deeper you

go. This will serve to ferret out any problems that you have had in past relationships as well. You are really seeking a commitment on a soul level. This energy will be at its most intense in May. This will make the commitment stronger or tear it apart.

Career & Social

Life You have been in a reassessment of your career path for the last two years. You are just starting to make some decisions about what direction to take. You will be more pragmatic than usual. Your potential commitments will have to offer some sense of future security or

you will not invest your energies. The same goes for business associations or community groups that you belong to. You are expecting more from those in the group. They have to be more responsible or you will not be a member, much less a participant. You are reevaluating your friendships with the same use-oriented eye. Don't be surprised if some of your friendships come to an end. You are expecting them to take a more active role in the friendship. If they don't, you will go have coffee elsewhere.

Family Family relationships may be strained as well for much the same reasons as your friendships. You want to be appreciated for who you are and not for what your family expects from you. This is a very truthful time in your life. You will not be able to keep your secrets from your family—nor will you want to. You just need to give them time to hear and accept the information that you are sharing with them. And remember that the person who needs to accept who you are the most is you. Self-acceptance is the most important thing here. If you are looking for your family's approval of your individuality, you are asking the wrong people. Expect some roadblocks in May. They are only temporary.

LEO

(July 23–Aug. 22)

Relationships & Romance

Those of you born between July 26–30 will need more time alone this year. This will create some tension between you and your partner, particularly if your partner is the possessive or clingy type. You are on a spiritual pilgrimage this year. You will want to know more about yourself, not so much about others. Mostly you will be interested in people who are on a similar path as you. Those of you born August 7–13 are needing a real electrical spark in your relationships. Relationships that have a lot of history

Highlights of 2000

Important Times of the Year

May is a power-packed month this year, because most of the planets will be in either Taurus or Aquarius. This may feel like a lot of hurry up and wait. Jupiter and Saturn will be conjuncting each other while they square Neptune and Uranus. It seems like a very unstable time. Also in September, Jupiter will be opposing Pluto, making for a high-energy time. This may have something to do with the Internet and business associated with the Internet. The airline industry could be having some real problems at this time.

Mercury Retrograde Dates

Mercury goes retrograde approximately three times a year. This year those dates are Feb. 21–March 14, June 23–July 17, and Oct. 18–Nov. 7. Remember, it is best not to start new projects during Mercury retrograde but to complete old ones. And if you're planning using the dates above, give yourself about two or three days before and after the dates.

Eclipse Dates

An eclipse is a high-energy time of a new and full moon. Eclipses tend to bring issues to a head so that they can be solved or completed, whether we are ready or not. The first lunar eclipse is on Jan. 20 in Leo, and the solar eclipse is on Feb. 5. This is a very active time for ego and creative energies. The next eclipse phase begins with a solar eclipse on July 1, the lunar eclipse on July 15, and another solar eclipse on July 31. The eclipses on July 1 and 15 are Cancer/Capricorn and usually bring up effects around family and career. The other eclipse in Leo will reactivate the creativity theme.

Outer Planets Changing Signs

Jupiter begins the year in Aries and on Feb. 14 re-enters the sign of Taurus. It will move rather quickly through Taurus and sashay into Gemini on June 30. Jupiter will remain there for the rest of the year. Saturn continues her journey through Taurus but briefly sticks her head into Gemini from Sept. 12–Oct. 15. After Oct. 15, she scoots back into Taurus.

—Lilly Roddy

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will need to be upgraded; boredom will take its toll if you don't. Jealous and possessive types will drive you away. The rest of the Leos born before or after these periods are wanting a solid commitment from their partners or potential partners. You will not have much time for those who just want to date. You are wanting something with a future attached to it.

Career & Social Life In 2000, you will find that your career and social life are working on the same plane. You are really wanting something from your career path as you reassess your long-term goals and plans. You are wanting more from what you do; better jobs and career promotions are on tap for you this year. Those of you born July 26-30 will have to find a career that

satisfies you at a much deeper level. Those born August 7-13 will want your work to be much more exciting. You will be drawn to industries that are high-tech oriented. The rest of you will be motivated to be your



Lily Tomlin
Virgo
Born Sept. 1, 1939

own boss and you may start your own business. Be careful that you don't have conflicts with your authority figures if you are dissatisfied. This may be a sign that you are ready for a change. But all of you can expect a busy and active social life. You will

want new people in your life who are much more positive and upbeat.

Family You are going to be expected to take on much more of a parental role in your family. You can expect your own parents to be depending on you more than ever. You are really stepping out there and assert-

ing your own sense of authority. Just be careful on what you say you will do—they will be expecting you to follow through. If you feel that you have been rescuing your family for years, then you can expect this time to create a much better boundary with your family. You will not be as active in the decision making and rescuing as you have in the past. Things may look worse as you pull back and don't jump in there to make things better. They are just used to you doing the job. Choose your responsibilities carefully this year.

VIRGO

(Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

Relationships & Romance

You are changing your habit patterns this year. You are beginning this by establishing a

list of priorities in your life. It is very natural for you to just take care of your partner's needs whether they ask you for the help or not. This year you will be redefining just what your duties are and, especially, are



Singer Johnny Mathis
Libra
Born Sept. 30, 1935

not. You will be surprised by your partner's response. They may not have noticed what you have been doing for them, but they will surely notice that you are not doing it anymore. And they will definitely notice that you are more vocal about who

does what. Don't be fooled by their lip service. They will seem very sympathetic to your problems, but they will probably avoid changing their patterns unless they have to. If you are not attached, you may vacillate between wanting to be with someone and wanting to be alone. You will feel better about

this whole process after July 1. You are more optimistic about your partner changing his or her patterns, or finding someone who is different.

Career & Social Life This is probably the biggest and most improved area of your life. Your career direction seems to take a definite direction after mid-January. Along with you changing entrenched and unhealthy habits, you are more dedicated to what you want to do with your life than you have been in a while. Those of you born September 1-5 are experiencing the most dramatic shift in your career life. Your company or business arena is going through a total redefinition of who and what it is. This is a time of major decision in your life. It will be a time to figure out something else to do or to take what is left over and resurrect your old career path. You will get a lot more planetary support after July 1 and will be feeling much more optimistic. If you haven't taken any action by September, action will be taken for you.

Family This year continues a path of cutting the umbilical cord of family genetic karma that you have dragged around with you low these many years. Your relationship with your parents is going to change. The old inner you that has been running your psyche is going through an inner death and rebirthing period. Externally, this could be you taking a step out on your own, your parents retiring from their jobs, major shifts in the structure of your family, or even you remodeling your home. Look for a culmination of these energies, September and October.

LIBRA

(Sept. 23-Oct. 23)

Relationships & Romance

Intimacy issues are stirred this year. You and your partner will want to know how each of you feels. You will cast aside the mask of pleasantness and politeness. You can think of this

as a renewal period in your relationship. For those of you who are involved, this is a very critical look into how open you are in a relationship. Can you strip off that mask and show your partner the darker, controlling, possessive part of your personality? These are the things that you usually project and draw through your partners. This is your chance to acknowledge this side of your self. For those of you not involved, you are wanting more honesty from your partners. And you are willing to give more honesty. Your relationships will not be the blissful harmony that you say you want. They will be full of much more passion and intensity. Sexual problems or money issues are just the surface problems. This is a great year for therapy. Some of you may avoid relationships altogether this year. If you do, you are avoiding really looking at yourself.

Career & Social Life Your creative energies are really flowing this year. You need to find an outlet for them. Your current career path needs to be more fun and allow a great deal of personal expression. This can be a great year if you are in marketing or sales. Jobs that are too routine will take their toll on you this year. This can be a good year to market yourself as well as a product. In your social life, you are looking for people who are fun to be with. You are seeking adventure and excitement here. Doing the same old things will take their toll on you just as they are doing in your relationships. A good thing is that you will be much more open to expressing your point of view and won't let things build up before you express them. This will definitely have a positive impact on your health at work and with your friends.

Family You are looking at your role in the family. No matter whether you are the parent or the child, you are trying to define some new

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patterns. Building your sense of self-worth is essential. You are wanting to be valued by your family circle for who you are, and not what you can do for them. You will be setting smaller boundaries of accountability this year. You are changing the things your family has come to expect from you. You will not take on the same job here unless you receive a better sense of recognition for what you are doing. And this can be a very tough year for those of you who have parents or children who control you by withholding their emotions from you. You will not tolerate this behavior from them. Be prepared to tell them what you will do and what you won't do. The more open you are, the better the chance they have in understanding what is going on with you. This may not make them change, but you will have done all you can to make the situation better.

SCORPIO

(Oct. 24–Nov. 21)

Relationships & Romance

This is a very active year for romance this year. If you are not involved with someone, you will be out there looking for potential partners. And you are not just interested in a date. You are interested in commitment. You will weed out anyone who is not serious on the first date. If you are involved, you are interested in bringing a new level of commitment to your relationship. If you are living with someone, then you are going to seek a more formal level of commitment. That could be buying some property together or having a ceremony publicly acknowledging your partnership. If you have been together for a while, you will still want to renew your commitment.

Problems in relationships will surface and they will have to be faced and dealt with. The most critical time for problems to arise will be in May. Anything that has not been addressed will show itself. It's time to fix it.

Career & Social Life This is quite a mixed time for you. For those of you born October 26–30, you are looking for a career that fills you up from the inside out. Originally, security was your main driver—but now you need more from what you do. Those of you born Novem-



K.D. Lang
Scorpio
Born Nov. 2, 1961

ber 4–13, you are looking for something to inspire you. This could show up as your department being reorganized, new computers, or a shift in the management structure. It could also show up as you taking control of this part of your life and following through on a dream.

Those of you born before or after those dates are just trying to bring some stability back into your career. You are definitely going to take a more public role at work. Your internal authority figure is needing some recognition. Look for some opportunities to express this part of yourself.

Family Lots of turmoil going on here. Some of you are hiding out from your families so that you don't have to play out the roles into which they have cast you. Others of you are ready to run away from home and join the circus. You want your independence more than anything. Just the normal courtesy of telling others where you are going may make you feel trapped. You may also feel you don't have a home to go to. You are restless and irritable. I would avoid those family gatherings this year. You are way too sensitive to your family members. And they will be pushing your buttons big time, even if it

is accidentally. Your home is also going through a lot of change. You may be living in an area that is undergoing lots of renovation. In fact, you may have to leave town to get some peace. These energies with your family will be at their highest pitch in May.

SAGITTARIUS

(Nov. 22–Dec. 21)

Relationships & Romance

You are going through a great deal of personal transformation. This is the detoxification of all parts of you. You are being challenged to look deep and determine who you really are. You are exploring your early life and checking to see if the pieces of your personality that you have acquired are really a part of your soul. If they are not, then a purging will take place. This is about all parts of your identity. And it will represent itself by whom you choose to keep in your life. As far as relationships go, relationships that have the most time and history

are under the greatest level of stress. This is because they are built on who you were in the past. The new you has not finished baking yet, so we can only watch the process and speculate. Consequently, knowing what you want from someone else in a relationship at this time is difficult to know since you don't know yourself. This process is strongest for those born December 1–5, or those of you who have planets in Sag in these degrees. September and October is a time of resolution, one way or the other, for many of you. Just keep flexible and open.

Career & Social Life Much of what I said about your relationships applies here as well. You will not be able to continue to follow a career path that doesn't have your true inner motivation connected to it. Nor-

mally, your optimistic attitude can carry you through times of difficulty whether in your career path or your social community. This allows you to look beyond the present and gaze into the future where things look better. What is changing is



Actor Tom Hulse
Sagittarius
Born Dec. 6, 1953

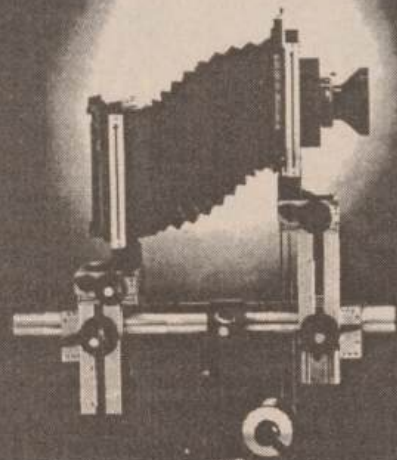
your internal fuel that has driven you from childhood. If you lose the fuel, you will have to go on a journey to find that part of you that is really you. Work will appear to be less satisfying. You will not be able to ignore the day-to-day interactions as you have in the past. Your real unedited feelings will make it to the surface. Your company will be going through a downsizing process allowing you to rethink your current career path. You really have more control about your life decisions than you have had in a long time. Give

yourself some time to decide. This goes on all year.

Family As this same process continues, and you begin to redefine who you are as a person, you will examine the connections that hold you to your family. If these are not genuine connections, you will have to create new ones, or those familial relationships will come to an end. You may feel more lonely than usual but more free at the same time. The old you is dying and your family has come to know and love that part of you. They are not going to be open to letting that part of you go. Anger can be a part of their expression, as something that they know and love is being taken away from them. Give them time to adjust. They should come around, but they may not.

Lilly Roddy is a Houston-based astrologer. She can be reached by e-mail at phil@cybersim.com, or visit her website at <http://www.cybersim.com/hermes>.

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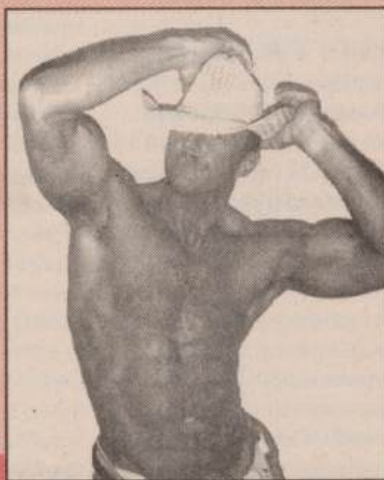


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Doing Good, Feeling Good

Focus on Bering Omega Community Services

by Sue-Ellen Davison

**Voted
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Best Place to
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Volunteers Ken Hurt, Richard Johnson, and Steven Shapiro attend volunteer training with Dena Gray, Director of Volunteer Services and Community Outreach for Bering Omega.

The October issue of *OutSmart* magazine celebrated the best places in Houston as defined by smart readers like you. We of Bering Omega Community Services were gratified to learn that Omega House residential hospice was voted "Best Place to Volunteer." Many thanks to all who gave us that "thumbs up."

Bering Omega Community Services resulted from the 1999 merger of Bering Community Service Foundation and Omega House. As a nonprofit organization, it depends on approximately 450 volunteers supporting a small staff of full- and part-time employees to keep things humming. Together, they are able to help 2,000 people with HIV and AIDS annually.

To find out what makes us the best place to volunteer, a good place to start is with Dena Gray, Bering Omega's new director of Volunteer Services and Community Outreach. Last June, Dena stepped into the shoes vacated by Joanne Reich, who got an offer she couldn't refuse in New York with the Methodist Church.

Dena is a graduate of the University of Houston and a former volunteer with several Houston AIDS organizations. Her job is recruiting and plac-

ing Bering Omega volunteers. She ensures that we always have enough volunteers, and she matches people's skills and interests to the areas they will enjoy the most and in which they feel they can be most effective.

Why volunteer at Bering Omega?

Most of us have at least one talent we probably take for granted: a green thumb, a flair for communication, or fluency in Spanish, for example. Perhaps you're artistic or a good cook.

Maybe you're good with people. Or maybe your talent is quietly bringing order to an office setting. These skills and many others are highly valued at Bering Omega, where volunteers find satisfaction in applying their assorted abilities.

Dena observes, "When small tasks are done, like taking [a hospice] resident out on the patio and letting the sun hit their face, seeing their expression is just the ultimate blessing. All those little daily activities really make the volunteers know what they're doing is important.... Even if it's just visiting with a resident, that's so appreciated—and what do you really need for that besides a good ear?"

As to what makes people want to volunteer in the first place, Dena says, "I think one of the reasons is that they know someone who has HIV or AIDS, or they've cared for someone at the end stage of their life. After going through the grieving process, or as a part of the grieving process, they want to continue that service and give back to other people in the same situation."

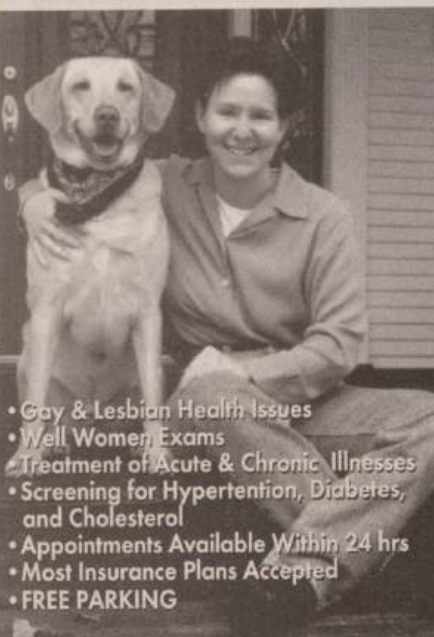
Secondly, students often volunteer—especially those major-

Cantor Marilyn J. Ladin

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ing in medicine, social work, or psychology—in order to augment their studies with a practical, real-life learning experience. But, although students may come for academic reasons, they frequently become involved in the lives of people here, and stay.

A third frequently cited reason is simply the desire to help. Dena has found helping others gives you an irresistible sense of purpose.

"So the reasons they come are different, the experiences they have are different," Dena says, "but I think it really all goes back to, 'I feel needed, and this is a calling that I have.'"

Additionally, "There's a lot of interaction with the human side of our clients, the heart and the soul, and a lot of connection at that level. The intensity is hard to escape. That's what I think keeps our five-year volunteers, our ten-year volunteers [coming back]. That's what keeps people constantly calling, saying, 'I want to get involved.'"

What, exactly, do Bering Omega volunteers do?

When you think of volunteering for HIV and AIDS community service, perhaps the first thing that comes to your mind is bedside care. While many volunteers are needed to provide that service, there are plenty of other opportunities as well.

Our Adult Day Care Center and Hospice Program need van drivers (we supply the van) and people to assist with activities and field trips. Our dental clinic needs reception-

ists and people to help patients fill out forms and get to dental chairs. The clinic also needs volunteer hygienists and dentists. Our In-Home Respite Program depends on volunteers to visit the homebound, relieving the isolation of prolonged illness. The Support Network and Hospice Program need people with skills or training in emotional

and spiritual support, psychological services, and bereavement counseling.

Now you might say, "I really want to volunteer, but I'm not comfortable dealing with the clients."

No problem. The Adult Day Care Center and Hospice Program need help with cooking, cleaning, clerical duties, maintenance, and lawn care. The Financial Assistance Program can use daytime office and computer assistance. The Advocacy Project needs help in community planning, advocacy forums, and research. Prefer to work at home? Perhaps our e-mail and fax action alert network is your thing. Plus, we have special events, public relations projects, and fund-raising opportunities as well.

Volunteers in all our programs receive complete hands-on training and all the tools they need to provide quality assistance. They get trained not only by our staff, but by other volunteers, who frequently offer a different perspective.

"When small tasks are done, like taking [a hospice] resident out on the patio and letting the sun hit their face, seeing their expression is just the ultimate blessing."



Volunteer coordinator Dena Gray at Pierson House, one of Bering Omega's several homey sites.

How much time does volunteering take?

Most Bering Omega volunteers work in four-hour shifts, but they decide how many shifts they want to work. Some come in once a month; others once a week. Some even come in three or four times weekly. We're flexible and allow for various scheduling limitations. We can accommodate the nine-to-fivers who need to volunteer evenings and weekends, as well as the retiree and student's preference for day shifts during the week.

"We try to make the schedule as accommodating to volunteers as possible," Dena says. "We don't ever want to lose a volunteer."

BYOF (Bring Your Own Friends)—or make new ones

Sometimes friends like to volunteer together, signing up for the same shifts. But other people find they can't help but form new friendships at Bering Omega.

After a shift, when volunteers want to talk about the experience at home, they sometimes find their listeners just don't get it. The best people to talk to are those who have shared the same feelings or experiences. That common ground tends to generate great friendships.

Another issue is, of course, confidentiality. Volunteers are taught to honor the privacy of those they serve. So, again, that increases communication between volunteers and builds relationships.

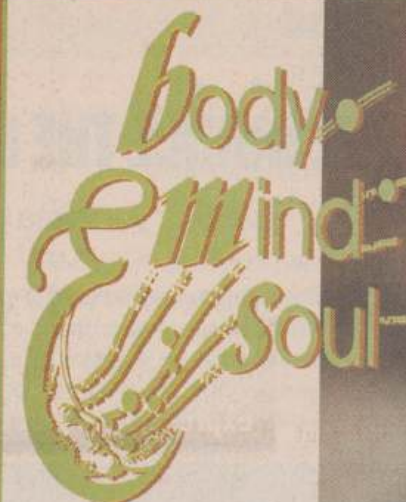
The 'typical' Bering Omega volunteer

"Our oldest volunteer who, sad to say, passed away this year, was about 70," says Dena. "And our youngest was 15. She would come in and cook brownies before school. When she left, the entire place almost just fell apart. We have one college student who's 17. He's here every day for a few hours, and he is just as magnificent as the older volunteers, so all the different ages really add to the diversity of experiences here."

"We have everybody here. It's not a very segregated community. We have full-time volunteers here from Germany and one full-time volunteer from Montana, and the dynamics that exist there are just hilarious. Every day is interesting. We have gay/straight. We have all the different ethnic populations represented, so when you walk in, you feel like that 'one world' that people always talk about really exists."

To volunteer with Bering Omega Community Services, telephone Dena Gray at 713/523-7110, extension 117. Or you can send her e-mail at denag@bering.org.

Sue-Ellen Davison is a freelance writer in Houston and a Bering Omega volunteer.



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WorkOut

by John-Aaron

THE HUNKS, THE DUMBELLS, AND YOU

Losing your fear of the weight room

It's a new millennium and, for most of us, we have made the resolution that this is the millennium that we are going to "get in shape"! But how? After all, going to a gym (especially for the first time) can be a scary thing. From my own experience I can remember the feeling of excitement and anxiety the first time I ever walked into a gym, so much adrenaline pumping through me, I thought I might pass out. But, like all experiences that cause us to grow and better ourselves, it doesn't take very long to overcome our fears and begin embracing the positive results that enhance our lives.

Since this is a new millennium, let's relate this subject to the dawning of a new age. Many "non-athletic" individuals are now facing the fact that we're not as young as we used to be. It takes longer to get over injuries, we don't seem to have as much energy, and those "love handles" seemed to appear overnight. In this light, there are two paths an individual can follow. One: Do something about it. Two: Ignore it completely. Let's review these two options as they apply to the experience of one person in particular. We'll call her Rachel.

With her 40th birthday fast approaching, Rachel had two premonitions of her future, and neither of them looked especially attractive. First, she could see herself as a stiff pudgy frumpy old woman—not unlike Aunt Bee in *The Andy Griffith Show*. Maybe charming in a nutty way, but definitely not a picture of vim and vigorous health.

The other nightmare would have her walking into a weight room at her local health club. First, she'd accidentally whack someone in the head while struggling to lift a three-pound dumbbell. Next, she'd nearly get crushed by a weight machine that seemed more intended for torture during the

Spanish Inquisition than something to "tone and strengthen" her legs. And, to top it all off, her desperate attempt to find someone to lend her a helping hand would only be met by the callused, patronizing glare of a bodybuilder-turned-gym-Nazi with arms that could open doors ... from the hinged side.

From this view, Rachel's options looked pretty bleak. However, what it doesn't show is that she has the power to change both of these scenarios for the best. So, at the risk of humiliation, she put her pride aside and entered the doors of a fitness facility for the first time. An incredible success it was not. But, so what? As a child, had she given up on her first try, she would never have learned how to ride a bike or eventually drive a car. Right?

Her desperate attempt to find someone to lend her a helping hand was met by the callused, patronizing glare of a bodybuilder-turned-gym-Nazi with arms that could open doors ... from the hinged side.

Walking into a room filled with monstrous machines, several of which resemble the morphing of a dentist's chair, a gynecologist's table, and something straight out of *Robo-Cop* can be pretty intimidating. You stare at each one and wonder to yourself, What the heck is that? Where do I sit? Do I sit? What does it do? Do I push or do I pull? And, most importantly, has anyone ever been killed on this thing?

In this new surrounding, everything seems alien to you. Or, because everyone else seems to know what they are doing and they are all performing elaborate exercises, more likely it is you who feels like the alien, convinced that everyone is staring at those creatures you call your thighs. All of this can be scary, but don't give up. Rachel didn't. Instead, she took a deep breath and moved on to her next exercise. After all, she was doing this for herself, and no one else.

However, there is another alternative you might want to try if you aren't as bold as Rachel, but are still serious about beginning

a weight training program. Hiring a personal trainer could be a tremendous help to you. With a personal trainer, you will not only have a guided tour of what all those hideous machines are for, but you will also learn about using correct exercise techniques, and how to set realistic goals for yourself. Additionally, when you make an appointment with a trainer, you'll be less likely to chicken out, make excuses, and miss your workouts. Besides that, with a personal trainer you won't feel like you have to face that bizarre world of "skin-cling spandex" all by yourself!

In any case, take heart. You need only a few trips to the gym to banish your fears about exercise, and surprisingly, not many more to start seeing fairly stunning results for your efforts. Before you know it, those obstacles that prevented you from reaching your body's full potential will be removed. Once that has happened, you will realize that there is virtually nothing that can prevent you from enjoying the benefits of exercise.

John-Aaron is a nationally certified personal trainer, member of the International Assoc. of Fitness Professionals, and owner of Houston's Muscle Mechanics, a personal fitness training and nutritional guidance facility. He can be reached at Musclemech@aol.com.

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Sharron Mattison has been a Houston reader for 15 years. She is also known as "Super Sharron," the celebrity psychic for KQQK 106.5 FM, since 1993. She has been featured in *The Houston Chronicle*, *The Houston Business Journal*, Channel 13, Channel 11, and numerous magazine articles. For more information and appointments, please call 713.783.3042. NCGR-Level I

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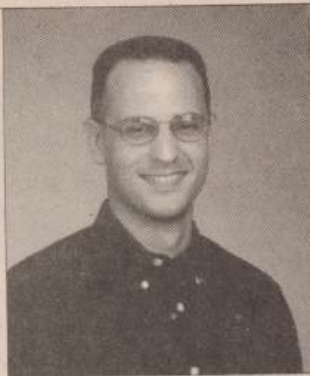
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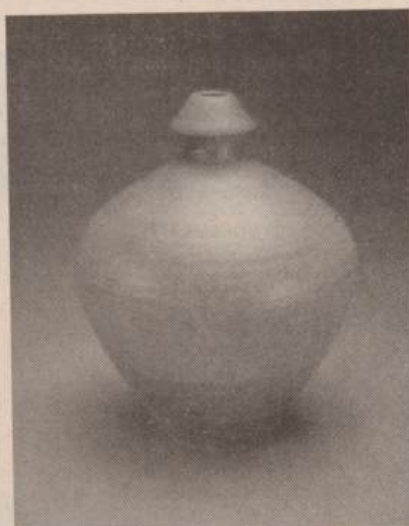
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From the Heart

by Alan Cohen

BEGGARS AND CHOOSERS

An exhortation to boldness

Last fall my plane landed at the Miami Airport just before the airport was closed in the face of the oncoming Hurricane Irene. I went to my hotel, hunkered down, and watched in awe as gale force winds bent palm trees and huge volumes of rain pelted the large windows. That evening the hotel lost electric power for eight hours, and I took the opportunity to light a candle, meditate, and savor the power of nature surging around me. I must say that evening was one of my most pleasant hotel visits.

When the storm abated, hotel guests scrambled to rearrange their flight schedules. As I stood at the public phone in the lobby, I heard a fellow in the booth next to me talking to an airline reservations agent. "I realize that beggars can't be choosers," he pleaded, "but is there any chance you can get me on this flight?"

His words reverberated in my mind: *Beggars can't be choosers*. It is true. If you think you are a beggar, undeserving of the good things in life, required to earn your right to be happy or suffer to get what you want, you certainly are not in a position of choice. But if you recognize that you are a co-creator with God, literally an expression of a God who brings beauty and joy to life through you, begging becomes meaningless, utterly contradictory to who we are and the way we were born to live.

Here we stand, at the threshold of the new millennium, with many choices before us. If we believe we must grovel, plead, or struggle to manifest our dreams, these choices can seem overwhelming, even frightening. But if we realize that every choice before us represents the universe inviting us to remember who we really are and what we really want, and then find the courage to claim it, the process of choosing becomes exciting—even exhilarating.

To choose is to empower. Every time you say "yes" to one path and "no" to another, life rushes to support you in your decision. Often it does not matter so much what we choose, but that we *do* choose. Many declarations from the Bible echo this wisdom: "God spews the lukewarm from His mouth" (not the most romantic image, but effective); "let your 'yes' be a 'yes,' and your 'no' be a 'no'; all else is of the devil" (meaning that when we live with half-heartedness or ambiguity, we lose our

ability to act effectively); in *The Gospel According to Thomas* we are told, "If you bring forth what is within you, it will heal you; if you do not bring forth what is within you, it will kill you." Modern pundits have described the process thus: "Throw your heart over the fence, and your body will follow." "Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it." And, "If you sit in the middle of the road, you will get run over by traffic from both sides."

Years ago I spent a day in New York City with a group of New Age friends. After our outing we were driving toward the George Washington Bridge, trying to decide if we wanted to go home or see a movie. "What do you guys want to do?" asked the driver. "I need to know which road to take."

"I am okay either way," one fellow announced. Another echoed, "I am not attached." My response was, "I will go with the flow." Another re-

ported, "I am easy." At that point the driver applied the brakes and pulled the car onto the shoulder of the road. He turned toward the back seat and with an air of authority announced, "Okay, all of you New Age flaks, this is one of those times when everyone is going to have to tell the truth and let the group know what you really want—or else we are going nowhere."

The rest of us looked at each other sheepishly. Then one fellow spoke, "I'd rather go home." "Yes, me too," said another. "I'm not really in the mood for a movie," I admitted. "Yeah, let's just keep going," the last fellow suggested.

"Thank you," the driver replied smugly, "now we can go home."

We all get to go home when we make strong choices. Thoreau advised, "Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined." And visionary William James offered a powerful formula for following through on any important life choice: 1. Be bold. 2. Begin now. 3. No exceptions.

If the new millennium is going to be anything, it will be what we make it. We will make it magnificent not by begging, but by choosing. As Peter Drucker wisely noted, "The best way to predict the future is to create it."

Alan Cohen lives in Maui, Hawaii, and is the author of 14 popular inspirational books including the award-winning *A Deep Breath of Life*. Visit Alan's website at www.alancohen.com, or call 800/568-3079.

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LeftOut

by Daryl Moore

HATE DOES NOT EQUAL MURDER

But forgiving Matthew Shepard's killers is going to be tough

I have always found it difficult to forgive those who are not truly sorry. To get over the horrible deeds of those who never repent. To find goodness in those whose only regret is being caught.

Matthew Shepard's killers are individuals I have difficulty forgiving. They lured the 105-pound young man from a bar. They drove him to a remote area. They tied him to a fence. One of the killers, Aaron McKinney, pistol whipped Matthew. Then, they left him tied to a fence. Eighteen hours later, a bicyclist found him. Five days later, Matthew Shepard died.

When the murderers were caught, they expressed no remorse. Instead, in an attempt to justify their heinous acts, they blamed their childhoods, each other, and even Matthew.

Russell Henderson, McKinney's accomplice, pleaded guilty on the eve of his trial in April in exchange for a life sentence in the Wyoming penitentiary.

When McKinney's murder trial began, we learned that McKinney had an explanation for pistol whipping Matthew and leaving him to die. McKinney said Matthew made an un-

wanted sexual advance toward him. That act, explained McKinney, caused him to fly into a blind rage.

In other words, Matthew Shepard allegedly bought his own death sentence by touching McKinney's crotch. That unwanted advance caused McKinney to "lose rational control" and to kill Matthew, said McKinney's lawyer to the jury.

Could McKinney's rage from an unwanted sexual advance remotely compete with the rage that the Shepards felt in losing their son?

Yet again, the murderer would become the victim. Rather than remorse, a Wyoming jury would hear excuses. One more time, it would be the fag's fault. Or

so it seemed at the beginning.

But that was not to be, said the trial judge. Reason prevailed in a Wyoming courtroom when the trial judge said that McKinney could not present his contorted argument that Matthew's murder was motivated by McKinney's so-called gay panic. At least this time, a jury would not be permitted to hear evidence that an individual's bigotry can legally excuse homicide.

Whether an individual is legally entitled to offer up a "gay-panic defense" will have to be resolved in another case. In another murder trial, continued on p. 62

Daryl Moore is a lawyer in Houston. He has a general practice and is board certified in civil appellate law. He can be reached at DarylMoore@outsmartmagazine.com



OutRight

by Dale Carpenter

THE BOOK THAT STARTED A COUNTER-REVOLUTION

A Place at the Table caused the "silent majority" of gays to shout "Yes!"

For anyone who thinks gays should stand irredeemably apart from society—either because we ought to be outcasts or because we ought to be revolutionaries—this must have been a frustrating decade. The political causes that most defined our movement in the 1990s sought to weave gays into the larger fabric of American life. We fought to be Boy Scouts, to join the military, to worship God and preach His word, to raise children, and yes, even

to marry each other. We wanted to be a part of these traditional institutions, not apart from them. We wanted a place at the table.

This deep and widespread yearning was crystallized by Bruce Bawer in *A Place at the Table*, which articulates better than any work before or since gays' rightful place in our culture. Since its publication in 1993, its compelling and

well-reasoned argument has fueled a movement of gay moderates and conservatives that is redirecting gay politics; it has proved itself the '90s most important book on volume and vituperation of their often-misplaced criticism amply demonstrated. In a year-end roundup of gay-themed books for 1993, one critic for San Francisco's *Bay Area Reporter* called the book "terrible," but nevertheless "important" because of its widespread impact. Gay professor and author David Bergman chided Bawer for allegedly failing to appreciate "the great spectacle of human difference," but acknowledged that Bawer had expressed "what many people feel." A recent collection of essays, *The Columbia Reader on Lesbians & Gay Men in Media, Society, & Politics*, snidely dismissed Bawer as "a newly hatched gay figure" but included an entire

[The "silent majority" of gays in the '90s were] uncomfortable with the prevailing notion of gays as a radical, sex-obsessed fringe. What they saw to their dismay was a gay movement that failed to reflect their outlook and attitudes, ... and increasingly called itself "queer."

Dale Carpenter, an attorney, is the winner of three Vice Versa awards for excellence in gay writing. A longtime Houston resident, Dale began his column for *OutSmart* in 1994; he is now living in San Francisco, and his column is syndicated across the country. He can be reached care of this publication or at OutRight@aol.com. For more *OutRight*, visit www.Planetout.com.



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IN MEMORY OF JIM JADLOWSKI

Jim Jadlowski passed away on November 23, just nine days before his 45th birthday. Jim died supported and surrounded by many family members, friends, and his partner, Ray Kroulik, during his final evening. He passed peacefully.

Jim was a member of the Houston Outdoor Group (HOG) for several years and really enjoyed camping (tent) and "camping" with the group. Jim served two years as director of publicity for the group from August '97 through August '99 and was instrumental in fund-raising and designing the HOG's Gay Pride Parade floats.

Jim was a native Houstonian. He was an architect and lived several years in Boston. Upon retiring, Jim kept busy with his own independent travel agency (Travel the World) and after that spent his time creating and developing his interest in this lifetime—the love of art.

Jim related a story to his partner Ray of an incident that took place about three years ago. Jim was in the hospital and was in a coma. During his coma he dreamt that he was swimming with the dolphins. The dolphins told him that he could continue to swim with them, or he could go back. He chose to come back. When he awoke, his symptoms were gone and he was able to go home from the hospital. This time he chose to go with the dolphins. Jim had always related to dolphins. A few years ago he went to the Bahamas on a gay travel trip and swam with the dolphins.

Jim's wish was for any donations in his name be made to the Houston AIDS Assistance Fund or Bering Memorial United Methodist Church.

A candlelight remembrance will be held on Saturday, January 22 from 7-8 pm at the Reflection Pool of Rothko Chapel located at 1400 Sul Ross.

IN MEMORY OF Diane H. Portilla

Dedicated traveler and proud amazon, Diane H. Portilla died of cancer on December 18, 1999. Diane was born January 29, 1928, in Manhattan, N.Y. Her tales of being an out lesbian in New York City in the 1950s have educated and entertained many audiences. Diane arrived in Houston in 1985 and quickly connected with the women's community. She proudly served the following organizations: The Women's Group, The Women's Network, LOAF, Texas Lesbian Conference, Life Begins at 40, and LiB.

Diane was an avid traveler, and the more remote or exotic destination, the better. She loved to dance, even if she had to step out on the floor alone. Diane professed surprise when young women admired her independence and zest. Diane's philosophy was, "being out gives you freedom and power."

Diane was recently given the first Uncommon Woman Award by An Uncommon Legacy, a national lesbian charitable foundation. Houston City Council member Annise D. Parker recently recognized Diane for improving the lives of Houston's lesbian community.

Diane is survived by her two sons, Dion and Darius, her brother, uncle, and many friends and admirers. In lieu of flowers, please make a donation in her memory to your favorite lesbian or animal rights organization. The epitaph chosen by Conrad Aiken fits Diane: Cosmos Mariner, destination unknown.

LeftOut

continued from p. 60

der trial. After another gay man has died at the hands of a straight man so filled with hate that he believes his hate can justify murder.

This time, however, the murderer was permitted to cut a deal. With the help of Matthew Shepard's parents, he avoided a possible death sentence by pleading guilty in exchange for two life sentences.

By granting McKinney his life, Matthew Shepard's parents showed that the gay-panic defense is completely baseless. Indeed, could McKinney's rage from an unwanted sexual advance remotely compete with the rage that the Shepards felt in

losing their son? Hardly.

Matthew Shepard's parents are truly amazing individuals. From somewhere within themselves they were able to muster up mercy for the one who showed their son no mercy.

Personally, I'm glad Matthew's parents could find in Matthew's death a lesson to teach—that hate never justifies taking the life of another.

I am not so magnanimous as Matthew Shepard's parents. I hope Aaron McKinney learns a different lesson in a Wyoming penitentiary. I hope he learns that unwanted sexual advances—perceived or real—do not justify murder. And, I hope he learns it the hard way.

OutRight

continued from p. 61

chapter titled "A Place at Which Table?"

Finally, even more telling is the effect of *A Place at the Table* on what Bawer called the "silent majority" of gays. In the early 1990s, gay women and men were coming out of their closets from every nook and cranny of America. This wave included a lot of people who were uncomfortable with the prevailing notion of gays as a radical, sex-obsessed fringe. What they saw to their dismay was a gay movement that often reinforced that stereotype, failed to reflect their outlook and attitudes, derided religion, deliberately offended middle-America with its language and dress, and increasingly called itself "queer."

Even though his book put forth few wholly original arguments, Bawer spoke to this generation in a way no one had before. One of my gay friends told me that as he read *A Place at the Table* alone in his living room, he came across passages that literally caused him to jump up on his couch and shout "Yes!" It was an experience shared by many others for whom reading the book was a revelation. Finally, someone was speaking for them and to them.

Bawer told them they could, indeed they *must*, be a part of a cause that had somehow always seemed alien.

So in the wake of *A Place at the Table*, this new generation got involved in politics through groups like the Log Cabin Republicans and made the moderate Human Rights Campaign the largest and richest gay political organization ever. They insisted that gay organizations put issues like marriage at the top of the agenda. They went back to church. They published their own essays in *Beyond Queer*, a book that self-confidently "challeng[ed] gay left orthodoxy." They set up a popular website, the Independent Gay Forum (<http://indgayforum.org/>), for their writings. They refused to sit still for lectures—from either the gay left or the religious right—about who they should be and what they should think.

A Place at the Table wasn't solely responsible for all of this. Much of it would have happened anyway, sooner or later. But the book brought it together, nurtured it, and sent it on its way. Bawer's world, to a very large extent, is now our world; his methods, our methods; his goals, our goals. He wrote the book of the decade and changed gay politics forever.

Want answers to your profound questions?



Yes



No



Maybe

THANK YOU!

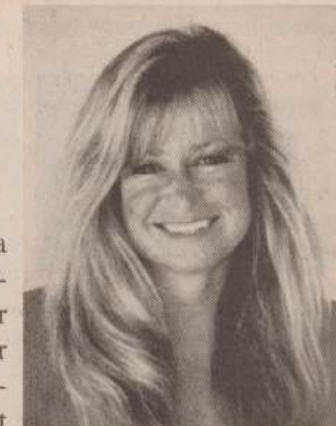
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TravelOut

by Sandra Wilkins

TOUR DE FORCE

OutSmart's pick of the top gay tours for 2000

Happy New Year, OutSmart readers! The past couple of years in the gay/lesbian tour world resemble the NASDAQ of late...setting unparalleled new records of excellent travel opportunities for our community. Known for their integrity, service, and outstanding tour products, the old standbys RSVP, Atlantis Events, Above & Beyond Tours, Olivia Cruises and Tours, and Family Abroad keep getting better by the year. I have discussed these stalwarts in previous columns (see especially May 1997 OutSmart, "Traveler's Choice: Gay Tours You Can Count On"), but to start the new millennium I'd like to highlight some different tour companies that have a proven track record and provide creative, exciting, and fun-filled vacation options for the gay and lesbian traveler.

To start, the absolute hottest new destinations are the romantic cities of central Europe. Prague seems to be the "darling": it's small, clean, cheap, and has an outrageous abundance of gay life, coupled with cultural and historical opportunities that rival cities 10 times her size. While you're in the neighborhood, including Budapest and Vienna in your tour makes good sense, time allowing. Norvista, the tour arm of Finnair, has recently joined all of the important gay travel associations and has designed "gay-friendly" packages that are an amazing good deal. For instance, a one-week package to Prague, off-season (Nov. 15-March 31) starts at \$599 per person! This includes round-trip air from New York, one night hotel Helsinki, five nights in Prague, breakfast daily, a city tour, and airport transfers. Another option is to

combine Prague with Budapest or Vienna, with packages starting at \$759 per person. (See June 1999 OutSmart for an in-depth look at Prague.) Norvista: 800/526-4927, 228 East 45th Street, NYC 10016, www.norvista.net.



Hot-air ballooning in Wyoming

More and more of you are choosing active vacations in beautiful settings. With this in mind, let's discuss three more stars, all recipients of Out & About magazine's "Editor's Choice Awards."

Toto Tours' most popular adventure year in, year out, is their men-only "Swept Away" whitewater rafting expedition through the Grand Canyon, offered July 1-8 and Aug. 12-19. This is not a paddling expedition; you are not required to do anything other than hang on tight in Toto Tours' long, oval 15-passenger rafts, manned by guides who "know the canyon intimately and will select beautiful places for you to explore." \$2,000 per person includes all meals and service of professional guide and crew throughout the tour. Hurry for this one...it always sells out! Toto Tours: 800/565-1241, 1326 West Albion Avenue, Chicago, Ill. 60626, www.tototours.com.

Want a bit more variety for your active vacation? Then opt for Alyson Adventures' "Butch Cassidy Days," a gay/lesbian ad-



If you want to ride to the ridge where the West commences, gaze at the moon till you lose your senses, head out to the Lazy EL Ranch for an OutWest adventure.

venture vacation. Based at Jackson Hole, Wyoming, amidst the Teton Mountains, a lively bunch of gay men and lesbians will enjoy a jam-packed week of rafting, horseback riding, canoeing, rock climbing, and hot-air ballooning, set for July 29-Aug. 5, and priced at \$1,395 per person. Tour

price includes luxury condo accommodations in shared two- and three-bedroom units, plus a trip to Yellowstone National Park. Alyson Adventures: 800/825-9766, P.O. Box 180179, Boston, MA 02118, e-mail: info@alysonadventures.com, www.alysonadventures.com.

OutWest Global Adventures offers a real dandy of a tour for wannabe cowboys and cowgirls, called "OutWestern Trails." After a handsome wrangler has taught you how to ride that pony, you can explore the Lazy EL Ranch's 15,000 acres (!). Every morning you'll have breakfast with the cowboys and cowgirls in the cookhouse and hear about the day's activities. During the July tour, a half-day whitewater rafting trip is offered along the Stillwater River, with a chance to hike the Beartooth Mountains afterward. This one-week adventure operates July 23-29, and Sept. 10-16, and priced at \$1,875 per person. OutWest Global Adventures: P.O. Box 2050, Red Lodge, MT 59068, e-mail: dheinzen@outwestadventures.com, www.outwestadventures.com.

One final thought: The "unfriendly" skies of United (they're

currently in a court battle with the city of San Francisco over the city's requirement that all major city contractors adopt nondiscrimination policies) continue to burden your professional travel agents with "falling" commissions, so now more than ever is the time to support your favorite professional, experienced travel agent. All IGLTA tour companies value their relationship with their travel agent partners, and any tour costs exactly the same to you, the traveler, whether you book directly with the tour company, or call your travel agent to assist in the planning. The gay and lesbian travel agent community needs your support and can provide invaluable experience and assistance in making your vacation the great time you deserve. So, giddy-up and go somewhere!



Sandra Wilkins is the owner of The Travel Partnership in Houston. Her e-mail address is outtrav1@aol.com.

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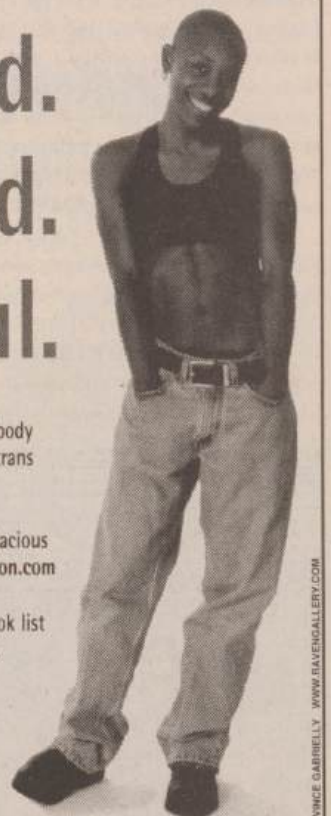
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continued from page 10

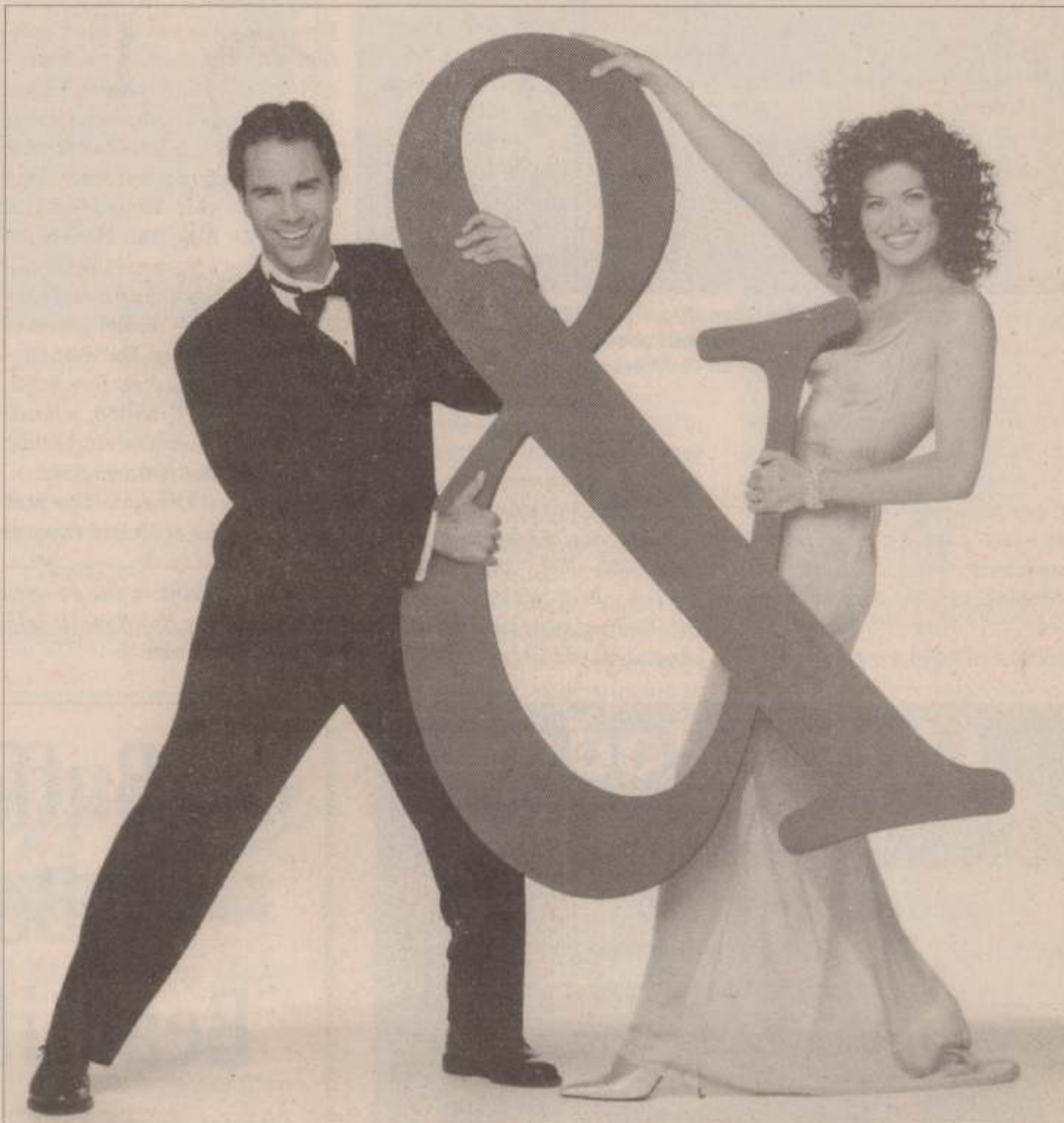
'WILL & GRACE' GOES GOLDEN & POLITICAL

The Golden Globes and Proposition 22 share 'Will & Grace'

The nominations for the 57th Golden Globe Awards were announced on Dec. 22, and compared to last year, it seems that *Will & Grace* is in the pink. Last year, *Will & Grace* only received one measly nomination—James Brooks for Best Director—which it did not win. This year, the tres-gay sitcom is nominated for four top awards: Best Television Series Musical or Comedy; Best Actress (Debra Messing); Best Actor (Eric McCormack); and Best Supporting Actor (Sean P. Hayes).

Kudos to the actors for also helping defeat a California referendum that would deny legal recognition to same-sex marriages. McCormack (Will), Messing (Grace), Hayes (Jack) and the un-nominated Megan Mullally (Karen) have filmed a TV ad opposing state Proposition 22, introduced by Republican state Senator Pete Knight. Currently running in California, the ad says, "You can make a difference. We urge you to say no to discrimination by voting no on Knight."

Mike Marshall, "No on Knight" campaign manager, says that the ad against Proposition 22 "marks the first time the whole cast of a network television series has taken a stand on a political issue with a TV spot," as



Stars of *Will & Grace*—Eric McCormack (above left), Debra Messing (above right), and Sean P. Hayes (below right)—not only receive nominations for Golden Globe awards, they also grace us with their presence in a television ad to help defeat a California referendum that would deny legal recognition to same-sex marriages.

Other nominees for Golden Globes include: (below left) Hilary Swank (r) and Chloe Sevigny; and (opposite page, top) Anthony Minghella (l) and Mark Damon.

Opposite page, bottom: Director Pedro Almodóvar (bottom center) poses with the stars of *All About My Mother*.



quoted in Reuters News Service. The Golden Globe nominees and Mullally filmed the spot without approval from NBC, a spokesperson told Reuters. "Each of our talent have their own personal beliefs and causes that they support."

Hope springs eternal for a "no" on Knight at the polls and a "yes" on *Will & Grace* at the Golden Globe Awards.

Though *Will & Grace* is the only "gay" television program that made it to the nominations, the film categories abound with gay or gay-related subjects. Openly gay Rupert Everett is nominated for Best Actor in a Motion Picture Musical or Comedy (*An Ideal Husband*), and Pedro Almodóvar's *All About My*

Mother (Spain) is nominated for Best Foreign Language Film. *Boys Don't Cry* (the story of Brandon Teena) received two acting nominations: Hilary Swank (Best Actress in a Motion Picture Drama) and Chloe Sevigny (Best Supporting Actress). And rounding out the Golden Globes' gay grantees is the critically acclaimed *The Talented Mr. Ripley* with five nominations: Best Motion Picture Drama; Best Actor (Matt Damon); Best Supporting Actor (Jude Law); Best Director (Anthony Minghella); and Best Original Score (Gabriel Yared).

The Hollywood Foreign Press Association will hand out the statuettes on Sunday night, Jan. 23.



CHANGING THE GUARD

Maria Minicucci to head up new board at the community center



The Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center board of directors elected Maria Minicucci as the center's new president. Minicucci succeeds Carl Riedl.

Minicucci has been involved with the center since they've been in their building, in 1997. "I know it's a cliché," says fellow center board member Tim Brookover, "but Maria really is a people person. She's very dedicated to the center, and marvelous with the volunteers." As one of her first actions as center president, Minicucci put together a volunteer appreciation dinner, the first ever at the center.

Minicucci writes a column for the *Houston Voice*, is involved with Lesbians in Business, and recently graduated from the Greater Houston Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce's first leadership training. She is a psychologist, and moved to Houston from Canada several years ago with her partner Deb Murphy.

Also elected were Susan Guerrero as vice president, Ron Helaire as secretary, and Patrick R. McKee as treasurer. Officer terms are for a year. Guerrero and Helaire were elected to the board, along with Tim Brookover, Rick Castillo, and Bruce Turner. Sean Carter and Don Hauboldt are returning to the board.

The community center is located at 803 Hawthorne at Stanford. Phone is 713/524-3818. Hours: Mon.-Fri. 6-9 p.m., Sat., noon-4 p.m.

THE LUNATIC FRINGE

Performance artist Stephanie Juno goes mad on stage at DiverseWorks

In a world like ours, the only sane reaction is to be quite mad. Or so posits gay San Diego performance artist Stephanie Juno in her one-woman show *La Femme Lunatique*. Called the Muhammed Ali of performance artists ("she floats like a butterfly and stings like a bee"), the fragile, intense Juno plays a mad-woman who squares off with an emotionally brain-dead therapist. She mutates between various absurdist personalities—from a crippled ballerina to a gorilla mother—all the while creating sculptures with her extreme props and costumes, for which she is known. *Not* for the straight-forward, linear-narrative crowd. Friday & Saturday, January 21 & 22, 8 p.m. DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway (off North Main at Naylor), 713/335-3445 (24-hour reservations). \$15.





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Letters to the Editor

continued from page 5

offended by this. I know that if I had children I would not go to Empower 2000 after seeing what I did.... I think that it's time to break the stereotype that all homosexuals have "sex on the brain" all the time.

And to do this, we ... have to start being adults with limits and respect ourselves and each other. Why can't we show that we can be taken seriously and professional? I don't mean to sound prudish, but the gay/lesbian community is going to have to remember that we have children in our community and we have to be the "good" example to them. We can no longer have this selfish attitude toward children by excluding them from public events by behaving in this reckless behavior. What we do in the bars and places that require "adults only" is another crusade. But for events that try and include all of us—"us," "family," and "community" include the children, too—we have to be more responsible! I have heard it's all "attitude," and I'm sick of this overused excuse—"I can't help my attitude!"

I will be the first to defend our community and the freedom we should have, but when we do something stupid like this, it's really hard to defend it when we set ourselves up to fail. We can be ourselves but there are appropriate places and times for this freedom.

It has taken me this long to write a letter that wasn't full of judgment and condemnation. I know that this will be met with the same "attitude," which is only an excuse, but I feel a strong need to share my feelings and also to say that I'm proud to be a gay male. I'm out at work and everywhere else. But I do not force others around me to accept me. I have to be an example [so] that those around me respect and accept me for who and what I am. I hope that at Empower 2000 Basic Brothers will display a more realistic view of my life and of many who are gay/lesbian.

—Prentice Danford
via the Internet

Basic Brothers replies:

I am surprised by both the tone and content of your letter. I will try

to respond to your concerns in a nonjudgmental manner.

Basic Brothers prides itself on not sinking to "the lowest common denominator" of content in any of our public events, including that of Empower 99. Yes, in our fashion show, we did have a swimwear segment, but there was no underwear shown. This was done primarily due to the concerns of your letter. We do understand that our community includes children. All garments worn were standard swimwear items that you might see at any pool or beach. Am I to assume that you (if you had children) would not allow them to go to any other trade show outside of our community, where no doubt, you would likely encounter a female or two in a bikini swimsuit? Would you not allow access to the newspaper if it contained underwear ads? While we feel it is important to protect our children, I'm not sure that isolation is the answer to the "responsible attitude" that you cite.

In addition, none of the garments shown during the fashion show or in our booth was "sheer enough to see through." Which leads me to a question—how long were you looking at our model to believe that you could see through the garment that he was wearing? We admit that we do sell underwear of an adult nature, but you will never see these in any of our shows or events, not even in the "adult-oriented" places that you mention. These items are available for sale, but I assure you we will not sell them to a child.

Mr. Danford, I want to assure you that we at Basic Brothers do not have "sex on the brain" or are "stupid" as you indicate. What we do have is a desire to do business and listen to our community's needs as we have done for the past 18 years. We remain your OUT and PROUD Clothing Store.

—Ken Claude
Vice President-General Manager
Basic Brothers, Inc.

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Community

• **Adoption.** Family to Family Adoption Services is an adoption networking agency in partnership with several nonprofit adoption agencies who are dedicated to finding loving homes for thousands of orphans. They sponsor a free workshop for prospective adoptive parents seeking more info about adopting children from China, Russia, Ukraine, India, Romania, & Guatemala. Single men & women and couples from 25-57 years old are eligible. Info and/or next workshop date: 713/219-1472 or Fam2fam@aol.com.

• **After Hours** (Radio) Saturdays, midnight-3 am. Featuring the QM2 (Queer Music Zone) with Jimmy Carper. KPFT 90.1 FM, 713/526-4000.

• **The Amazon Society** is an intergenerational feminist organization dedicated to the elevation of women in society by addressing practical issues through the promotion of a strong mind, mentoring, & personal/economic development events. Participate in a real-life collective for women working together, make new friends, & cultivate an empowerment lifestyle! More info: Bernadine @ 713/731-0251 or e-mail: strongflower@yahoo.com.

• **The Art League of Houston** offers free art classes to all HIV-positive individuals. Complimentary lunch provided. Classes are ongoing every Thursday, 1-4 pm @ the Art League, 1953 Montrose. More info: 713/523-9530.

• **The Bar Association for Human Rights** (BAHR) is a Houston-area organization for those interested in legal issues affecting gay, lesbian, bisexual, & transgendered people and those living with HIV. Legal professionals, law students, & others interested in these issues are welcome. For more information, please call John Adcock at 713/951-3700 or JADCOCK@bahr.org.

• **BiNet** is a support/social/educational group open to all women & men exploring their sexuality or identifying as bisexual. Confidentiality is maintained within the group, & the use of assumed names is respected. BiNet is an active part of the queer community & is accepting of diverse lifestyles. Meets every Wednesday, 7:30-9 pm @ Toopees, 1830 W. Alabama. For more information: 713/467-4380.

• **Black Lesbian And Gay Coalition** (BLAGC), an organization dedicated to providing visible leadership in the African-American GLBT community, meets every Monday at 7 pm @ the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 803 Hawthorne. 713/524-3818.

• **The Center for AIDS: Hope and Remembrance Project** provides the most current HIV/AIDS treatment information to health-care professionals, HIV-positive individuals and their caregivers, while advocating Houston as a clinical trial site, bringing innovative HIV/AIDS research to local clinics. It holds monthly Treatment Mixers for HIV-positive people to discuss openly their successes and failures concerning treatment. More info: stop by the center, 1407 Hawthorne, 9-6, M-F, or call 281/HIV-INFO.

• **Colt 45's** is an all-volunteer charity. Despite our name, you don't have to have an overwhelming love of western attire, lore, or guns to be considered for membership. All you need is a big heart & a willingness to help others when they need it the most. As a 501(c)(3) charity, and to serve the Houston HIV/AIDS community by the best means possible, Colt 45's created the AIDS TroubleFund, the Stone Soup Fund, & the Till Thacker III Memorial City Charity Fund. Anyone interested in becoming a member, leave a message at 713/526-6077 or join us the 2nd Monday of each month at the BRB.

• **Dignity Houston** is dedicated to the welfare of gay/lesbian Catholics & their friends. Meets Saturdays at 7:30 pm, 1307 Yale. Suite H. 713/880-2872.

• **Executive & Professional Association of Houston** (EPAH) is established to provide a nonpolitical forum for discussion of business and community affairs, to encourage and foster social and business relationships among the membership, and to support such educational and/or charitable causes as may be approved by the membership. More info: 281/587-6066.

The Source

• **EXXON Gay & Lesbian Employees** (EGLE) meets monthly at the Montrose Library to discuss workplace issues, empowerment, social events, etc. For more information, call 713/522-6212.

• **The Feminist Online Network** (FEMNET) is a free e-mail list with announcements, info, & resources of interest to feminists & lesbians in the Houston/Galveston area. Postings include health info, political activism, resources, a calendar of events and more. To subscribe, go to <http://www.onelist.com/subscribe/FEMNET>.

• **FIRM** (Foundation for Interfaith Research & Ministry) is a nonprofit organization working with local congregations to sponsor Care Teams. Volunteers are trained to meet many of the social, physical, and emotional needs of people touched by HIV/AIDS, Alzheimer's, and dementia-related disorders; frail seniors; and other life-threatening conditions. Care Team volunteers view themselves as friends and extended family who can offer nonjudgmental,

• **The Hollyfield Conference Center** provides meeting & conference facilities to the general public & offers the facilities to gay and lesbian community-based organizations at a reduced rate. 2700 Albany, Ste. 100, @ Tuam. More info or to schedule an event: Brent Armspiger at P.O. Box 66722, Houston, TX 77266 or e-mail at HollyFdn@AOL.COM or phone 713/523-6900.

• **The Homeless Pet Placement League.** A nonprofit animal welfare organization that rescues & rehabilitates stray & abandoned cats & dogs. Volunteering, foster care, or adopting: 862-PETS.

• **Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus.** 1st Wednesday of each month, 7:30 pm, Lovett Inn, 501 Lovett Blvd. For more info: 713/521-1000.

• **Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center,** located in the heart of Montrose, maintains drop-in hours of 6-9 pm, M-F, noon-9 pm Wednesday, and noon-4 pm Saturday. The center offers extensive information on community organiza-

tions & activities and has rental space available for meetings & events. Programming includes Lesbian Movie Night, Montrose Writer's Project, separate men's & women's coming-out groups, and Wednesday Brown-Bag Lunch. Six organizations office at the center. Volunteers & donations welcome. 803 Hawthorne at Stanford, 713/524-3818, www.neosoft.com/~hlcc.

• **Houston Pride Band** provides musical entertainment for the lesbian and gay community. They are seeking musicians of all skill levels and instrumentation. Rehearsals are held at Dignity Houston, 1307 Yale on Wednesdays from 7-9 pm. Contact Russell at 713/524-0218. Or e-mail address is HousTxBand@aol.com.

• **Houston Reconstructionist Havurah** (HRIH) is an inclusive Jewish community. Core tenets of Reconstructionism are maintaining a supportive community & taking social action to repair an imperfect world. Newcomers describe the remarkable level of acceptance & warmth they encounter, regardless of background or initial level of Jewish education or observance. For more info: 713/728-5050.

• **Initiatives for Children,** a nonprofit organization promoting quality care and early education for children in the Greater Houston area, needs volunteers for its newly created Community Relations Dept.; Speakers Bureau volunteers are needed to provide info to the public at community fairs, about the agency's programs to help parents find child care and train caregivers to improve the quality of care they provide. Training will be provided to all volunteers. More info: 713/365-0313, ext. 136.

• **Integrity/Houston** is the advocacy organization for gays & lesbians in the Episcopal Church. Meets 2nd Monday of the month for Eucharist & potluck dinner, 7:30 pm @ Autry House, 6265 Main St. More info: 713/528-6771.

• **Kolbe Project** is an ecumenical outreach to gays, lesbians, & other sexual minorities modeled after the ministry of St. Francis of Assisi. Potluck & community-concern programs: first Thursdays, 7 pm. Healing Service: 4th Wednesdays, 8 pm. Spiritual Direction by appointment: HIV/AIDS hospital chaplaincy. For more info: 713/861-1800. E-mail: kolbe@neosoft.com.

• **Lesbian & Gay Voices** (Radio) Mondays, 8-9 pm. Features, news, music, interviews, reviews, and commentary. KPFT 90.1 FM, 713/526-4000.

• **Log Cabin Republicans.** 4th Monday of each month, 6:30 pm (social), 7 pm (meeting), Renata's, 2006 Lexington, 713/529-9100.

• **Marriages.** NO FEE for gay, lesbian, or bi marriages. Weddings are performed at anyone's private home or their church with the permission of their church's minister. I am an ordained minister through the Universal Life Church of Modesto, CA, legally authorized to perform all ministerial services (baptisms, marriages, funerals, & conduct church meetings). Lives in Galveston. E-mail address is: bruce_37@cheerful.com.

• **Montrose Writers Project.** Gregg Rodriguez, a published essayist & playwright, leads this ongoing series. Sessions include writing exercises, group readings, & discussion. \$7 per session. Meets every Saturday, 3-4:30 pm @ the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 803 Hawthorne, 713/524-3818.

LAMBDA CENTER

Here's a place for that New Year's resolution. Formed in the early 1970s, the Lambda Center provides a safe community meeting place for gay and lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, as well as Al-Anon and other offshoots—and January is always the biggest month for attendance. • According to the president of the Lambda Center (who remains anonymous in keeping with the AA code), about 10 percent of the general population has problems with alcohol, as opposed to about 35 percent of the gay and lesbian community. So often, bars are a primary way for socializing. Even more, gays and lesbians have to deal with so much societal and internal oppression that it's no wonder many seek escape through alcohol. • The Lambda Center offers a refuge and entry point for gay and lesbian alcoholics who seek recovery. It was started in the mid-1970s when a small dedicated group said how much a gay AA center was needed; it's challenging enough to face one's drinking problem, without having to face prejudice because of one's sexual orientation. "I stopped drinking on February 5, 1984," says the president of the Lambda Center. "If there had not been a gay AA meeting that day, I would [never have gotten into the program]." • All meetings are free—the center uses donations to cover costs (which run about \$8,000 a month, if you'd like to help out). Located in a spacious building one block north of West Gray and just east of Montrose, the center has a friendly welcoming atmosphere, although all within use the anonymous first-name tradition of AA. Open seven days a week, 365 days a year; hours are generally noon to 11 p.m., although you should call or stop by to find out exact meeting times. • 1201 West Clay, 713/521-1243 or 713/528-9772 •

caring, and supportive services. All services are provided free of charge. For more info, contact the Care Team coordinator at 713/682-5995, or e-mail: firm-hou@neosoft.com.

• **GAY-INFO** can tell you the closest gay business or service to where you are or where you're traveling anywhere in the United States or Canada. Over 25,000 listings of gay bars, restaurants, hotels, bookstores, shops, & events. More info: 888/429-4630.

• **Gay & Lesbian Switchboard Houston** (GLSH) is a nonprofit all-volunteer organization offering the community information & referrals to businesses, legal and medical professionals, and a variety of organizations. It also provides information on HIV/AIDS, coming out, etc. P.O. Box 66496, Houston, TX 77266-6469, 529-3211. GLSH also operates the Hate Crimes Hotline, 713/529-9615.

• **Greater Houston Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce** (GHGLCC) fosters & promotes the economic development & vitality of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, & supportive heterosexual businesses & professional organizations in the greater Houston area. First Monday each month. Info: 713/523-7576.

• **More Light Presbyterians of Greater Houston** is one of approximately 40 local chapters of the national MLP organization, which is dedicated to full participation of all persons in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) community without regard for sexual orientation, personal background, or human condition. The More Light Presbyterian organization works for full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, & transgendered persons into the life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), including positions of leadership requiring ordination. Meets 1st Monday of each month, 7:30 pm @ the Presbyterian Center, 1110 Lovett Blvd. More info or to confirm meeting date: 281/440-0353.

• **National Organization for Women (NOW)**, Houston area chapter (Houston NOW) works for women's rights and equality in all aspects of life with particular focus on ending violence against women, combating racism, protecting reproductive rights and in support of lesbian rights. Meets the 3rd Thursday of the month with business and program meeting. Call for details at 713/665-8669 or e-mail: HoustonNOW@yahoo.com.

• **OutVote**, a nonprofit organization dedicated to registering, educating, and motivating our community to vote. For more information: 713/520-VOIE or 713/522-9837.

• **People With AIDS Coalition-Houston (PWAC)** is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization of, by, and for people with HIV/AIDS that promotes independence & self-reliance so that they may live with dignity, self-esteem, & acceptance. This is achieved by providing short-term crisis intervention & long-term referrals; creating opportunities for active participation as a member of the PWA community; & providing public advocacy for the needs of PWAs. While committed to ending the epidemic, PWAC endeavors to respond with love, care, & compassion to the unmet & changing needs that arise with PWAs. 3400 Montrose Blvd., Ste. 207. More info: 713/522-5428; fax 713/522-2674.

• **Pride Committee of Houston** is an energetic group of people who meet year-round to develop/organize Pride activities in June for our community. Meets 7 pm, the 1st & 3rd Tuesday of each month @ the Metropolitan Multi-Service Center, 1475 W. Gray. Board of directors meets 7 pm, the 2nd Tuesday of each month @ 2700 Albany. For more info or to get involved: 713/529-6979 or fax 713/529-6929. E-mail: info@pridehouston.org.

• **Prism** is an employee network for employees of Equilon Enterprises LLC, Motiva Enterprises LLC, Equiva Services LLC, & Equiva Trading Company. The network is open to any employee of these companies and includes gay, lesbian, & bisexual employees & their friends. The mission of Prism is to provide is to provide support for members & co-workers, promote equality for employees regardless of sexual orientation or gender identification, and create awareness in management of issues & concerns affecting people in a diverse workplace inclusive of sexual orientation & gender identification. More info: Jim at 281/544-8138, Robert at 713/241-1238, or Dick at 281/544-8730.

• **Q-Patrol** is dedicated to the prevention of hate crimes against gays & lesbians, patrols the bar areas in Montrose, & is always looking for volunteers for one Friday or Saturday night per month. Call 713/528-SAFE (7233). Web: www.members.aol.com/qpatrol.

• **Rice GALA** (Gay and Lesbian Alumni Association) seeks gay and lesbian alumni of Rice University. Contact Neal Tannahill at 713/526-6718 for more information.

• **Roundtable—The Houston Philosophy Forum** is open to anyone interested in civilized & open discussion on topics of the day. 6:30-7 social time, meeting 7 pm, the 1st & 3rd Wednesdays @ Café Express, 1422 W. Gray. More info: Jackie @ 779-8620.

• **SEA Change** (Support, Educate, and Advocate for Change) is open to social workers and social work students who are interested in gay, lesbian, bisexual, & transgendered issues. For information, please contact Rick at 281/484-3809.

• **Second Chance Pets** is a nonprofit organization that helps stray, abandoned, & unwanted animals find permanent homes. Provides medical care & an adoption site for the animals. The animals live in foster homes during the week. Foster homes are needed (especially for dogs & cats). Also needed: volunteers for adoption days, publicity/fund-raising, & adoptive homes. More info: 281/286-3535.

• **SPECTRUM** is an employees' group of Southwestern Bell Communications which is open to both management & nonmanagement (active & retired) lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered personnel, & those who share their concerns. The group's goals include establishing domestic partner benefits, making the workplace more aware of diversity, & helping direct the company's involvement in the community. Partners are encouraged to attend & to participate. Meetings: 3rd Tuesday of the month unless otherwise announced. To be added to mailing list & other info: 713/567-7733. SBC Intranet Site: Intranet.sbc.com/SBCWIN/corporate/aware/index.html or Internet Web Site: www.webcom.com/benny/spectrum/spectrum.html.

• **The Stonewall Democrats of Houston** give gays and lesbians the opportunity to fight for their rights: to love who they want, to be safe from hate crimes, and to be judged—on the job—by the quality of their work, not how they were born. We work to educate voters and elected officials about GLBT issues and offer opportunities to volunteer in political campaigns. At monthly meetings and events, you can talk to city and state politicians one-on-one. There are over two dozen other Stonewall chapters across the country. We meet at Bibas One's a Meal Restaurant on West Gray, upstairs in the Greek room, the last Monday of each month. Social 6:30 pm, meeting 7 pm. More info: Mark at 713/854-8773.

• **Texas Human Rights Foundation**, a statewide, not-for-profit legal agency, advocates on behalf of the lesbian, gay, and HIV community and publishes the booklet *AIDS and the Law: Know Your Rights*. If you feel you have been discriminated against on the basis of sexual orientation or HIV status and need legal advice or attorney referral, call their toll-free number, 1-800-828-6417, or in Houston call 713/522-0636.

• **Texas Lesbian Conference** is the only yearly statewide lesbian conference in the country. It will be in Houston in 2000. Organizational meetings are held every 3rd Sunday, 3-5 pm, at the Hollywood Foundation, 2700 Albany. For more information, call 713/460-3435, ext. 3.

• **An Uncommon Legacy Foundation** is a nonprofit lesbian foundation established in 1990 to promote lesbian visibility, strength, & vitality and enhance the well-being of lesbians today and in future generations. Legacy supports the lesbian community by making grants to projects & scholarships to individuals that help meet the social, cultural, health and educational needs of lesbians. More info: 713/520-1142.

• **The Women's Group** is a feminist group for all women (each woman defines her own feminism) that meets every Sunday at 10:45 am in the Sojourner Truth Room, 3rd floor of the First Unitarian Universalist Church, 5200 Fannin @ Southmore (elevator accessible). For more information, call Iris Greer Sizemore at 713/529-8571 or Laura Reich at 713/529-1886. E-mail: HouWmnsGrp@aol.com.

Counseling/Support

• **AIDS Foundation Houston, Inc. (AFH)** relies on volunteers to help meet the needs of its more than 2,000 clients. Choose from over 22 direct and indirect client volunteer programs. You'll join a pool of more than 300 talented volunteers in Hotline, Information & Referral, Buddy, Helper, Art Therapy, Stone Soup & many other programs. Whether you can commit to 4 hours a month or 40 hours a week, AFH needs your time and talent. Volunteer department: 713/623-6796. Website: <http://www.aids-houston.org>.

• **Astro Rainbow Alliance for the Deaf**, general meeting every 2nd Friday of the month, 7:30 pm, Montrose Clinic, 215 Westheimer, 713/861-1544 via Texas Relay 1-800-735-2988.

• **AVES** (Amigos Volunteers in Education & Services). The AVES Men's HIV Support Group meets monthly @ the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 803 Hawthorne, 713/524-3818. Call for dates & time.

• **The Bering Lunch Bunch Gang** is a walk-in support group for persons living with HIV/AIDS who have retired. Tuesdays, 11 am @ Bering Church, 1440 Harold. Info: Russ Robinett, 713/526-1017, ext. 211.

• **The Bering Spiritual Support Group** is a nurturing space in which we whose lives have been touched by HIV/AIDS unite in spirit for the celebration of life through sharing our mutual support, strength, acceptance, & love. This walk-in support group meets Wednesdays, 6:30 pm @ Bering Church, 1440 Harold for potluck dinner, speaker, & small groups for newcomers. HIV+ only, positive/negative together; caregivers, & family. Info: Christine Coberly, 713/526-1017, ext. 208.

• **Bering Support Network** offers counseling, visitation, retreats, & support groups. Call 713/526-1017.

• **C.A.T.S.** (Community Awareness for Transgender Support) is a Galveston-based transgender support group which meets the first Friday of every month. "We do care and you are not alone." More info: 409/927-1705 or P.O. Box 62, Galveston, TX 77553.

• **Centergy** — Rediscover the joy, the joy of releasing the energy at your center. Reclaim your emotions. Identify & verbalize your feelings & desires. Face & release your blocks to living freely. Create the life you want. Centergy offers weekly programs for anyone willing to face addictions: individuals, pairs, families, groups, organizations, business relations. Groups meet weekly: Mixed—Tues., 6-8:30 pm; Mixed—Wed., 7-9:30 pm; Women—Thurs., 6-8:30 pm, Southwest Recovery Place, 4726 Yoakum. Call Jackalyn Rainosek, Ph.D., @ 942-7181.

• **Chase Bank of Texas' P.R.I.D.E. Team**, a chapter of the Chase Manhattan Bank Pride Networking Group, welcomes you to be a part of equality. P.R.I.D.E. stands for People Recognizing Individual Differences Equally and is the bank's networking group for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, & supportive employees. Our

mission is to support the inclusion of all Chase bankers—regardless of sexual orientation & gender identification—as valued employees of the bank & to encourage an environment of equality that celebrates the individuality & diversity of everyone. The Team typically meets the 4th Tuesday of every month at 6 pm. More info: Richard Bielec at 713/655-5423, Elizabeth Goza at 713/216-5574, or Roy Mendiola at 713/216-8889.

• **Child Advocates** needs volunteers to help serve the nearly 3,800 children in Harris County who are in foster care because of severe, life-threatening, soul-threatening abuse. To get these children into homes that are safe, loving, and permanent, please call 713/529-1396.

• **Crisis Intervention of Houston** needs volunteers for 24-hour crisis-intervention & suicide-prevention hotline that requires 53 hours of training & a commitment of 4 hours a week; cash contributions for hotline & counseling programs. P.O. Box 130866, Houston 77219, 713/527-9864.

• **Crossroads** is a support group for gays & lesbians who are currently in full-time church work, have been in the past, or are pursuing their calling. Not exclusively for pastors—is open to chaplains, administrators, musicians, or music-, youth-, and educational-directors. 3rd Saturday of each month & socials throughout the month. Call 681-9082 for dates, time, and place.

• **Gay & Lesbian Helpline**. Our phone counselors can help you clarify & prioritize your issues & sort through options. The helpline is an anonymous & confidential safe space for you to voice your thoughts. Whether you are concerned about coming out, locating resources, or even just finding something to do on a Friday night. Let us be the ear you need. Our counselors are always friendly & supportive and have your best interest at heart. Fenway Community Health Center's Gay & Lesbian Helpline's hours: M-F 6-11 pm, Sat-Sun 5-10 pm. 1-888-340-GLBT (4528).

• **Gay & Lesbian National Hotline (GLNH)** is a nonprofit organization, providing information, referrals and peer-counseling to the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered communities. Information is also available for those concerned with gay-related issues. The services are free and anonymous. The hours are 5-9 pm (M-F) and 11 am-4 pm (Saturdays). The toll-free number is 1-888-THE-GLNH (1-888-843-4564). E-mail: GLNH@GLNH.ORG.

• **Gay & Lesbian Switchboard Houston (GLSH)** is a nonprofit all-volunteer organization offering the community information & referrals to businesses, legal and medical professionals, and a variety of organizations. It also provides information on HIV/AIDS, coming out, etc. P.O. Box 66496, Houston, TX 77266-6469, 529-3211. GLSH also operates the Hate Crimes Hotline, 713/529-9615.

• **Gay Fathers of Houston** is a support group of gay men who meet every Monday, 8-9:30 pm at Grace Lutheran Church, 2515 Waugh, to discuss problems gay fathers share. More info or directions: 861-6181.

• **Gay Male Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse**. Montrose Counseling Center is offering a therapy group designed to provide a safe environment for men who share this type of experience to work together to resolve the impacts of the trauma on everyday life. Services are provided on a sliding scale basis, and insurance is accepted. Certain restrictions apply. For further information, call Shane Hennessey at 713/529-0037.

• **Gay Men's Process Group** is a general process group dealing with life issues that effect gay men (coming out, career, family, relationships/dating, etc.). More info: Daniel Garces, MS, LPC, LMFT at 713/526-8390. E-mail: daniel_garces@yahoo.com. On-line: www.dansmd.net.

• **Gay Men Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse**. Bering Support Network offers individual counseling for gay men who are being abused in their present relationship or for gay men who are dealing with unresolved issues from a past abusive relationship. Abuse can be emotional, mental, verbal, physical, or sexual. Survivors may experience low self-esteem, suicidal thoughts, isolation, a deep sense of shame or embarrassment. More info: Russ Robinett, MS, LPC, LCDC at 713/526-1017 (leave name and a safe phone number where your call can be returned). Men who are violent will be referred to other community services.

• **Gay Men Survivors of Domestic Abuse** is a closed support group for gay men who are being abused in their present relationship or who are dealing with unresolved issues from a past abusive relationship. Abuse can be emotional, mental, verbal, physical, financial, or sexual. Survivors may experience low self-esteem, suicidal thoughts, isolation, a deep sense of shame, or embarrassment. A support group offers a safe place to share your experiences, learn from others, or just listen. For assessment/screening or more info: Russ Robinett @ 713/526-1017, ext. 211 and leave your name & a safe phone number where your call can be returned.

• **Grief Groups** (bereavement, loss/estrangement) are closed 6-week groups for those who have lost a loved one to HIV/AIDS and for loss or alienation from primary emotional relationships. Mondays, 7-8:30 pm @ Bering Church, 1440 Harold. For schedule/assessment: Christine Coberly, 713/526-1017, ext. 208.

• **Gulf Coast Transgender Community** meets 2nd Saturday of each month (cross dressing required). Open discussion 1st & 3rd Thursday of each month (cross dressing not required). P.O. Box 66643, Houston, TX 77266-6643. 780-4282.

• **HCDA** (Helping Cross Dressers Anonymously) is a support group for transgendered people dedicated to helping those who are having difficulty accepting themselves or for those involved with a transgendered individual who is having trouble adjusting. HCDA's philosophy is that the wearing of clothing opposite to one's birth sex is but an outward manifestation of an inner feeling. HCDA is run by a licensed counselor and has been meeting since Jan. 1991. All are welcome. Meets Tuesdays, 7-9 pm @ 239 Westheimer (Suzanne Anderson Properties).

• **HIV/AIDS Treatment Mixer**. open forum for sharing info. Men's mixer: 3rd Tues. of the month 7-9 pm. Women's mixer: 4th Wed. of the month, 6-8 pm. 1407 Hawthorne, 527-8219.

• **Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals (H.A.T.C.H.)** is open to gays and lesbians, age 13-20. Fridays, 7:30-10 pm & Sundays, 6:30-9 pm. Location/more info: 713/942-7002.

• **Houston Area Women's Center** provides shelter, support, and advocacy services for ALL survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. HAWC operates two hotlines, one for domestic violence (713/528-2121, TTY 713/528-3625) and one for sexual assault (713/528-RAPE, TTY 713/528-3691). Nonresidential services are provided including individual & group counseling, legal advocacy, housing advocacy, children's services, and job training. HAWC also manages the Second-to-None Resale Shop on

Westheimer. All services are FREE of charge. Volunteers are always needed. Call 713/528-6798, ext. 272: 1010 Waugh Dr. @ Dallas.

• **Houston Gay & Lesbian Parents (HGLP)** support group meets to discuss issues pertaining to today's gay families. If you have children or plan to have children, this support group can help with issues like coming out, ex-spouse problems, step relationships, etc. Child-care provided. Grace Lutheran Church, 2515 Waugh Dr., the 2nd Tuesday of the month, 7-9 pm. More info: 713/284-4939.

• **Jewish Family Service** offers individual, couple & family counseling to individuals of all ages regardless of sexual orientation or religious affiliation. Our professional counseling staff have received training in working with gay, lesbian, bisexual & transgender issues and can help individuals deal with interpersonal problems, relationship conflicts, dealing with families, HIV/AIDS-related concerns & other issues frequently facing sexual minorities. Services are offered on a sliding fee-scale basis. To make an appointment or for more info: 713/667-9336.

• **Just For Us (JFU)** is a social and support group for youth in the 6th through 12th grades who have gay or lesbian parents. Sponsored by Houston Gay and Lesbian Parents. 284-4939.

• **Lambda Center A.A.**, 1201 W. Clay, Houston, TX 77019. For meeting times, call 521-1243.

• **Lesbian Coming-Out Group** is open to all women regardless of age & length of time out. \$3 donation is requested but not required. 2nd & 4th Tuesday each month, 7:30 pm @ the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 803 Hawthorne, 713/524-3818.

• **Men's Coming-Out Group**. Each meeting includes discussion, support, & a social activity. A \$3 donation is requested but not required. 3rd Friday each month at 8 pm @ the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 803 Hawthorne, 713/524-3818.

• **The Men's Network** is for gay & bisexual men to come together in a safe & supportive environment to learn & share about issues that affect them. A donation of \$3-\$5 is requested; however, all men are welcome, regardless of their ability to pay. The 2nd & 4th Tuesdays of every month, 7:15-9 pm @ Montrose Counseling Center, 701 Richmond, 713/529-0037.

• **Montrose Counseling Center** offers numerous counseling groups, including groups for men & women living with HIV, people in recovery, lesbian survivors of cancer, survivors of sexual abuse, lesbian survivors of domestic violence & more. The center needs office furniture, equipment & interested citizens to serve on boards. 701 Richmond. For more info (24 hrs.): 713/529-0037.

• **Muscular Dystrophy Association**, Houston/Gulf Coast, provides monthly support groups for adults with neuromuscular diseases, for people with ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease), for parents of MDA children, and Spanish-speaking groups. For the most current info on these ongoing groups, call the MDA office at 713/522-3941.

• **Out Together** is a support group where individuals & couples can share thoughts, experiences, & knowledge about mixed orientation marriages—where one spouse considers him/herself gay, lesbian, or bisexual. 1st Sun. & 3rd Thur. of each month. Confidentiality ensured. Questions: Bob 713/667-1535 (Bobbs54@aol.com) or Jackie 281/558-3159 (jackie_mag@msn.com).

• **Overeaters Anonymous (OA)**. For information about OA's 50 regular weekly meetings, call 713/973-6633.

• **Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians And Gays (PFLAG) Houston**. General meeting with small group discussions, 1st Sunday of each month, 2-4:30 pm. Christ Church Cathedral, 1117 Texas Ave. Mid-month discussion group meets 3rd Tuesday of each month, 7:30-9 pm, Church of the Epiphany, 9600 S. Gessner @ Bissonnet. 2nd mid-month discussion group meets 2nd Tuesday of each month, 7:30-9 pm, Hollywood Conference Center, 2700 Albany. PFLAG Houston Helpline: 713/867-9020.

• **Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians And Gays (PFLAG) Galveston County** — 3rd Sunday of each month, 2 pm, @ AIDS Coalition of Coastal Texas, 1405 39th St., 409/744-3200 or janettexas@aol.com.

• **Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians And Gays (PFLAG) Woodlands** — 3rd Sunday of each month, 2 pm, Northwood Unitarian Church, 1370 N. Mill Bend Dr. For more info: 713/867-9020.

• **Project CAESAR** is the Gay Men's Health Initiative at AIDS Foundation Houston. By providing the latest information and education to the gay community, Project CAESAR intends to slow HIV infection rates among gay and bisexual men in Houston. Through self-esteem, motivational and relationships topics, the program helps uncover healthy paths buried under the pressure of everyday life. It also reaches over 20,000 men a year in the Houston area through its outreach team, The Legion. To attend a workshop, volunteer for The Legion, or to find out more info, call the Project CAESAR staff at 713/623-6796. E-mail: education@aidshelp.org.

• **PROTECT** (People Respecting Ourselves Through Establishing Community and Trust) is a walk-in support group for HIV-negative people to share our experiences, strengths, & hopes in an effort to remain HIV negative and to help ourselves understand & change behaviors that could lead to infection. Tuesdays, 7-8:30 pm, Bering Church, 1440 Harold. Info: Russ Robinett, 713/526-1017, ext. 211.

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The Houston Pride Band, a gay and lesbian nonprofit organization, is looking for a conductor/artistic director. Volunteer duties will include: providing artistic direction, conducting at weekly rehearsals (Wednesdays, 7-9:30 pm), and participating at monthly board meetings. For information, please contact Russell Williams at 713/524-0218, or send e-mail to HoustonTXBand@aol.com.

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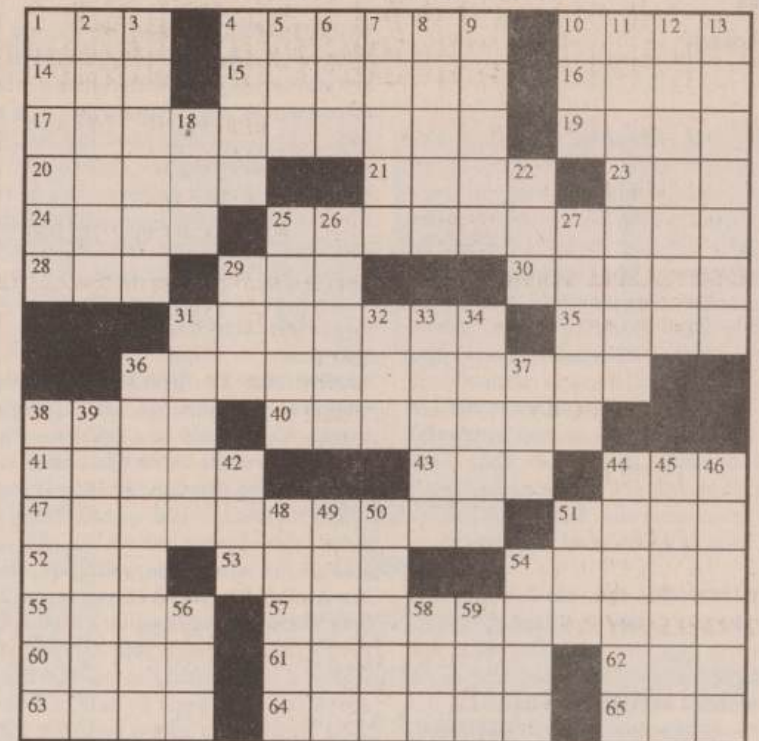
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Answers

ABOUT "IN & OUT"



ACROSS

- 1 It may be split or tight
- 4 Robberies
- 10 A Great Peter
- 14 "___ Me, Feel Me" (song from Tommy)
- 15 Completely mistaken (like a participant in water sports?)
- 16 "There is Nothin' Like a ___" (South Pacific song)
- 17 He played Howard Brackett
- 19 Narrow hole to drop things in
- 20 Those who are worshiped, like porn star Ryan
- 21 Lawyers' charges
- 23 More than bi
- 24 Portion (out)
- 25 He played Cameron Drake
- 28 Poem for Billy Joe
- 29 Schoolboy
- 30 Mrs. Gorbachev
- 31 Corolla and Camry
- 35 Sgt. and cpl.
- 36 He wrote the screenplay
- 38 Train track component
- 40 Get excited
- 41 Boner
- 43 National Coming Out Day mo.
- 44 What Beatrice Dohrn and Evan Wolfson practice
- 47 She played Emily Montgomery
- 51 5,280 feet
- 52 Like George Michael, now
- 53 "___ boy!"
- 54 A rubber might make him come out
- 55 Egyptian fertility goddess
- 57 He played Peter Malloy
- 60 Dollar division
- 61 It may be atomic or solar
- 62 Have the sniffles
- 63 On pins and needles
- 64 Step down
- 65 Bolger or Bradbury

DOWN

- 1 Igloo inhabitant
- 2 "You ___ Me" (Anne Murray hit)
- 3 Dedicate
- 4 ___ Christian Andersen
- 5 Reindeer relative
- 6 Not in the pink
- 7 Speedy
- 8 Doctrine
- 9 One mounts it and rides it
- 10 Bear scores, for short
- 11 Deer-attracting deposit
- 12 Medium dry sherry of Spain
- 13 Eye parts
- 18 ___ de France
- 22 Dominant partner in a B&D scene
- 25 Peter who wrote *A Year in Provence*
- 26 Decorate
- 27 Judge Ito
- 29 Composer Harrison
- 31 Hawk hook
- 32 Egyptian boy-king
- 33 Kind of committee
- 34 Skulked around
- 36 Sea rover's crime
- 37 Ending for lobby or hobby
- 38 Shout hallelujah
- 39 Turned on
- 42 Elvis Presley's longtime label
- 44 Straight
- 45 Clueless star Silverstone
- 46 How often Michigan's *Between the Lines* is published
- 48 Speak
- 49 Slingshot ammo
- 50 *Charles in Charge* actor Willie
- 51 Reverend White of Soulforce
- 54 *It* author Elinor ___
- 56 Pig's place
- 58 ___ Lanka
- 59 Faberge creation

SignOut

by Lilly Roddy

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19) This is the time of the year when the Sun returns to the same position in the zodiac when you were born. This is the month for reviewing goals that you set for last year. And it is the time to set new directions for the next year. Your future money and security plans are very important this year. This would be a good time to look into investments or the stock market. You are looking for practical ways to channel your creativity. You need a return on what you are doing and investing it. You are not as playful in your relationships this month. Your lover may think that you are pre-occupied with something or someone else. Take some time to reconnect. That is a very good investment.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18) January is a good month for you to take some time for yourself and recover from the hectic December you just had. Your sensitivity levels are turned up. You may overreact to things that normally you ignore. Try some meditation, Tai Chi classes, or rent some videos. You are into a rest-and-retreat period. Because, at the later part of the month, you spring from the couch and re-enter the real world at breakneck speed. This whole year is full of action and decision making and most of it begins with the Sun moving into your sign on the 20th.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20) Your social calendar and holiday celebration continues almost at the same pace as during the holiday season. Friends, groups, and associations are very important this month. This is a great month to get involved in the community. Any business associations that you belong to are also a great place for you to imbue yourself. Your leadership energies are strong and you are ready to make some changes in your life and those around you. You are becoming more open about your life and your desires. Anything that you try to keep hidden this year will be revealed whether you are ready or not. Make the decision to be more open and don't leave that to happenstance.

ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19) The career arena of your horoscope is very active this month. This is the month to be out in the public and to promote yourself and your work. The real deal is that you are to take on a leadership position. If you try to avoid this, you will find that the avoidance shows up as problems with your boss or other authority figures. This is also a great time to be more active in your community. You are attracting more people to you than usual because your magnetic energy is reaching out there and grabbing them. This can be a fab time to meet people for relationships, or for business ... or both.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20) You are feeling a bit more laid back after the holidays as January starts this year. Your career has been on a roller coaster, and after the big dips you have been riding, you sure need the rest. Try to do something different and change your schedule so that you have a different way to view your life. You need a new approach to relationships and career fulfillment. You will feel much more focused and directed in your life after January 11. Be sure and take the 20th off. That is good day to be taking it easy.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 21) Relationships, both business and personal, are highlighted this month. This would be a great month to meet someone. And the attraction energies are very strong the 7th through the 10th. If you are currently involved, this is a good month to renew those vows of commitment. You will also notice what is not working as well. Even though this is not much fun to look at, you can still improve your current conditions by knowing what the problems are. Watch your temper with those who you work with. You are moving at warp speed and they won't be able to follow you or your ideas if you go too fast. You will just be frustrated and they still won't know what you are talking about.

CANCER (JUNE 22-JULY 22) The crabs are out of the water this month and on the beach for all to see. You are very visible this month. Your business energies are especially good. Look for improved work conditions, raises, and promotions. Be sure that you pay a lot of attention to your relationships. You will need the support of friends and loved ones to continue to move forward. Renew any productive relationships from your past and nurture your current ones. These relationships can provide you with invaluable counsel about your career path. There could also be a lot of people who want to hang on to your skirt. Watch for those hangers-on. They may just want to take advantage of you. Choose your friends wisely.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22) Time to get your life organized. Messy work environments and disorganized closets will be getting on your nerves. You will be more practical than you are usually noted for. And you are definitely ready for some new challenges in the career area of your life. You will not be happy doing the same old thing for this month or for this year. Also, stale relationships can whip up some dramas. You need some attention this month. If you aren't getting it from your current partner, you will be out beating the bushes for someone new. If you are not mixed up in a relationship, this is great energy to find someone to share your life with.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22) Your creativity pours from your pores this month. You are really looking for fun and play. This could be a fun

relationship month. You are feeling very adventurous and are more than willing to take a risk with that special person you have been eyeing. Great month for initiating friendships too, if that is your desire. Your career energies are beginning to warm up but you are not really ready to settle down just yet. However, this can be a wonderful month for marketing, networking, or advertising you or your services. Lots of opportunities around the corner.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 23) So, you are looking for a stable home life just after you have been doing the holiday family thing with all those people who you tried to escape from and now you are looking for someone identical to them in your life. What has gotten into you? Okay, you are going to work on that foundation part of you. Even your relationships will take a backseat to this part of your life. Spend time in your home this month. Invite people in to share your home. Those people who are your family are very important to you. Make sure that they are around you. Work will be tense this month. Make sure it is your job before you decide to fix the problem.

SCORPIO (OCT. 24-NOV. 21) You are very talkative this month. You have a lot to say and you will want people to listen to what you are saying. You have lots of advice for those around you even if they appear to be uninterested. You are also into organizing. You may think you are doing spring cleaning early. Family issues continue to be tense. Real separation can occur no matter what backflips you do. You are more open about yourself and your lifestyle, and those closest to you may not be able to come to terms with the new you as quickly as you would like them to. Keep talking to them. They just need some more information.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21) Money and financial affairs are on the menu as the new year opens. This is the time to get your checkbook balanced, debts taken care of, and a plan to handle your money and investments for the future. This is probably more about self-worth rather than just about money itself. You will want to be appreciated by your lover, your boss, your parents, and your friends. Watch who you ask for that sort of judgment about yourself. You are very sensitive this month and especially on the dates of the 8th, 9th, 18th, and 19th. Try not to overload your schedule or your dance card. You may think you can do almost anything you put your mind to. You probably can. But we will just expect you to fulfill your commitments if you agree to do them.



Lilly Roddy is a Houston-based astrologer. She can be reached at phil@eybersim.com.



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SceneOut

OUT IN HOUSTON

OutSmart's annual holiday party was held on Dec. 15, 1999. The ambience was provided by The Lovett Inn, a beautiful bed-and-breakfast inn on Lovett Blvd., and the glorious food was catered by Clayton Catering. Everyone, as far as we could tell, had a great time. Here are only a few of over 100 photos snapped by staff photographer Tricia Moreau Sweeney.



1 Cookie Davenport (l) and JR

2 (L-r) Jackie, Kat Cook, Jennifer Ertel, Mark Diez, and Travis Bohmann

3 Jack Valinski (l) and Troy Christenson

4 Katie Tijerina

5 (L-r) Bonita Dehn-Benson, Marty Romere, and Joan Buelling

6 (L-r) Christopher Evers, Richard Bielie, Rene Guerra, and David Furlong

7 (L-r) Jeffrey Kuchar, Steve Louis, and Sam Armstrong

8 Melissa Valenzuela (l) and Melissa Gillis

9 David Morales (l) and Sue Null

10 (L-r) Sheela Patil, Yettie Brown, and Noel Torres



11 (Top, l-r) Brandon Van Vleck, Morgan Mascio, and Glen Braden (Bottom, l-r) Dereck Jung and Garrett Longwell celebrate the holidays at Braden's annual Christmas party, this year held on Dec. 11, 1999.

12 Friends of Noel Torres (circled) are all smiles at his big birthday blast at Riva's on Dec. 11, 1999.

13 Dizz Reardon (l) and Dickie Written witness the Houston Aeros beat the Long Beach Ice Dogs at the Compaq Center on Nov. 20, 1999.

14 Michael Leblanca (l) and STUTZ at the opening of "Big Works" by STUTZ. The art exhibit took place on Friday, Dec. 10 at no tsu oH. The smallest piece measured 4"x4'.



15 Among those at the grand opening of Privé on Nov. 19, 1999, were owner Archie Patterson and bartender Kimberly Hinds.



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