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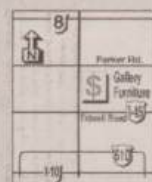
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About the cover:

Actors in Stages' production of *The Laramie Project*: (front row) Rutherford Cravens, Kelli Cousins, Drake Simpson; (back row) Kara Greenberg, Connie Cooper.

Laramie photo by Marcus Potter
Group photo/design by B.J. Smith.

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JANUARY 2002

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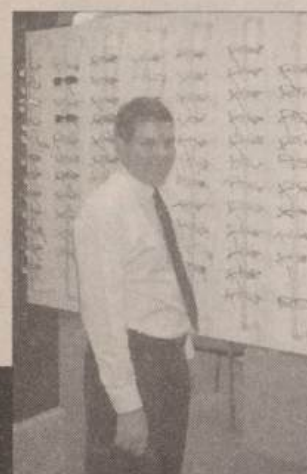
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Letters



SINGING OUR PRAISES

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for the great article that Sally [Huffer] wrote. ["We Will Keep on Singing Until We're Heard!" December *OutSmart*.] The guys were so excited and we appreciate so much the support that you have given us!

The concerts were very successful. We sold over 900 tickets (only 250 last year). Tuesday night SOLD OUT for the first time since 1993! The audience seems to really love it. Thank you once again for your support.

James Knapp
Director, Gay Men's Chorus of Houston

I am delighted to find author Taro Gold profiled by *OutSmart*! ["The Tao of Versace," December.] I received his wonderful little book *Open Your Mind, Open Your Life* as a birthday present from a co-worker a few months ago and have been reading from it every day since then. It has become like a little book of daily guidance for me and has truly helped me change my outlook for the better.

I had no, idea, however, until Alan Davidson's interview that Taro Gold is a young gay man! How fabulous is that? I sometimes find myself thinking that younger people, especially young gay men, woefully lack wisdom, but Taro Gold is shining proof that there are incredibly wise young people among us. (Perhaps his gayness has even contributed to such wisdom.) I thank you for sharing more about Taro with us in the pages of *OutSmart*!

David Owens
Houston

On the Pride Committee of Houston being included as one of the places to think about giving to during the season ["Ten Places to Share Your Wealth," by Ann Walton Sieber, December].

As I have been working with the Pride celebration for almost 20 years and sometimes feel burned out, there always seems to be another wind that blows in to give me validation. I feel that our night parade has helped put our city on the map as something to be

proud of, just like PVA, the Center for AIDS, and *OutSmart*.

We have been kicked around a lot: losing the referendum, seeing the thieves of Enron, really takes a toll.

We have to continue to do the best we can. Thank you and everyone at *OutSmart* for your continued support for Pride. From the most original floats, I will never forget the fish tank, to your great coverage and promotion of Pride to our community. You are truly a community treasure. Thanks again for all you do.

Jack Valinski
Volunteer Executive Director,
Pride Committee of Houston

Thanks so much for your column in the December *OutSmart* ["OutRight," "Follies of the Antiwar Gay Left," by Dale Carpenter].

I am extremely active in Democratic politics but as a fiscal conservative and a bit of a hawk on defense issues, I get really tired of listening to all of my good liberal friends berate what we as a nation are doing right now.

Thank you for pointing out that the right to dissent that these folks use to make their comments would certainly not be tolerated in many of the nations they are effectively defending with their statements—and we won't even talk about the price they would pay for their homosexuality. My boyfriend—while not a Muslim—is from an Arabic country [where] the penalty is effectively death.

Great job. It's nice to know there's at least one more patriotic queer out there.

Jimmy Wynn
Houston

Thanks for publishing on your website Sue Null's "Further Reminiscences of a Streetwalker" [*OutSmart* December website issue at www.outsmartmagazine.com/issue/112-01/essay.html]. Sue is a treasure. I'm glad readers of *OutSmart* and subscribers to Han-Net now have an opportunity to find this out.

John Kellett
Houston

LOVE LETTERS? HATE MAIL?

We want it all! Tell us what you think about *OutSmart*: What got you thinking? What got on your nerves? Send

to Letters, 3406 Audubon Place, Houston, Texas 77006, or e-mail to letters@outsmartmagazine.com.

From the Publisher

In February, *OutSmart* magazine will be entering its ninth year in publishing.

We'd like to thank our readers for continuing to support our advertisers who keep us in publishing. They advertise in *OutSmart* because they want to put the message forth that they seek and value the business of the GLBT community—in return, please support them with your business and let them know how much you appreciate them.

If there is a gift that could be found from the tragedy of September 11, it is the reminder to often embrace those we love and to make sure that our lives are filled with both meaning and joy. For all of us at *OutSmart*, that means being able to publish a magazine for the community that we love and are proud to be part of. Thank you for this tremendous opportunity.

Like many businesses, *OutSmart* was hit hard during the aftermath to the World Trade Center tragedy. Admittedly, some days it has been just plain difficult to continue going about "business as usual." Especially when our publishing company's growth and existence depends so much on the health and confidence of our advertisers as well as the mercy of the economy.

Just how stressful has it been for us? Just look at my head—I've pulled all my hair out!

Last month, *OutSmart* faced a difficult business decision: whether we should change the magazine format from glossy paper stock back to newsprint. The decision was hard, but the choice was obvious. It was the prudent thing to do; we thought of it as akin to rationing and other austerity measures during World War II.

When the economy permits, we look forward to putting out a glossy magazine again. But for now, this format will give us greater control over our company's growth and an even greater opportunity to add more new columnists and features. It will also afford us more energy and resources to attend to our mission of slaying the dragon of homophobia and spotlighting the achievements of our great community.

Here's to a new year of hope for peace, prosperity, and health for all of us.

Greg Jeu
Publisher



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Latanya Richardson

(Entertainment Weekly, 11/30/01, Ken Tucker)

On her role as Judge Sims on A&E's 100 Centre Street, the only show with a female black judge as a main character: As for upcoming plotlines, Richardson reveals, "[Judge Sims] is going to run for mayor. I have this speech where I say, 'As you all know, I am black, I am a woman, and yes, I am gay,' and my press person is going 'Oh, no!'" She giggles, delighted.

Kate Clinton

(The Advocate, 12/25/01, Kate Clinton)

Audiences are traumatized [because of Sept. 11]. They're happy to be out, i.e., of the house. They laugh hysterically, glad for any release. It's easy to go easy. I could just do jokes—"Celine Dion goes into a bar; bartender says, 'Why the long face?'" The current comedy coda is to lay off Bush, to stand behind the president. Huh. Only if I can put up two fingers behind his head.

Bill May

(Olympic swimmer)

(A&U, 12/01)

A&U: If you had a choice to have dinner with anyone from history, who would it be?

Bill May: Adam. Was Eve really who he wanted or did he just settle because there wasn't anything else on the menu?

Dr. Mathilde Krim

(A&U, 12/01, Dale Reynolds)

"If I were president, I would follow Bill Clinton's lead and give AIDS the highest national and international priority as a security threat, which it certainly is. I would promote voluntary testing and strongly encourage and fund prevention education programs, as have been proposed by Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher. For heaven's sake, leadership is about convincing others to follow."

1 YEAR AGO
THIS MONTH

Hugh Grant

(Us Weekly, 1/29/01)

I've always wanted to be a rock star who is sent women's undies. I've been sent underwear by a man and wish he'd stop, but I'm too polite to say anything.

6 YEARS AGO
THIS MONTH

Barbara Jordan

(1997, Today's Out Look Calendar)

Barbara Jordan, born in 1936, was the first African American woman from the Deep South to be elected to the U.S. Congress. When she died of pneumonia on **January 17, 1996**, the obituaries in some U.S. newspapers listed Nancy Earl as Jordan's "longtime companion."

13 YEARS AGO
THIS MONTH

Billy Tipton

(1997, Today's Out Look Calendar)

Jazz musician Billy Tipton died on **January 21, 1989**, as the result of an ulcer; he had refused to go to the doctor for fear it would be discovered that he was born female. Born Dorothy Lucille Tipton, the musician appeared to the world as a man for over 50 years, during which time he married and adopted three sons.

Boston Public

(Boston Public, 12/01, Fox)



Leslie Jordan (l)
& Anthony Heald
Homophobia High?

These exchanges took place after Boston Public's vice principal, Scott Guber (Anthony Heald), saw two female high school students kissing during rehearsal for a scene from the high school play. In the first exchange, Guber confronted faculty member Dr. Benjamin Harris (Leslie Jordan).

Dr. Benjamin Harris: I said we were doing *It's Our Town II*.

Scott Guber: By Thornton Wilder?

No, by Susan Miller.

You told me it was Wilder.

I may have said it was [slight pause] wilder than the original.

You will cancel the play.

Cancel it?

Our funding for our arts program rides on this, Dr. Harris. I won't have it jeopardized by an aberrant piece of filth!

Filth?! Why... you're a putz. My word!

You will cancel the play now.

Guber then talked to the principal, Steven Harper (Chi McBride).

Scott Guber:... The foundation thinks they're coming to see *Our Town*. That's what Dr. Harris said it was going to be.

Principal Harper: They've been rehearsing for six weeks.

The problem is that grant is conditioned on arts being in good taste.

Who decides what's in good taste? You?

Better me than that little peanut.

Dr. Harris steps in: I heard that.

Guber, to the principal: Listen, I'm just trying to avoid a Mapplethorpe situation.

Dr. Harris, to Guber: You're a homophobe. My word!

Guber, to Harris: *Our Town II*. You tricked me, you little roach.

Dr. Harris: He called me a roach!

Principal: We're not gonna shut down the play, Scott.

Dr. Harris: Thank you.

Guber: You can kiss the grant goodbye.

Principal: Then we'll just have to do that.

Later, when Guber went backstage in the theater, he found two boys kissing... not for rehearsals. This was the last episode in December. We're looking forward to its continuation of the storyline in January (Mondays at 7 p.m. on Fox).

Queer Quotes

Compiled by Blase DiStefano

Ian McKellen

(The Advocate, 12/25/01, Bruce C. Steele)

The lie that most galls McKellen is that an actor's offscreen

sexuality limits his on-screen roles.

He has absolutely no patience with

Tom Cruise's lawsuits alleging that

if audiences think he's gay, he will

no longer be able to play romantic

leads or action heroes. "He's talking nonsense," McKellen says. "It's a

very juvenile view of an audience's reaction to actors. Is Tom Cruise suggesting that if he ever wears a beard in the future which is not his own, that we are not to take that performance seriously? Or, indeed—now he's no longer married—that if he were to play a married man, he couldn't possibly be convincing? One doesn't have to speculate on Tom Cruise's sexuality to attack his point of view."



Ian McKellen
(seen here in 1997's *Band*)
Is Cruise a ruse?

Elaine Stritch

(Entertainment Weekly, 11/23/01, William Stevenson)

After 50 years in the theater, [Elaine Stritch] is telling her story in a one-woman show. . . . She dated [Marlon] Brando while living in a convent as a teen, served as a fortysomething Ethel Merman's standby at 20, got fired from a really catty production of *The Women* starring Gloria Swanson, and left Ben Gazzara for Rock Hudson. "We all know what a bum decision that turned out to be," the now-76-year-old says wryly.

Conan O'Brien

(Late Night with Conan O'Brien, 12/01, NBC)



Conan O'Brien: Are gays on grass?

A Texas court has upheld a law that makes it illegal for two men to have sex together in their home. Which explains why gay men all over Texas are having sex on their front lawns.

According to a zoology journal, researchers have discovered gay orangutans living in Asia. Apparently, you can tell which orangutans are gay—they're the ones who throw their feces like a girl.

Britney Spears has to re-shoot some scenes for her upcoming movie because test audiences didn't like long scenes of Britney in nothing but her underwear. Apparently, the test audiences were made up entirely of gay orangutans.

Related orangutan quote from Jimmy Fallon on Saturday Night Live (12/15/01): A scientist for the Wildlife Conservation Society is the first person to discover homosexual behavior in wild orangutans. When asked exactly how he discovered the homosexual behavior, the scientist got really quiet.

CHER AND CHER ALIKE

More of a good thing is fine with us. Plus the Chemical Brothers

Cher

Living Proof (Warner Brothers)

It's a known fact in the music business that few things are more difficult than following up a hit album—especially when it's a worldwide smash, selling more than 11 million copies, as was the case with Cher. While the phenomenal success of *Believe* introduced the Academy Award-winning actress and gay icon to a new generation of fans, simultaneously that success also created a tremendous amount of pressure and anticipation for what is to come next. Not that it's a bad spot to be in. Undoubtedly there are plenty of divas who would kill to have the kind of success Cher has seen at this stage of her career. But the question remains, can Cher continue this success and have us all believing again? With *Living Proof* the diva puts her winning formula to the test.

Enlisting a talented production ensemble that includes Mark Taylor from *Believe*, songwriting superwoman Diane Warren, and Nick Bracegirdle, the man behind the hit dance act Chicane, *Living Proof* opens with an onslaught of Euro-dance anthems. Among them, "The Music's No Good Without You" and "Song for the Lonely" command complete attention. "The Music's No Good" is already out as a single in Europe, and "Song for the Lonely" will be released in the U.S. on January 14, after being debuted by Cher on the American Music Awards January 9. After listening to the uplifting, almost patriotic lyrics, one can't help seeing this song embraced by America. Hats off to Warner Brothers for choosing this as the first U.S. single.

Things slow down for just a minute with the R&B-fueled "Rain Rain," but Cher picks up the pace again with "Love So High" and "Body to Body." Here she continues her love

affair with Latin rhythms, with DJ and producer Tony Moran helping pour on the spice. If there's a fallible part to *Living Proof*, it comes late in the equation. "Real Love" quite simply should have been left out. Nothing about it sounds original, from its tired chord structure and drum track to the annoying vocal acrobatics electronically created by the vocoder. And although Mr. Bracegirdle provides his signature glorious soundtrack on "You Take It All," the song itself keeps this one from surfacing.

Ultimately, time will tell if *Living Proof* proves itself. There's little artistic ground broken here. In fact, everything about it, including the marketing strategy, is a copycat of *Believe*—that's why America will be near last in seeing it on store shelves, with the exception of imports. But copycat or not, Cher delivers a bubbly set of dance jams that will pleasantly distract any within earshot, and that kind of distraction is something that most Americans are searching for these days. Besides, being a living legend entitles you to some liberties, doesn't it?

The Chemical Brothers

Come with Us (Astralwerks)

"Come with us, and leave your planet behind. Bright and clear we see the light. Our universe is at your side." An out-of-this-world opening track invitation like this one is nothing new for fans of Tom Rowlands and Ed Simons, the duo who make up the Chemical Brothers. Like their previous three albums, *Come with Us* extends an open invite aboard their spaceship, traveling to their personal psychedelic world of electronica. *Come with*

Us puts down much of its roots in-house, in a slight departure from their signature break beat vibe. Not to fear, quite a bit of the album excels and pushes the boundaries of today's sound, including the house tracks. Yes, it's a bumpy flight, but neither seatbelts nor RSVPs are needed here, just an open mind and plenty of room to roam.

All aboard? First stop Africa, for a fierce tribal tech-house workout with "It Began in Africa." Already released as a single, this monster of a club record has already been igniting dance floors the past few months. Moving on, the boys take a crack at the filtered disco-house sound with "Star Guitar." An orgy of deep soothing bass lines, punchy kick drums, and faded-out keyboard washes create one of the most sensuous feel-good tracks of the new year.

On "Hoops" the boys get to some serious booty shaking with this pure electro jam.

Label mate Beth Orton shows up on "The State We're In," making vocal magic once again with a dreamy down-tempo song, one of only two on the entire CD. The other sees ex-Verve vocalist Richard Ashcroft searching the galaxy for answers on "The Test." If there's such a sound as psychedelic folk, this is it. Thick guitar strumming meets Middle Eastern wind instruments while cruising through the Milky Way on acid. *Come with Us* is a trip you won't want to end, as the Chemical Brothers show us once again why they are at the top of their game. Passengers awaiting takeoff should mark January 29 as their departure day.

By day, Chris Sill works as a buyer at Soundwaves; by night, he spins tunes at Rich's. He can be reached at csill@infohwy.com or www.djchrisill.com.



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When the Sun Comes Out is a new collection of Broadway showstoppers, torch songs, American standards, and pop classics by Karen Mason, star of Broadway's smash hit musical *Mamma Mia!* "I Have a Dream," the ABBA song from the show, is included as a special bonus track. The CD also features songs by Kander and Ebb, Lennon and McCartney, George and Ira Gershwin, and more. Now available in stores. For more information, visit www.jeromerecords.com. —BD

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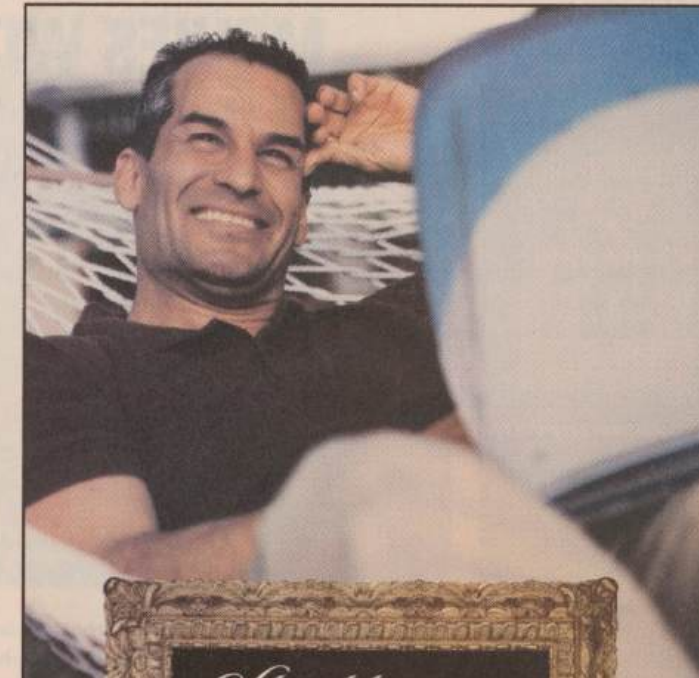
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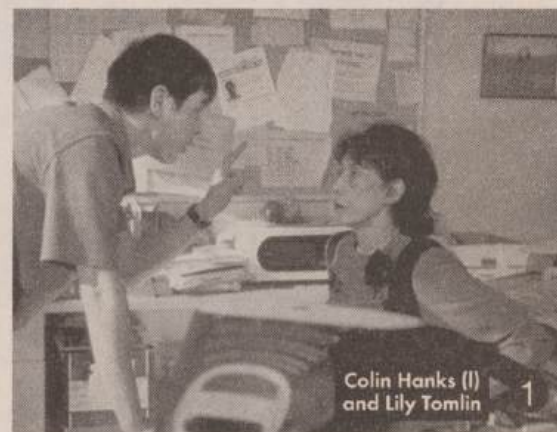


The Anniversary Party

Be glad you didn't attend this party, but also be glad you are now given a chance to see it. Joe (Alan Cumming) and Sally (Jennifer Jason Leigh) are hosts to a great ensemble cast including Kevin Kline, Gwyneth Paltrow, and Jennifer Beals. *The Gay Touch*: Mention is made of Joe's "sexual ambivalence." (Available for rental on VHS/DVD, and for sale on DVD for \$24.98, on Jan. 15.)

MOVIES WITH A TOUCH OF GAY

Lily Tomlin, Judi Dench, & Kate Winslet



Colin Hanks (I) and Lily Tomlin 1



Kevin Spacey (I) and Judi Dench 2

1 *Orange County* is the story of what a high-school senior (Colin Hanks) goes through to get into Stanford University when his guidance counselor (Lily Tomlin) accidentally sends them the transcript of a complete loser. *The Gay Touch* (besides Tomlin): written by Mike White, the Buck of *Chuck & Buck*. (Starts Jan. 11.) 2 *The Shipping News* traces one man's (Kevin Spacey) journey to self-discovery. After the

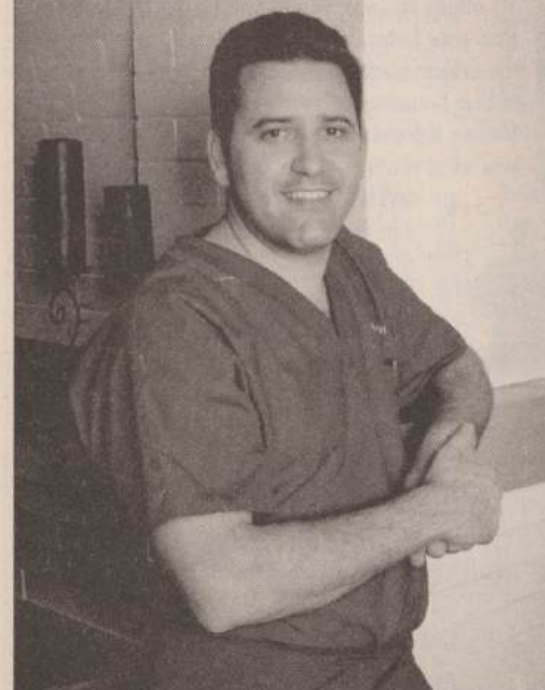
death of his estranged wife (Cate Blanchett), his fortunes begin to change when his aunt (Judi Dench) convinces him to move. *The Gay Touch*: It's a surprise. (Now playing.) 3 *Iris*. Judi Dench and Kate Winslet each portray the novelist Iris Murdoch in two distinct periods of her life. *The Gay Touch*: This is stretching it, but Kate Winslet played a lesbian in 1994's *Heavenly Creatures*. (Scheduled for a January release.)



Kate Winslet 3

ANNIVERSARY: NEW LINE HOME VIDEO; ORANGE: UNCREATED; SHIPPING: DOANE GREGORY/AMAX; IRIS: UNCREATED

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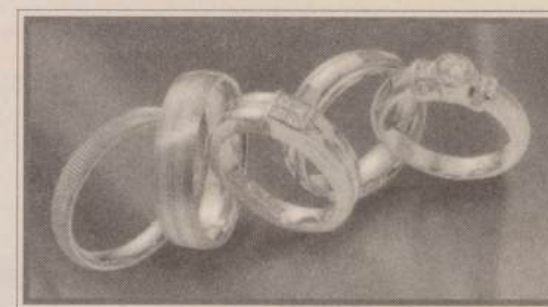
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QUEER TV IN THE NEW YEAR

Queer characters return and Queer Duck premieres



L-r: Peter Paige, Michelle Clunie, Hal Sparks, Thea Gill, Gale Harold, Randy Harrison, and Scott Lowell.

QUEER AS FOLK Michael loves Brian but lives with David. Brian loves Michael but lives to have sex with everybody but Michael. Justin loves Brian but lives with Michael's mother. Okay, it's really more complicated than that... and a lot less trivial. Though not a representation of most gay people, *Queer as Folk* is a nice slice of queerness, a nighttime soap opera with enough eye candy (for both men and women) to keep us coming back for more. Which is what we're ready for. The new season begins **Sunday, January 6**, at 9 p.m., with repeat airings every Tuesday at 10 p.m. on Showtime.

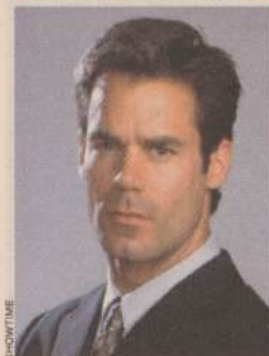


MORE QUEER NEWS *Queer as Folk* comes out on VHS/DVD: The complete 22-episode first season hits the stores on **Tuesday, January 8**. It will be presented in a 5-tape VHS set and a 6-disc special edition collectors DVD set featuring almost three hours of extras. Each boxed set is \$119.98. We'll see you in line.

FROM ONE QUEER TO ANOTHER *Queer Duck*, which follows the outrageous adventures of a gay duck who works as a male nurse, is the first series to expose the lives of gay cartoon characters. *Queer Duck* and his friends—Openly Gator, Bi Polar Bear, and Oscar Wildcat—all lead openly gay lives. Jim J. Bullock and RuPaul (both openly gay, we might add) lend their voices to this queer 'toon. Premieres online at www.SHO.com in January; after the online debut, the series will air on Showtime on Tuesdays following the 9 p.m. broadcast of the other queer-titled show *Queer as Folk*.



MORE SHOWTIME



Beggars

Missed episodes of *Beggars and Choosers* before it was cancelled? This great show featured gay character Malcolm Laffley (Tuc Watkins, pictured), and it didn't hurt that Alexis Arquette appeared in drag. The weekly marathon starts at 9 p.m. and runs for 4 1/2 hours every Saturday and Sunday in January on Showtime.

NBC



Grace

Will & Grace. Grace (Debra Messing, right) schemes to fix up the mistress (Lesley Ann Warren, left—remember her in *Victor/Victoria*?) of Will's (Eric McCormack) father with a friend as a favor to Will in hopes that she will leave his old man. The scheme backfires when they get a gay friend as her date. Thursday, January 10, 8 p.m. on NBC.

TCM



Dietrich

Marlene Dietrich: Her Own Song. Though her bisexuality is not mentioned in this documentary, it's worth the watch. Jamie Lee Curtis narrates. It features interviews with her daughter; her sister's son; Rosemary Clooney; and Burt Bacharach. Airs throughout January, along with many of her films. More info: www.turnerclassicmovies.com.

HBO



Oz

Oz returns for another season to bombard us with violence, gay sex, full-frontal nudity, and occasional melodrama. Good scripts and even better actors (Chris Meloni [right], Lee Tergesen [left], Rita Moreno, to name a very few) whet our appetites for the following week's episode. Starts Sunday, January 6, at 9 p.m. on HBO.



Sex

The four straight (depending on your definition of "straight") women slip comfortably into their fourth year with *Sex and the City*. Will Samantha (Kim Cattrall, pictured, top left) do it with another woman again? Will all that humor make us laugh? We're sure of the latter. The award-winner starts Sunday, January 6, at 8 p.m. on HBO.



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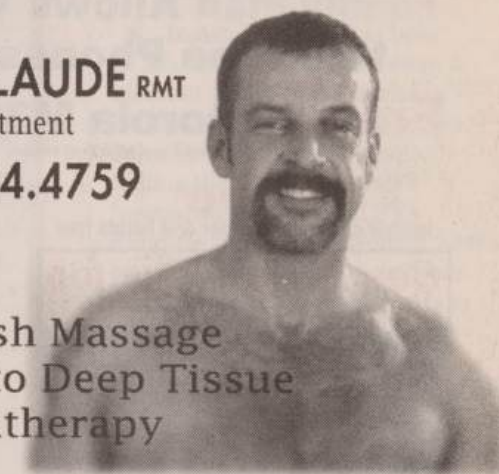
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Gays Protected?

Finally, some good news. Sort of. Many in the community know about the 1998 murder of Marc Kajs, by his ex-lover Ilhan Yilmaz, outside Urbana restaurant. Yilmaz had been stalking and threatening Kajs for about seven months. Kajs had sought protection from the Houston police numerous times, including the early morning before his death when Yilmaz actually chased Kajs into the police storefront on Westheimer. The police told Kajs they couldn't help him because he didn't have a restraining order and sent him away. That morning after Kajs got off his shift waiting tables at brunch at Urbana, Yilmaz came for Kajs with a gun, chasing him down Montrose and shooting him eight times before also killing himself.

Marc Kajs's mother, Gloria Swidriski, has sued the city of Houston, saying that they are responsible for her son's death, asserting that they did not take adequate action to protect people in domestic violence cases, especially when the

partners are gay. The case had enough serious implications that the national ACLU filed a brief on its behalf.

What people may not know is that the city of Houston's lawyers contended that the police were not required to protect Kajs because gays and lesbians are not protected by the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution. (That's the one that says "[No state shall] deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.") And a U.S. District Court decided in favor of this incredible piece of reasoning, according to Rosenberg.

So the good news is that on December 12, 2001, the U.S. Court of Appeals in New Orleans reversed the lower court's opinion and said that, yes, gays and lesbians do deserve equal protection under the law, including in domestic violence cases.

Basically, what Marc Kajs' mother has won is the right to a trial. A date has not yet been set.

News & Comment

Calling Gay Vets

A Houston chapter has been formed of the Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Veterans of America, a national group with chapters from Palm Springs to San Antonio. Calling themselves America's "unwanted warriors," GLBVA dedicates its efforts to overcoming the ban on gay service in the military and on creating a sense of pride in gay service members and veterans.

There was a local chapter of GLBVA about a decade ago, but after several years of existence, it faded away. The Houston GLBVA meetings will be held the first Monday of the month at the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 803 Hawthorne. For more information, see the national website at www.glbva.org, e-mail houstonglbva@earthlink.net, or call the community center at 713/524-3818 and leave a message.

2002 Escape

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Palmer Bids Farewell to Positive Art Workshops

After 11 years of teaching the Positive Art Workshops, Patrick Palmer is passing on the, er... paint brush. To recognize his years of work teaching art to HIV-positive students, the National Council of Jewish Women will honor Palmer on February 5 with the Hannah G. Solomon Award; named for the group's founder, the award is "the highest honor given by the organization to individuals who have been a catalyst for social change."

Palmer originally got the idea for the classes after his best friend, Jim Hemesath, died in 1990. "In my attempt to do something," Palmer said, "I realized all I could do was teach and paint! So I set up the course, which originally was just a 10-week workshop which never stopped."

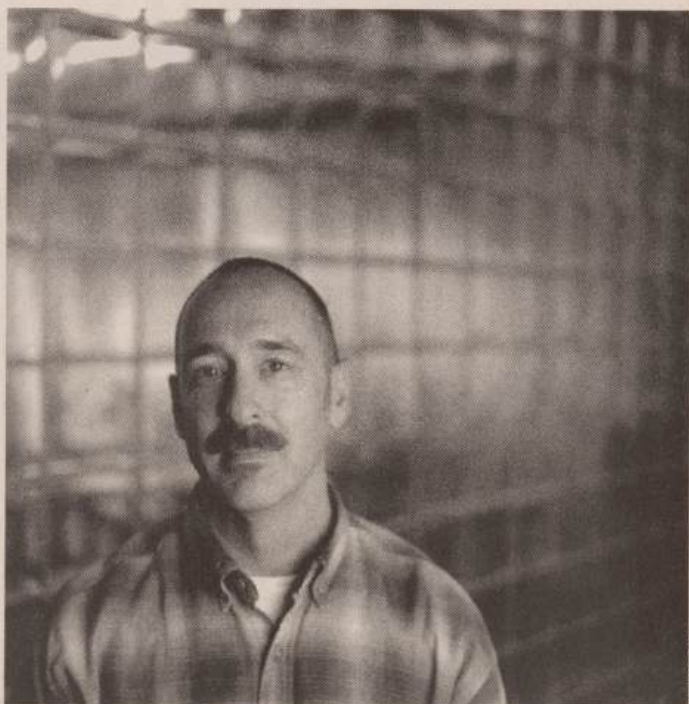
The classes were originally at the Art League, and then moved

to the Museum of Fine Arts' Glassell School in 1998. Palmer estimated that several hundred people have taken them in the 11 years.

One of Palmer's students, Don Workman, had a support team that included a member of the National Council of Jewish Women, so he got the two groups together. The Jewish women's group became a mainstay support to the classes, providing lunch, holiday and birthday parties, and "just unlimited amounts of support and love," said Palmer.

Sometimes we look at community activists and leaders and think, "Oh, that's not for me—that's not the kind of thing I do." But Patrick Palmer is a real example of someone who figured out how to make a difference by using the gifts and experience he already possessed.

The Positive Art Workshops



will continue under the guidance of well-known Houston artist Richard Fluhr, and they will move to the Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center every Friday, noon to 2 p.m., starting January

18. The classes are free and open to anyone who is HIV-positive, regardless of artistic experience or talent. For information, call the community center at 713/524-3818.

National Briefs

RELIEF FOR 9/11 GAY WIDOWS AND WIDOWERS

Gay and lesbian partners of those killed in the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States will be able to apply to the federal victims compensation fund for relief.

Congress directed the Justice Department to make rules for how the claims should be heard and gave broad discretion to Kenneth Feinberg, who was named to oversee the fund. Feinberg (whose title is "Special Master") is required to award funds based on individual circumstances. Feinberg will therefore consider the merits of each same-sex partner claim under the regulations, and can provide recovery to same-sex partners based on a variety of determining factors. The Special Master can grant the same funding to same-sex partners as married spouses would receive should he determine the partner was a "dependent" of the victim.

"Gay and lesbian survivors will get relief from the fund, and we applaud the Justice Department and Ken Feinberg for achieving this important federal milestone," said Richard Tafel, executive director of Log Cabin Republicans. "We would have preferred that the

regulations were more specific and the recovery process simpler, but we are fully confident that Ken Feinberg, on behalf of the Bush administration, will settle every case fairly and equitably."

LGBT YOUTH-RUN ACTION

On April 10, the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) will stage the Day of Silence Project, in partnership with the United States Students Association—making it the largest youth-run LGBT action in the country.

First started in 1996 by students at the University of Virginia, the Day of Silence Project is a full-day action in which students take a vow of silence to protest the discrimination faced by LGBT people. Instead of speaking, participants hand out "speaking cards" printed with a message that explains why they have chosen not to talk. The Day of Silence Project now occurs in hundreds of high schools and colleges across the country.

If you'd like to organize a Day of Silence in your university or high school, you can get the info you need at www.dayofsilence.org.

"The Day of Silence Project can be a tremendously powerful launching pad for youth

to make a concrete difference in their school communities," said Chris Tuttle, national student organizer.

NOW WE CAN GET THEM!

Two AIDS activists were jailed November 28 in San Francisco under the new federal anti-terrorism legislation, with bail set at \$500,000 each, in a case that calls up concerns about Bush's use of the September 11 attack to eliminate our civil liberties.

Michael Petrelis and David Pasquarelli were arrested as a result of a "phone zap" action, in which they urged people to call public health officials and news reporters about the proposed Model State Emergency Health Powers Act, what they describe as an AIDS quarantine proposal.

"The men currently languish in jail with little prospect of release," said a letter protesting the arrests signed by such gay public persons as Steve Ault and Harvey Fierstein. "The prospect of high bail and escalating criminal charges for protest is a genuine threat to civil liberties."

"All of these cases send a clear message to others who might engage in protest. In this new legal and political climate, activists must beware." ■

AIDS Death Rate Rising in Texas

The rate of deaths from AIDS in Texas climbed in 1999 and 2000, according to the Texas Department of Health. Gary Wernitz, medical director of Austin's David Powell Clinic, and other health officials said they expect HIV eventually to become resistant to some of the drugs that produced a sharp decline in AIDS-related deaths and for death rates to begin climbing again. Department of Health figures also show that more intravenous drug users, poor people, and minorities are being exposed to HIV and are dying in Texas. Almost one third of AIDS deaths in the state since 1993 have been among African-Americans, who make up less than 12 percent of the state's population. Health officials say the AIDS death rate in Texas will continue to climb without new treatments. More than 31,000 Texans have died of AIDS complications since 1981.

Danburg to Seek Reelection

Gay-friendly State Rep. Debra Danburg has announced she will seek reelection in the November elections, with the primaries scheduled for March. Danburg has served 10 two-year terms in the state capital. However, this election her district has been reconfigured significantly; shifting to the southwest, District 134 retains the Montrose area west of Montrose Boulevard, but loses the Heights and adds West University and Bellaire.

Grand Marshal Nominations

The Pride Committee of Houston will accept nominations for grand marshals of the 2002 Houston GLBT Pride Parade until January 11. You can find a nomination form at www.pridehouston.org.

City Council Watch

The Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus is starting a Councilwatch Committee, a watchdog group whose purpose is "to keep current on the history of the voting record(s) and actions of individual and groups of city council members and the mayor of Houston so that we may better educate members of the GLTB and progressive communities while also holding our elected officials accountable to their constituents." If you are interested in being a council watchdog, contact Deborah Rogers, caucus president, at voter@HGLPC.com.

HIV - Related Weight Loss / "Wasting"

Montrose Clinic / Body Positive Wellness Center is doing a research study to see how a 12-week weight training program with nutritional counseling, with or without an oral anabolic steroid, affects lean body mass in men with HIV related weight loss.

All study volunteers will have 12 weeks of supervised weight training, and will receive nutritional counseling. Participants will be assigned by chance to receive an oral anabolic steroid or a placebo. Odds are 50/50 of receiving the steroid.

If you are interested in this study and think you might qualify, please call one of the study coordinators for more information.

This study is being conducted by Dr. Shannon Schrader.

Study Coordinators:

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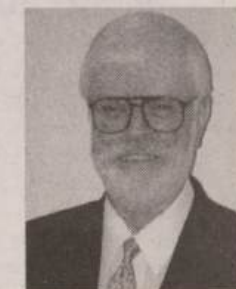
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Why Republicans are nervous and Democrats are cautiously optimistic

With Republicans holding every statewide office in Texas, most would think it's a bad time to be a Democrat in Texas. Not me. I think it's a great time to be a Democrat in Texas. To fully appreciate the possibilities of what Democrats might do in next year's November elections, consider the recent Houston mayor's race.

Just last month, Orlando Sanchez—an incredibly conservative Republican in a largely Democratic city—came within a few points of pulling off a major political upset that would have been a feather in the Republican Party's cap and the first nail in the Democratic Party's coffin. Both parties know that their political destiny lies largely in the hands of the fastest-growing voting bloc in the nation—Hispanics.

That's why both national parties poured money into a local city election. That's why George and Barbara Bush appeared in an ad

with Sanchez. And, that's why former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani taped an ad for a candidate he doesn't even know.

Republicans are scared. They realize that if they are to keep their iron grip on Texas politics, they are going to have to make inroads into the Hispanic community. In Orlando Sanchez, Republicans saw an opportunity to finally put an Hispanic-friendly face on a party that is so institutionally xenophobic that its platform seeks the "immediate adoption of American English as the official language of Texas." (Do Spanish-speaking Hispanics really pose a greater threat to the King's English than native Texans do?)

Now, even though Sanchez lost, Republicans are saying that his close finish indicates they really are making inroads into the Hispanic community. They point to the fact that the number of Hispanic voters from the last mayoral election—when Brown defeated Rob

Mosbacher and carried a majority of the Hispanic vote—doubled. They brag that this time, Brown got only 25 percent of the Hispanic vote. Sanchez got 75 percent.

What the Republicans ignore, however, is that while Sanchez did get 75 percent of the Hispanic vote, Brown got 98 percent of the African-American vote. In other words, if the Hispanic community had stood behind Sanchez like the African-American community stood behind Brown, ex-council member Sanchez would be Mayor Sanchez. The problem for Republicans is that 25 percent

continued on page 24

Writing from the liberal end of the spectrum, Houston attorney Daryl Moore has a general practice and is board-certified in civil appellate law. He can be reached at DarylMoore@outsmartmagazine.com.



THERE /S REASON FOR OPTIMISM THIS NEW YEAR

Three blows against gay victimhood

Gay writers, newspapers, and organizations tend to emphasize the bad things that happen in life. And 2001 was, in some ways, a bad year for gays. The fourth largest city in the country, Houston, voted to ban health and other benefits for the same-sex domestic partners of gay city employees. The military maintained—at least officially—its "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy despite the wartime need for personnel. And, of course, the long national nightmare that is Britney Spears continues with no end in sight.

Nevertheless, tucked away in news summaries about antigay ballot initiatives and the latest tussles with the Boy Scouts, three little items might have escaped your attention. Each is good news, though victim-mongers out there will manage to find the cloud in the silver lining. Here they are:

(1) **Survey shows gays feel more accepted.** The Kaiser Family Foundation re-

cently polled by telephone 405 randomly selected, self-identified gays in 15 major U.S. cities. Pollsters interviewed the subjects about their experience of discrimination and their encounters with verbal and physical abuse. The survey found that 76 percent of gay people believe they are more accepted now by their fellow Americans than they were a few years ago.

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation's survey of the general population, more Americans than ever before report knowing someone who is gay: 62 percent now say they have a gay friend or acquaintance, as compared to 55 percent three years ago and just 24 percent in 1983.

Gay Americans are heeding the call to come out of the closet. And that honesty appears to be paying off in the form of unquestionably softened public attitudes about homosexuality.

Skeptics will point out that the Kaiser

survey hardly eliminates doubts about how deep acceptance of homosexuality really is. There are, to begin, the usual questions about survey methodology. Because the survey required gay people to identify themselves as gay (query: what survey of gay people could avoid relying on self-identification?) the sample might have been skewed and the results therefore flawed.

But it's hardly clear which way the "flaw" of reliance on self-identification would cut in a survey asking respondents whether they feel accepted. On the one hand, those homosexuals

Writing from the conservative end of the spectrum, former Houston resident and law professor Dale Carpenter began his column for OutSmart in 1994. Now living in Minneapolis, he can be reached at OutRight@aol.com.



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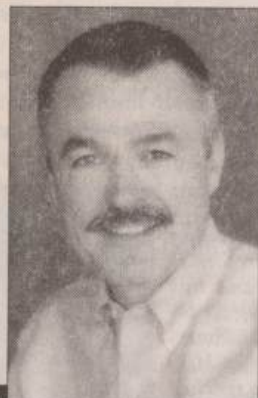
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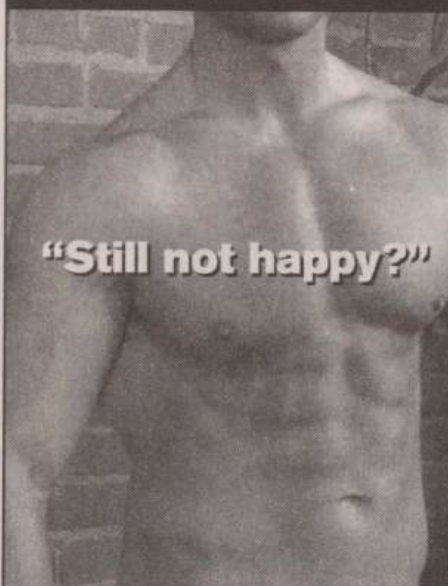
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LeftOut

continued from page 22

of the Hispanic community is so solidly Democratic that they refused to support a Hispanic candidate who is a Republican.

And that's what spells trouble for the Republican Party in Texas. Next fall, there will be another Sanchez on the ballot. This time, the Sanchez will be named Tony. And, this time, the Sanchez will be a Democrat.

If Hispanic voters across the state turn out next November like they did in the Houston mayor's race, Governor Rick Perry will be in trouble. Because instead of carrying 75 percent of the Hispanic vote as Orlando Sanchez did, this Sanchez could carry more than 90 percent of the Hispanic vote. If that happens, the Democrats can take back the governorship as well as other statewide offices.

Republicans say they're not worried. They point to Governor Perry's approval ratings, which are hovering around 60 percent. And, they point to preliminary polls, which show Perry has a 30-point lead over Sanchez (48 to 18 percent, with 34 percent undecided).

Republicans should not be so comfortable with these numbers. After all, when George Bush ran against Ann Richards, Richards had 60 percent approval ratings and a 30-point lead over Dubya just 10 months before the election. We all know how that turned out.

Year 2002 just might turn out to be an okay year to be a Democrat in Texas. It's about time. ■

OutRight

continued from previous page

with enough self-confidence to reveal their sexual orientation to a stranger over the phone may overestimate the degree to which others accept them; further, they may have sought out jobs and circles of friends where they really are more accepted. On the other hand, because of their openness, these same people may encounter more overt hostility than gays who remain closeted.

The survey also had some bad news. Some 74 percent of the respondents said they had encountered antigay verbal abuse, and 32 percent said they had been subjected to physical abuse or property destruction because of their sexual orientation.

But because we don't know when these incidents occurred, and because we have no comparative data from the past, it's hard to know whether there has been deterioration on the abuse front. It's possible that as more gays come out, especially in smaller towns and rural areas, they will be easier targets

for the remaining homophobes who mean to do them harm. This suggests rising acceptance may paradoxically accompany a transient rise in hate crimes.

(2) Survey says gays are richer than straights. A new online survey of 6,300 self-identified gay respondents sponsored by OpusComm Group in cooperation with Syracuse University has found that the median combined annual household income among gay couples is \$65,000. That's 60 percent higher than the U.S. median household income.

This might sound like good news. It suggests that, whatever obstacles gays face in life, we have overcome them to a large extent.

But the survey met immediate criticism. Dr. Lee Badgett, an economics professor at the University of Massachusetts, lambasted the survey's methodology, arguing that Internet users are not representative in that they tend to be wealthier and better educated than the general population. Badgett's own research has shown that individual gay men make less on the job than straight men. Her research has also shown that gay women earn about the same as straight women, though both groups earn less than men.

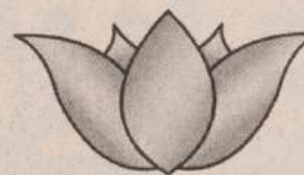
What's at stake in this debate? For gay magazines and newspapers, it's about luring potential advertisers who lust after wealthy readers. For gay civil rights advocates, however, surveys like this undercut the case for employment discrimination protection. If we're already better off, why do we need civil rights laws to make us equal?

(3) Survey says gay teens are less suicidal than we thought. Two new studies debunk the common assertion of gay civil rights groups that gay teens are three times more likely to attempt suicide than their straight peers. The studies, conducted by a Cornell University psychologist, found that gay teens are only slightly more likely to attempt suicide. Research heretofore on the topic had interviewed teens from support groups or shelters, where the most troubled youths are found.

The Cornell studies concluded that gay youth do indeed have more difficult lives. "But most gay kids are healthy and resilient," says the researcher, Ritch Savin-Williams. He adds that studies exaggerating their suicide risk "pathologize gay youth, and that's not fair to them."

Evidence, even if not conclusive, of increasing acceptance, higher levels of income, and less dramatic suicide rates may not serve the cause of portraying gays as helpless victims of homophobia in need of state protection. But it gives some reason to cheer in the new year. ■

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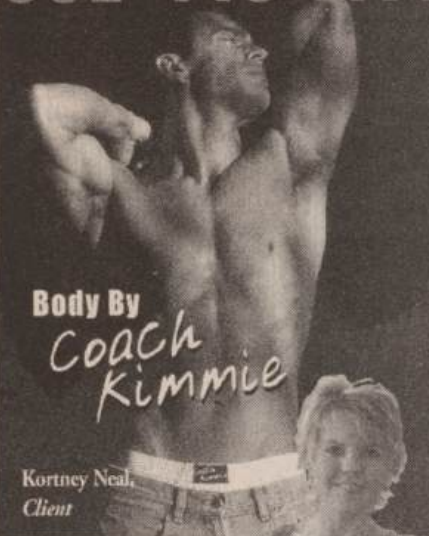
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Our Town

By listening to the residents
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by D.L. Groover

photo by Marcus Potter

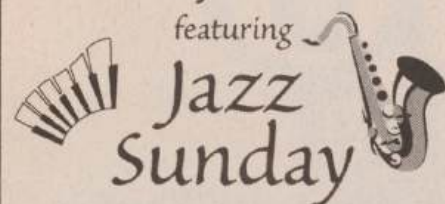
The Rock in the Road

Pedaling his mountain bike, University of Wyoming freshman Aaron Kreifels was having a good workout late Wednesday afternoon, October 7, 1998. →



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His thighs burned. He had made it to the top of Cactus Canyon, but twilight was setting in, the temperature dropping. Riding back down, he took whatever trails looked easiest. He kept getting stuck in sand. He wanted to turn around but kept pushing forward. Although near the subdivision of Sherman Hills, on the outskirts of Laramie, he wasn't sure where he was. That's when he hit the rock. He flew over the handlebars and landed, surprisingly unhurt, in the middle of the dirt road. Brushing himself off and checking his bike, he noticed a shape near the rough fence that bordered the far back property line of a distant house under construction. A scarecrow, he thought distractedly, someone's put a scarecrow there for Halloween.

But as he walked his bike along the side closest to the dark figure slumped down against the fence, instead of straw, he saw hair on its head. The chest of the formless shape slowly moved up and down. The ground was black with blood. The grotesque shape had a face. The only clear patch of skin was where the tears had washed away the blood. Aaron Kreifels had found Matthew Shepard.

Watershed, November 1998

Matthew Shepard doesn't appear in *The Laramie Project*, but he infuses every line by his presence and every heartache by his absence. This is Laramie's story—how the citizens of this very all-American town in this very all-America Wyoming react to a most horrific, senseless crime of gay bashing.

When Moisés Kaufman, award-winning gay author of *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde* and artistic director of NYC's form-breaking Tectonic Theater Project, first heard about Matthew Shepard's murder, he knew instinctively he had found his next subject. Within a month, he and his company of 10 actors would travel to Laramie and interview anyone who would talk to them about Matt. Over the next year and a half and six more visits to the town, the group talked to more than 200 residents and amassed 400 hours of tape recordings. Out of this gargantuan amount of raw research, the Tectonic Theater gleaned, edited, and honed their new theatrical documentary into a razor-brilliant dissection of this clarifying moment in time when our collective hearts stopped.

"When Matthew was murdered," says Kaufman in a recent conversation with *OutSmart*, "our initial reaction was the same as a lot of people in the country: Oh my God, sorrow, sadness, shock. In the

days that followed the murder, you couldn't open a newspaper or turn on the TV without seeing a picture of Matthew, or at least seeing the event. . . . For some reason, this one resonated. This was a moment where we said, Wait a minute, what's going on?! It was a watershed moment in our culture."

Hapless, Hopeless Young Men

On the road toward humanity, Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson took the path of least resistance. These young men, both 21—consciously or not—had committed themselves to living without dreams. Theirs were indeed lives of quiet desperation, filled with roiling frustration and volcanic outbursts of rage. Broken homes with messy divorces, petty criminal acts, heavy drug and alcohol use, the mire of poverty, low-rent girlfriends, the crushing weight of endless grimy boredom coupled with the mocking self-knowledge of no future—all coalesced into their strong bond of friendship. Both high school dropouts, neither would ever go farther than Wyoming state prison. Neither of them could dream any wider.

Once, Henderson might have soared. He was actually a good student: on the honor roll, an Eagle Scout, a Future Farmer of America. But his demons—a neglectful alcoholic mother, restrictive pinched Mormon grandparents, probable boyhood sexual abuse—caught up with him and he was too timid to defend himself.

Together, these two made a very lethal pair.

Matt Galloway, bartender at the Fireside, remembers the two as scruffy and gruff, with dirty hands, who paid for their \$5.50 pitcher of beer with dimes and nickels.

Unfortunately, Matt Shepard, nattily dressed as usual, was seated at the bar that night. Easygoing and garrulous, Matt could talk to anyone, and usually did. Earlier that evening he had attended a meeting of U.W.'s Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Association, which he had joined two weeks prior. According to friend Romaine Patterson, Choo-Choo (as Matt's closest friends called him) was stoked about school and heartily enjoyed helping LGBT with their preparations for Pride Week. After the meeting, when he couldn't convince anyone else to go out with him to the bar, another friend drove him home and watched him walk safely into his apartment.

No one knows why he later decided to go out by himself. Matt showed up at the bar at 10:30 p.m. By midnight, he had left with Henderson and McKinney.

The Director

With his spiked black hair, cool downtown style, and effusive charm, Rob Bundy (pictured), Stages' artistic director and director of *The Laramie Project*, might be a grown-up Bart Simpson, occasionally tweaking the nose of his older sister, the refined, Tony-winning uptown Alley, with his provocative productions and imaginative stagings. Last August, he directed



The Laramie Project at the prestigious Chautauqua Institution in upstate New York, and he's chomping to have another go at it and present it to Houston audiences.

"It's really a play about hope," Bundy explains in his office filled with Stages memorabilia. "For the gay audience member, it talks about how a community awakens to understanding that the 'other' is not so foreign. It's presented in human terms—this enormous sense of hope because the whole nation suddenly woke up and said, This is wrong. For the straight community, it was a quote/unquote Mom and Dad who were saying our son was brutally murdered because he was different. I think that welcomes the straight audience to look at Matthew Shepard as actually one of [their] own children."

"It asks the question what happens when bad things happen in good communities. It's about a community coming to terms with and learning how to accept that we are like this—[realizing that] the whole 'live and let live' mentality is as flawed as the 'don't ask, don't tell' mentality. It is this really beautiful journey from grief into hope. When the Tectonic Company came in and started interviewing people, it gave them an opportunity to

Confronting Hate in Our Community

Activities surrounding Stages Repertory Theatre's
production of *The Laramie Project*.

Thursday, January 17

Live Town Hall Broadcast, Channel 8, KUHT, 7–8 p.m. Stages and Channel 8 will broadcast live a town hall discussion "Confronting Hate in Our Community." Facilitated by Ernie Manouse, host of *WeekDay*, the panel will include Judy Shepard (Matthew Shepard's mother, pictured), the Rev. Mel White (founder of Soulfence), Louvon Harris (James Byrd Jr.'s sister), and Susanna McMahon (Houston author of *The Portable Therapist*).



Friday, January 18, 8 p.m.

Opening Night *The Laramie Project*
The Laramie Project will run through February 10, playing Wed. & Thur., 7:30 p.m.; Fri. & Sat., 8 p.m.; and Sundays, 3 p.m. Tickets are \$32–\$42, with discounts for seniors, students, groups, and previews. Stages Theatre, 3201 Allen Parkway, 713/52-STAGE (713/527-8243).

Saturday, January 19, Midnight

Midnight benefit concert for the Matthew Shepard Foundation, location to be announced. Singer/songwriter Randi Driscoll performs original songs, including the single "What Matters." This event is open to the public. No admission will be charged, but donations made at the concert will benefit the Matthew Shepard Foundation.

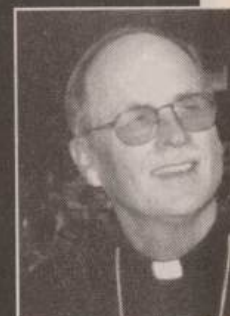
Saturday, January 19

Rev. Mel White on Nonviolent Resistance/Panel Discussion
2–4 p.m., Stages Theatre, free.

Rev. Mel White (pictured below) will lead a lively presentation on nonviolent ways to challenge hate. Rev. White's group Soulfence uses Gandhi's methods to stage protests against the major religious denominations' exclusion and oppression of gay people. To be followed by a panel discussion with White and local professionals who routinely confront issues of hate and intolerance. Panelists include Steve Huey (former United Nations peacekeeper and human rights monitor); Rev. Bob Schaibly of the First Unitarian Universalist Church; Susanna McMahon (author of *The Portable Therapist*), and Rev. White.

Prayer Vigil

6–7:30 p.m., Christ Church Cathedral, 1117 Texas Ave. Rev. Mel White will be the keynote speaker and Randi Driscoll will perform. Religious leaders from around the city will be invited to participate, as well as include in their services this weekend a discussion of how we can confront hate in a productive way.



BUNDY: B.J. SMITH; SHEPARD AND WHITE: UN-CREDITED



Rob Bundy (far right) gives direction to members of the Laramie cast. (Top - left to right) Kara Greenberg, Connie Cooper. (Bottom - left to right) Rutherford Cravens, Kelli Cousins, Drake Simpson.

start to articulate their thoughts and feelings about this event. In doing so, the community was able to heal."

"Hey, guess what? We're not gay and we're gonna jack you up!"

A surprised and frightened Matt sat between Henderson and McKinney, handing over his wallet as commanded. But they beat him anyway. First with fists, then the butt of McKinney's .357 Magnum. The undersides of Matt's arms would be covered in bruises from trying to ward off the blows. By the time they drove out past the sleeping subdivision, the front seat was splattered with blood. Matt never had a chance.

Matt pleaded, but to no avail. They

tied his hands together behind his back and then tied him to the fence rail. They kicked him repeatedly. McKinney kept beating him with the gun. They took his black patent leather shoes, in case he freed himself and tried to escape. They mocked his pleas to stop and hit him some more, cracking open the back of his skull. They left him for dead.

Dry Statistics

The latest national report from the FBI, released November 2001 and covering the previous year, shows a two percent increase in hate crimes. Defined by the American Psychological Association as "violent acts against people, property, or organizations because of the group with which they are identified," hate crimes

have held steady at around 8,000 per year.

In Texas, even with our newly passed James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Law, the crime rate dropped, but the number of hate crimes rose from 267 reported in 1999 to 286 in 2000, an increase of seven percent. Texas is one of 42 states with a law that recognizes hate crimes as a category. Wyoming, the Equality State where Matthew Shepard lived and died, does not. Half of all reported hate crimes last year were committed against blacks.

The Texas State Department of Public Safety has released these figures: Aggravated and simple assault: 31 percent of hate crimes. Intimidation: 27 percent. Race: 56 percent. Antigay: 17 percent. Religious bias: 15 percent. The remainder were ethnic or disability bias.

The perpetrators of 55 percent of hate crimes were white, 10.5 percent were black, and 32 percent were of "unknown race."

Eighty-four percent of hate crimes were against individuals, with 8.5 percent against religious organizations.

Quo Vadis Matthew?

The death of Matthew Shepard galvanized the world unlike any other gay-bashing murder. Moisés Kaufman sees it in almost political terms as a defining moment for America, one whose cascades of meaning flowed together at the most opportune moment.

"There were several things that contributed to this. One is the symbolic nature of the crime: It was a crucifixion. And you can't do that in this culture without getting an incredible amount of attention. He was young and a student, very pretty to look at, a very good-looking young man. In that sense he was camera-ready; we could all identify with him. So that his being murdered meant something very, very different than an African-American drag queen who goes home with someone and gets murdered at home. This was a victim that all of America could very quickly digest.

"But we were ready for this to resonate. If the exact same murder had happened 10 years ago, we weren't there yet. Our awareness and our consciousness as a nation is slowly evolving. And now we're ready to understand and think about things that until now we weren't ready to do.

"I'm very interested—and the company's very interested—in what we call watershed moments: moments where a certain culture is faced with itself. Like the trials of Oscar Wilde, when an event happened of such magnitude that it served as a lightning rod. If you listen at moments like that, you can hear the ideologies and the beliefs and things that form a certain culture at a certain time. If you read the transcripts from the trials, you can hear how Victorian men and women were thinking and feeling and processing their lives, not only about homosexuality but about Victorian society, about education, about class, about religion.

"So the idea was that if we went to Laramie and we listened to the town, we might capture something about where not only Laramie, but perhaps the entire nation, was at the end of the millennium. Not only in relationship to homosexuality, but in relationship to class, education, violence, religion—all the ideological pillars of our culture." →

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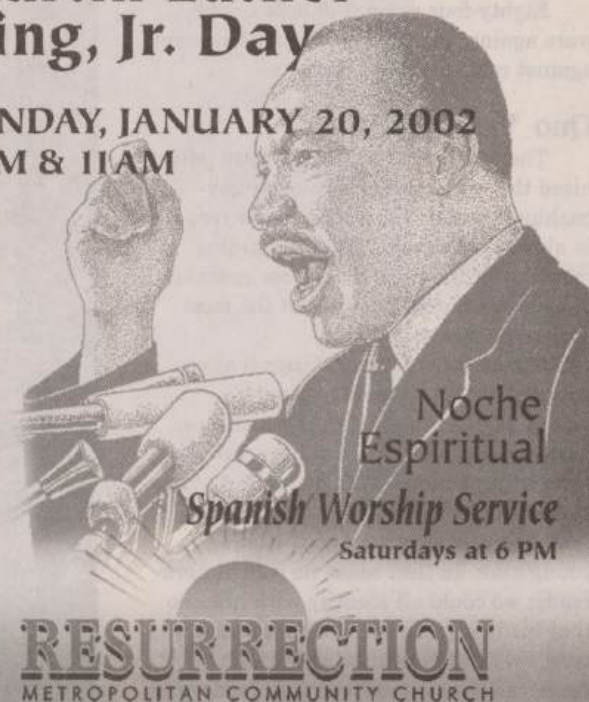
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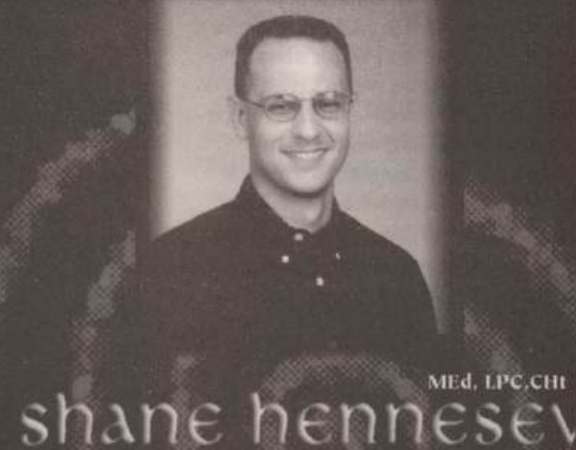


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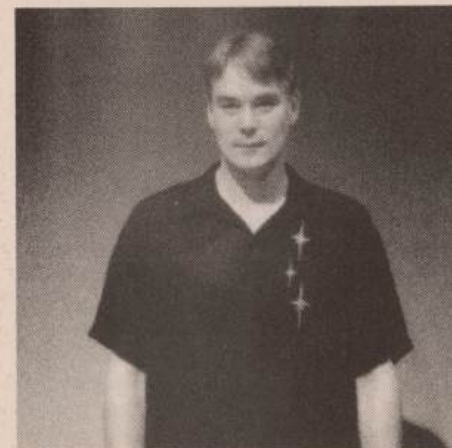
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"The play is very uplifting," says Chris Jimmerson (pictured above), artistic director of Unhinged Productions and co-producer of *Laramie*. "You come away really believing that, as a culture and a society, we can move past our hate. Actually, what happened to Matthew may help some people: seeing how this one event very personally affected a lot of people besides the direct victim of the event."

"This is such an all-American play," says director Bundy, "—both the good and the bad, the open and the closed. It's all there. It's not hoity-toity poetry onstage. It's the residents of Laramie, Wyoming, sharing their thoughts and feelings in their own words. This is not a straight-bashing play, either. All the characters on both sides of the issue are so fairly rendered that it allows the audience to identify with them, understand them, and really see them. It's very nonjudgmental, which is really important. It's something I strive to honor."

I give you life in the memory of one who no longer lives

Matt Shepard was not perfect, as his parents constantly had to point out to counter the martyrdom backlash, especially during the media frenzy in the weeks after his death. He did rash, foolish things to mask his fear and insecurity, usually to his own bemusement. He was a little skin-

ny guy, 5'2", 105 pounds, size 7 shoe. But everyone who ever met him remembers his beaming smile and gregarious nature. He was a very likeable, winsome young man.

And he was strong, his character sound. Twice he was beaten up by straights who thought he was coming on to them. Once, on a summer holiday in Morocco before high school senior year, he was accosted and raped by a street gang. But he had the fortitude to report his humiliation to the police. When he left the country, the local police were so impressed by this stalwart young American student that they gave him souvenirs. And lately, he had met an older man from Denver over the Internet. After weeks of lengthy correspondence in which they had gotten acquainted and secure with each other, Matt invited him to Laramie for their first weekend together. Brian was to arrive October 9. Matt was lying in the hospital unconscious that day, dying.

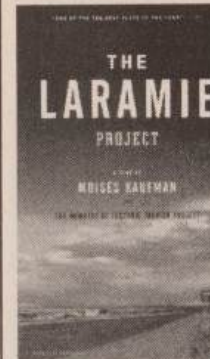
For 18 hours he was tied to the fence on that windy Wyoming high plain, under blazing stars, then unrelenting sun. He was bleeding to death, his head bashed in, suffering hypothermia during the near-freezing night, before Kreifels literally stumbled onto him. At the hospital, the doctors couldn't operate because his head was so mangled. How he managed to hold on for as long as he did—until his parents arrived from Saudi Arabia to say their last goodbyes—is yet one more example of Matthew's incredible will to live and his love for life.

Matthew Shepard's story is first among equals of those who have suffered senseless torments because of sexual orientation. He means as much to the world as he does to the characters depicted onstage in *The Laramie Project*. He may never have craved the attention nor the notoriety from victimhood, but he has it now. He is our symbol of hope, as blazing as the canopy of stars over his broken body. And we will never forget. ■

Matthew Shepherd was not the only hate crime.

Although the death of Matthew Shepard and the community aftereffects have been immortalized on stage in Kaufman's *Laramie Project*, as has the murder of transgender Teena Brandon in two powerful films, sadly these young people have not been the first—nor will they be the last—victims of senseless violence and hatred against sexual orientation.

As a web sidebar to *The Laramie Project*, *OutSmart* has compiled descriptions of four recent hate crimes, two occurring in Houston last year. These killings probably will never be dramatized nor carry the emotional weight that overlay Shepard and Brandon's deaths, but every victim needs to be commemorated if only to keep us vigilant, wary, and angry enough to continue the fight for change and social equality. Go to www.OutSmartMagazine.com.—David Groover



THE PAPERBACK
In the aftermath of the Matthew Shepard murder, the people of Laramie, Wyoming, as well as the world, were trying to understand the hate and fear that could bring about such a tragedy. In November 1998, award-winning playwright Moisés Kaufman and nine members of his theater company traveled to Laramie. What they found were the voices of real people responding to tragedy in their midst. What they created, *The Laramie Project*, is a vivid mosaic that is "deeply moving. . . [Kaufman] has a remarkable gift for giving a compelling theatrical flow to journalistic and historical material. . . [The Laramie Project] is determined . . . to find the light in an event of harrowing darkness" (*The New York Times*). • Kaufman (author of *Gross Indecency*) and his Tectonic Theater Project conducted more than 200 interviews with the citizens of Laramie to create this portrait of a town struggling with a horrific murder. The savage killing of Shepard, a young gay intellectual, has become a national symbol of intolerance. But the people of Laramie—both the friends of Matthew and those who hated him without knowing him—the tragedy was personal. The result is a complex and sympathetic portrait of a town that dispels the simplistic myths and stereotypes of the national media, and shows the people of Laramie struggling with the aftermath of an appalling event that made them question their belief that "it can't happen here." • The paperback is available for \$11 at your favorite bookstore.

THE HBO ORIGINAL PICTURE *The Laramie Project*, directed by Moisés Kaufman, starring Laura Linney (*Tales of the City*, *More Tales . . .*, *Further Tales . . .*), Steve Buscemi (*Divine Trash*), and Christina Ricci (*The Opposite of Sex*, *Pecker*), and featuring Janeane Garofalo, Joshua Jackson, Camryn Manheim, and Peter Fonda, is scheduled to air in mid-March.

MATTHEW SHEPARD MOVIE The Matthew Shepard Story, directed by Roger Spottiswoode (*And the Band Played On*), and starring Stockard Channing (*The Truth About Jane*, *To Wong Foo . . .*) and Sam Waterston (*Serial Mom*), is scheduled to air in the spring on NBC. One of the executive producers is Goldie Hawn.

Wfter the last year, most of the questions I have been getting from my clients are: "When will this be over?" and "When will it get better?"

Currently, we are under the influences of Saturn and Pluto sitting in opposition. Pluto is about expunging all that is old, and Saturn is the principle of stability and practicality—you can see how we might get some mixed messages here. This influence actually began in January 2001 and will end mid-June 2002. After June, we should see the economy begin to rebuild. We will still be involved in the fight against terrorism well into January 2003. Eclipses occur in May, June, November, and December 2002, making them trigger months.

What does all of this mean for you? There will be a continuing struggle between freedom and individual rights. The "tech" part of the market will still be down as it tries to find a way to recover. The government will increase its examination of the mail, e-mail, airline travel, and other communications. The travel industry and the airlines are going through the same astrological influences that the banking industry went through in the mid-to-late '80s, with no real solutions until the beginning of 2003. Religion takes a more prominent role. And the "fringe" elements want their time on stage.

Mercury is retrograde Jan. 18–Feb. 8, May 15–June 8, and Sept. 14–Oct. 6, making these good times for personal and professional review, cleaning out the closets and file drawers—and *not* good times time to start new projects or make major purchases. Look for issues and problems to come to a head so you can bring about resolution. Venus is retrograde Oct. 10–Nov. 21. This is a time to be cautious with investments and not the best time for makeovers and plastic surgery.

The eclipses this year are May 26, June 10, June 24, Nov. 20, and Dec. 4, stimulating people to voice their own version of the truth, to take stands based on "principles" rather than the practicality of a situation.

For you more astrologically minded folks, *the planets' movements are in italics*, while the interpretations are in regular type.

Back to the Future



Lilly Roddy's annual horoscope for 2002

All 12 "celebrities" are (or were) gay, lesbian, or bisexual



Capricorn

(Dec. 22–Jan. 19)

Janis Joplin

singer

• Jan. 19, 1943 •
(died 1970)

Jupiter moves into your solar eighth house in August. Happiness in relationships is on the increase. Optimism surrounds your connection with your partner. If you are single, this is a fabulous time to get out and beat those

bushes. Your partner may also be expanding his or her horizons—maybe a chance to travel, hopefully with you in tow. Business partnerships also prosper. After August, you'll get clear about how to use your money for growth in business. Overall, this is a good time for investing. Your desire for sexual intimacy is also on the increase. Getting away from it all with your partner could do wonders for your bank account.

• **Saturn is in your solar sixth house.** Your ruling planet, Saturn, wants your work environment in order, making the office work better as a whole. You may be focused on details you normally ignore, and act as though you are the boss (even if you are). But be careful—if you overload yourself with

responsibilities, your health could suffer. Time for a checkup or improvement in your health and diet regimes.

• **Uranus and Neptune are in your solar second house.** These planets call to your youth and creative spirit. If you're not feeling creatively fulfilled at work, you may find yourself daydreaming about the fun of your younger days. Those adventuresome planets are in your money sector, drawing you to high-tech investments or alternate power sources—something unconventional. Found yourself browsing in thrift stores and trendy art galleries? Time to integrate that youthful energy into your moneymaking machinations... or be bored to death.

• **Pluto is in your solar 12th house.** You are exorcising those old devils from your religion and spirituality. Your current religion better make itself more real and useful or you will be out looking for a new temple. Maybe a more evangelical approach. You are looking for that passion fruit, the holy grail, the lady of the lake. In a more secular approach, you are interested in exposing illusion—from your employer's business ethics to your partner's flimsy excuses about why she or he was so late getting home. As you sniff out the truth, you will be able to smell a lie no matter how sweet-scented they are.



Aquarius

(Jan. 20–Feb. 18)

Susan Love
oncologist/writer
• Feb. 9, 1948 •

Jupiter moves into your solar seventh house in August. Daily life is getting hectic. Your work environment is getting a facelift, plus you're thinking about adding some skills to your résumé. In August, romantic relationships start to glow. Attractive? You're like a magnet these days, pulling people to you—maybe foreigners or people who work in international businesses. Travel may be involved. After August, luck runs high. If you are a writer, publishing is up for you.

• **Saturn is in your solar fifth house.** Creative energies are high, but with an underlying theme of putting them to use, or marketing them. Outcomes are important: If there's no direct return, forget it. If you have children, they may be testing their boundaries of adulthood, ignoring any authority figures. If you suddenly feel blocked creatively, back off that critical side and give yourself some room. Ask others for their views so you don't get caught up in this personal eddy of hypercritical behavior.

• **Uranus and Neptune are in your solar first house.** These planets cause you to rip up your mental carpeting and search for any crumbs of unhappiness in your life. Sounds like a big job? It is, but you'll do it, since your itchy feet are going to find a new path whether you

like it or not. You may switch into hermit mode, shunning anyone from your past, but things lighten up after August, when new fun people enter stage right.

• **Pluto is in your solar 11th house.** Transforming all the groups you belong to is your mission, should you choose to accept it. No coffee and chitchat for you—you have your eye on the larger mission, and you're prepared to unearth any hidden agendas that are getting in the way. Revealing your truth to the group becomes more than just a passion; it may become your lifework. If you find yourself at the head of an organization, make sure that you enlist some help. You may have to share the credit, but you can also share the blame.



Pisces

(Feb. 19–March 20)

Barbara Jordan
politician
• Feb. 21, 1936 •
(died 1996)

Jupiter enters your solar sixth house in August. Time to frolic. Career? Relationships? Phooey! Life needs more games and prizes and less security concerns. You are feeling childlike and find that your charm and charisma act as a people magnet. If you do want to work, your products and ideas sell easily. In August, you return from your mental vacation ready to work with more enthusiasm than you have had in a while. Times are ripe for a promotion or even a raise.

• **Saturn is in your solar fourth house.** And now for something totally opposite of what I just wrote. Saturn wants you to be grounded, practical, and to establish a foundation from which to build the rest of your life. And why would the Goddess do this to you? She has a great sense of humor. Family pressures can sure make you want to leave the house screaming. And sometimes that is the perfect idea. Normally, you have large boundaries and you want to help everyone on the planet. But not this year. If you feel guilty about this newfound reticence, just keep asking yourself, "Is this my job?"

• **Uranus and Neptune are in your solar 12th house.** Bold new ideas are percolating in the hidden areas of your brain, especially after August. Sure, people might think you are a bit crazy—but you have a good plan on how to make the planet come alive. Forget the old order, you are ready to try almost anything new, and are looking high and low to find your greater purpose—including the spiritual plane or even past lives. School or travel could be on your agenda.

• **Pluto is in your solar 10th house.** Your career is downsizing. What to keep and what to get rid of—the choice is entirely up to you. Are you really happy in what you are doing? If the answer to that is yes, you can stay. If the answer is even a little bit "no," you may have to

leave. Let's face it—sticking around when it was time to leave has always been an issue for you, so this time, exit with confidence. Some of you are retiring simply because you just don't know what else to do. Things will improve, but only after the end of June.



Aries

(March 21–April 19)

Margaret Cammermeyer
colonel, U.S. military
• Mar. 24, 1942 •

Jupiter moves into your solar fifth house in August. In the first half of the year, you want your home base more comfortable—some remodeling, or even a move? You resolve old family issues so everyone comes out a winner. Time to break through routines and add some adventure to your life. As your creativity picks up after August, you are ready to be playful and enjoy your new gorgeous home. Investments should prove fruitful. Groups and business associations are important to your life. You may find new loves, friends, and fabulous business contacts through these connections.

• **Saturn is in your solar third house.** All projects and relationships will have to be reviewed and renewed. As you scrutinize what you really know deep down, you are ready to invest yourself heart and soul into those projects that you choose to focus on. You're feeling serious, deliberate, and directed—but not pushy. You might feel a calling to go back to school. You are also reviewing early childhood friendships. Relationships with siblings could be tense as you figure out who is really in charge.

• **Uranus and Neptune are in your solar 11th house.** Regarding old friends and acquaintances, you're feeling bored and isolated—maybe even betrayed. You are ready for some fresh life—new friends with a bigger picture of how the Universe works and a stronger spiritual tone about their lives. Any business or community groups better supply plenty of meaning, or your money and time are out of there. You may find big holes in your life and career dreams, especially after August. This will propel you forward to look for something to put in those holes.

• **Pluto is in your solar ninth house.** In questioning your knowledge and education this year, most likely you will find it inadequate. As you look at your former vision of the truth, you will find out you didn't have a large enough picture of the world. Your horizons widen, and you will embrace this experience. You will be ready to take a leadership role and lead others into this new future view of world culture. But you will not keep your opinions to yourself. And this may make others uncomfortable with your version of the truth. →



Taurus (April 20–May 20)

Gore Vidal
writer/actor
(seen here in 1997's *Gattaca*)
• April 29, 1932 •

Jupiter moves into your solar fourth house in August. You are more talkative than usual—and more adventuresome than the normal cautious Bulls and Cows. Learning is high on your radar, you information highway hog you. And you may even travel to get this information. And speaking of transportation, let's talk new car. New luxury car. After August, your money and time are going toward your family and your home. Might even be a good time to start your own business. Of course, it will have to be home-based, but you are so ready for that.

• **Saturn is in your solar second house.** The microscope is on your worth and investments. A more conservative investment plan ap-

peals to you. Money feels tight even if you are in a safe economic position. Reevaluate your salary and/or your fees—in general, look at how you are treated by others. You will want to obtain what you are worth. Business partnerships are rocky in

May and June. If you don't share the same clearly stated goals, you will be cruising solo.

• **Uranus and Neptune are in your solar 10th house.** These two planets are creating all the hubbub in your life. You are dissatisfied with your current career goals, yet don't feel like you can attach your anchor to something stable and solid. You are questioning every decision and questioning it again. You have second-guessed yourself so much, you don't know which way is up with your life goals. One thing you know is what you *don't* like, and you are ridding yourself of those people and things with certainty. Family members may test your loyalty and love. Always remember whom you

have to love first if you are going to love anyone.

• **Pluto is in your solar eighth house.** And what is the core reason you really want to be with your partner? Pull off those masks and look at each other's deepest and darkest secrets. While you're staring at your partner, don't forget to pick up a mirror. Yikes! Who's that? Don't let those money issues divert you from the truth you are discovering. You are ready to allow yourself to be supported emotionally. You could really find out if you are made for each other; soul mates reborn. Maybe yes, maybe no. May and June will answer those questions.



Gemini (May 21–June 21)

Raymond Burr
actor (best known for
Perry Mason and *Ironsides*)
• May 21, 1917 •
(died 1993)

Jupiter moves into your solar third house in August. You are working hard this year on expanding your financial base, wanting more return from your money (and also wanting to spend more). At the same time, you are rediscovering talents that you had stashed in the attic several years ago. After August, wiping the dust off them won't be enough—you will want to do something with them. Watch for new people to come into your life in August and September to help with these new creative endeavors.

• **Saturn is in your solar first house.** Saturn is your driver for this year: She is turning the spotlight on all those details in your life you usually so successfully avoid. It's like you are trying on all the clothes in your psychic closet to see what fits, what doesn't, and what's in style. You're in a big cycle of endings and beginnings. If you are over 30, look back to 1972 and 1973—Saturn was in the same area of your life then as now. You are seeing every part of your life more clearly. After July, you will be ready to make some decisions

and stick to them.

• **Uranus and Neptune are in your solar ninth house.** With these planets here, you are ready to take old habits and routines out to the dumpster. Time for a totally different cultural context for your life. Travel sounds good. Friends and associates have to have a larger worldview because you will not be able to contend with prejudice and bigotry. After August, you will be taking this new vision and bringing it home to your work and daily life. Right now, your plate can't be too full.

• **Pluto is in your solar seventh house.** Relationships... ha ha ha ha ha ha! You probably want a little more detail than that. You finally get up the courage to invite that someone over and they reschedule for a, uh, yoga class. If it can't be real, you don't want it—which is scaring the panties off most potential suitors. Your relationships can start and stop in the same day

and you will think you have been involved with that person for 10 years. After the end of June, you turn the intensity meter down a couple of microns and life returns to semi-normal.



Cancer (June 22–July 22)

Jimmy Somerville
singer/songwriter
• June 22, 1961 •

Jupiter moves into your solar second house in August. You have been busy busy this past year, and it's not going to stop. It's all too easy to overschedule your life with too much fun when you're as danged upbeat as you are—you are even philosophically upbeat about the larger purposes of potholes. It may be hard to understand that not everyone shares your Pollyanna attitude. Crabs walk sideways and we can avoid having to deal with anything or anyone directly. (Did I say "we"?) This is a great time to promote yourself, your business, your partner, meet new people, travel around the world in 80 days, and get more orga-

nized than Martha Stewart. After August, all this enthusiasm moves into your money and resources sector, as you both make more and spend more. Just try to keep a balance.

• **Saturn is in your solar 12th house.** Traditionally, this is the house of spirituality and you want goddess/god to make a visit to your house for, oh... say... just a weekend. Your vegetable soup is all vegetarian and she will just love it. For you, religion, spiritual beliefs, and philosophic principles are not worth a darn if you can't use them in your daily life. Be careful as you punch holes in other people's views. They may not want to be your friend anymore, even after you have enlightened them. Instead, try writing down your views so you can share what you have gleaned with a wider audience.

• **Uranus and Neptune are in your solar eighth house.** Essentially, can you have a real friendship with your spouse? Do you really share common points of view or are you just keeping your thoughts and feelings inside to keep the peace? Well, even if you are trying to, they aren't letting you. If there are undiscovered mysteries, you both will discover them after August. Let them support you emotionally and economically. Go ahead. Just try.

• **Pluto is in your solar sixth house.** You are sick of your inefficient humdrum routines, so you're taking them on a trip to a foreign land—even if it's just the psychic realm of GetReal-istan or NoMoreBS-ia. This means

more direct and real relationships with co-workers. And you are finally paying attention to your health. You are going to get rid of those bad habits, and you won't stop until you have done it this year. Make a list so you can keep score.



**Leo
(July 23–Aug. 22)**
.....
James Baldwin
writer
• Aug. 2, 1924 •
(died 1987)

Jupiter moves into your solar first house in August. You are busy exploring new areas of spirituality. You have always been drawn to things that are designed to help validate the sense of self—and to a spirituality that puts you in touch with others whom you can bounce your ideas against. This year, you are more interested in integrating that within yourself than validating it through others. In some ways, you are more solid in your beliefs and less concerned with what others think. After August, you begin to grow personally as you put those views into action. You can expect the last half of the year to be very, very busy. You will want to meet new people with whom you can share your views.

If you are single, this can be a great time to meet that right person.

• **Saturn is in your solar 11th house.** If friends and co-workers are not showing you the respect you deserve, they will be hearing about it. Groups and business associations need an unambiguous purpose or you're out the door. And no more sitting in the audience, you're taking back your leadership roar... I mean role. If you have children, you are cutting the cord—they want their independence and you are happy to give it to them.

• **Uranus and Neptune are in your solar 7th house.** So you are attracting mystical poetic merchant mariners who have a slight drug and alcohol dependence and prefer to write about commitment rather than be in one? And why doesn't this surprise you? Or is that partner you have had around for decades now paying attention to you? What is going on? Have you entered the twilight zone? No, you are being more real and you want real people in your life. No more push-me-pull-you scenarios. Bad relationships are falling out of your life and you are ready for that someone with whom you can be real and honest. Be careful what you wish for.

• **Pluto is in your solar fifth house.** Awaken, awaken, little inner child. You are hungry and I am here to nurture you back to health. Don't you remember the good times? Oh, maybe there weren't any, but there will be. I promise. And all you want is the truth! Are you sure I can't just bake you something? →

New Year's 2002

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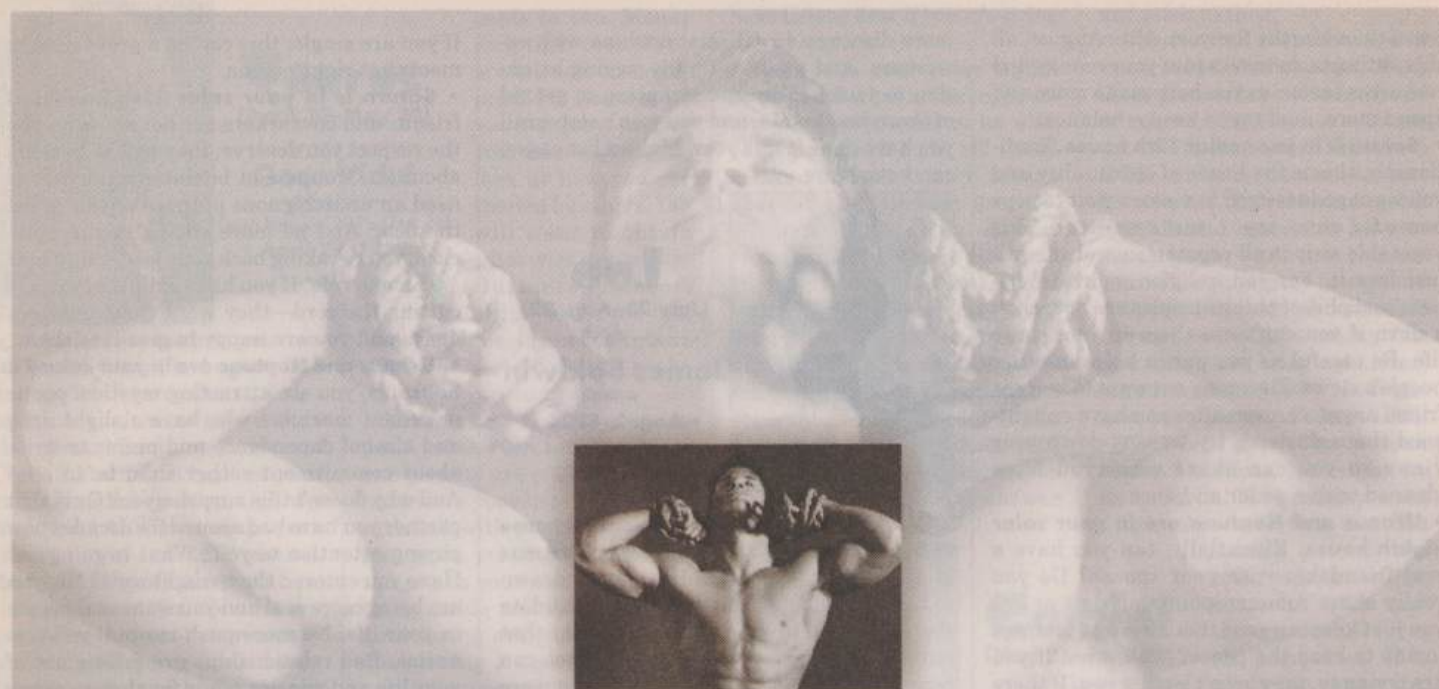
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Virgo (Aug. 23–Sept. 22)

Nancy Kulp
 actor (best known for her
 role as Miss Hathaway
 on *The Beverly Hillbillies*)
 • Aug. 28, 1921 •
 (died 1991)

Jupiter moves into your solar 12th house in August. This past year you've been relishing group activity, and this year you want more. If only you beware of overcommitment, you can fly high. Your charisma's so strong, people are ready just to be next to you in line at the grocery store. You can make use of your magnet charm in business as well. In August, your charm level goes up yet another notch, as well as your psychic talents. Can you believe it? But you are also ready for some time to yourself. A vacation is looking good. Negative people are not invited.

• **Saturn is in your solar 10th house.** Saturn is kicking your career in the butt. You had better be in top form or she will be letting you know just how far you haven't gotten yet. And no one can judge a Virgo like a Virgo can judge themselves. Those short floggers were invented by a Virgo. Yes, we know you like to follow others because then you can blame them when anything goes wrong. No more. Stand up and take your place at the helm and, yes, you will make some mistakes. Start your own business, get a promotion, take on a new project. But don't wait. Keep your options open till after the end of June when the aftershocks stop.

• **Uranus and Neptune are in your solar sixth house.** Your health and work habits are being charged and changed. Your tolerance for your co-workers' BS is at an all-time low. If you are trying to keep it inside like you always do, look forward to tension and ulcers. Make sure you are getting plenty of exercise and eating right. Your system is sensitive, and just a little bit of the wrong stuff will throw you. And, yes, they are redoing your computer system at work. And, no, they can't seem to figure out why it isn't working. It is just a living being and wants to do things her way. Take a break in August and September.

• **Pluto is in your solar fourth house.** As you continue to work on your house (both real and psychic) from the flood damage, you are getting rid of rotten things that have been hidden for years and years. Oops, aren't those your parents you are throwing out with those old magazines? Oh, they are not your real parents, just the ones that live inside of you. You are establishing a foundation based on who you really are—although giving up illusions is always a painful process. →

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Libra

(Sept. 23–Oct. 23)

Isaac Mizrahi
fashion designer

• Oct. 14, 1961 •

Jupiter enters your 11th house in August.

It is a great time to expand your career goals and directions. More customers. Promotions. You are getting recognition for all the work you have done. When opportunity knocks at your door, be sure and answer. You don't have to make a decision, you wishy-washy seesaws, just go *look*. In August, you are more social as new friends and business associates come into the picture. Community affiliations can be profitable. You are feeling innovative—think about relationship potential in the audience.

• **Saturn is in your solar ninth house.** Time to get clear on your vision of the universe—and then share these insights into human and cultural interactions with everyone you know. They may not want to hear your truth—it is the darker side of reality and they don't want to look too closely. You may also find big holes in your own life philosophy. Be careful about defending a tradition just because you've gotten used to it. This is very strong in May and June.

• **Uranus and Neptune are in your solar fifth house.** Besides being truthful about your life, you get to enjoy it at the same time. All your play and creativity must have meaning and a deeper purpose. And I hear there is an opening for a juggler in the circus. You are attracted to spiritually motivated causes and people. You are about to have a relationship with an enlightened being. Just be sure you have protection. You are looking for outlets to express your creativity, and having chil-

dren may or may not be on your menu for 2002. One way or another, it needs to get out. • **Pluto is in your solar third house.** You did want a new car, didn't you? What does affording one have to do with anything? The day-to-day interactions of life are under your microscope. It may be hard to see the big picture when you are seeing the details of dirt molecules. And, gosh, you are taking things so seriously. I was just joking when I said your childhood dramas were going to be published in *Reader's Digest*. OK, maybe I wasn't. A good therapist could be very helpful this year.



Scorpio

(Oct. 24–Nov. 21)

Randy Harrison

actor, *Queer as Folk*
• Nov. 2, 1977 •

• **Jupiter moves into your solar 10th house in August.** You are gathering your forces to make a big career push in March. You are learning and teaching and your mind is like a sponge. Just watch out that you don't soak up that puddle of spilt milk. More in a feeling than an intellectual mood, you are connected emotionally to what you are learning about. Also, the world's culture is pulling on you and you can easily be drawn into cause-oriented movements. Do be careful. It is not that your emotions are wrong, but maybe you should question the people who are leading the cause. After August, the push for your career gets even stronger. And it is an easy push. You seem to be able to make headway without much effort, and you are more noticed than usual. This can be a great time for promotion of yourself and/or your business.

• **Saturn is in your solar eighth house.** Saturn, the planet of structure and discipline, enters your relationships sector and says, "Just the facts, ma'am." You launch into a detailed and dramatic description of all your past experiences and hurts and how they affected the way you treated your partner. "Were you clear, ma'am?" Saturn, the taskmaster, asks again. "Or did you give mixed messages?" You try to explain how you wanted to say what was in your heart and mind, but you didn't want to injure your partner. Saturn's crone face is looking more and more steely. "It looks as though we have to go for a ride to the underworld," she says. You pull the pistol from the bureau drawer and shoot her. Startled, you awake from your dream and there is your partner sleeping soundly beside you. You grab your pillow and hit him or her with it. (Message: The time has come to be more direct in your relationships and get rid of whatever past distresses are getting in the way. But you do not go down that path willingly.)

• **Uranus and Neptune are in your solar fourth house.** You are as rootless as you can be. Now that you have that place you always wanted just to be yourself, you are not sure about it. Solitude calls. You feel more distant from your family, and your friends always seem to want something from you. You are strong, but you always seem to fall way down on your own list of things to do. You have to come first this year, even if you don't know what you want. You will be clearer after August.

• **Pluto is in your solar second house.** Revitalizing your finances is high on your agenda as money's vise grip continues through June. After that, you are freer and can invest your time, resources, and talents into projects that you like. You have been missing that commitment part of you. The uncertainty is still there, but after June you won't be second-guessing yourself as much. Take care of any past debts or tax problems. You don't want them following you around after this year.



Sagittarius

(Nov. 22–Dec. 21)

Margaret Mead

anthropologist

• Dec. 16, 1901 •
(died 1978)

• **Jupiter moves into its home, your solar ninth house, in August.** You are digging deep to find out just exactly what and who are you. In relationships, you find out if your partner has been listening to you. Do you really want the same things in life? You are exposing those core wants and desires and taking the chance to find out if your partner can really handle intimacy. In August you are somewhat lighter about the whole process. Travel is good to clear and expand the mind.

• **Saturn is in your solar seventh house.** This planet really reflects how much you are looking at your life in a long-term fashion. Every decision hinges on the next choice, and you are nervous about making the wrong one. The worst thing to do is freeze and do nothing. Although you will be naturally cautious, it is time to rework all your commitments. You have only till the end of June to get this done.

• **Uranus and Neptune are in your solar third house.** You are communicating more directly than ever before. And you are getting subtle information from people that they are not even

aware they are sending. This can be quite confusing. Oftentimes, they will wonder what you are talking about or deny it. Trust your instincts. Also, be careful driving this year: Your mind is wandering around and is not al-

ways in total contact with your body. Relationships can be confusing, since you will pick up on your partner's unconscious message process. If you are in a business where it is important to read the indirect messages that people send, you could do very well.

• **Pluto is in your solar first house.** As Pluto, the cosmic enema planet, moves over your Sagittarius planets, she is cleaning any unnecessary dirt out of your life. Even if you are perfectly happy with that dirt. This slow-moving planet has been here since 1996—and will stay until 2012. The effect is intensified this year because Saturn is adding her weight to the process. Simply put, if you are trying to hold on to something, that resistance is causing you great pain. Let go of it. You will not be the same person afterward. Those of you born December 5–10 are the most impacted by Pluto this year. The rest of you will feel her influence over the next few years.

Lilly Roddy is a Houston-based astrologer. She can be reached at lillycath@aol.com or <http://communities.msn.com/LillysAstrologicalPad>.

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Humor by Sally Sheklow

THANKS FOR SHARING

Hello. I don't mean to pry, but I'm sensitive to details, and I'm picking up from some comments you made, and the ring you're wearing, that you might be heterosexual? I know it's none of my business, but I knew some heterosexuals in high school, and I never had the nerve to ask them about their lives. I didn't want to embarrass them or anything. So I was wondering if you'd be willing to share, to talk about what it's like being straight.

Did your family have a problem with it? What was it like telling them? Did they reject you? Are they nice to your—what is it you people call your partners?—your spouse? Oh, husband and wife, that's a cute term. You look like you could be brother and sister! You probably get that all the time. Anyway, have you ever felt discriminated against? Has anyone actually singled you out and made fun of you, or treated you differently? Did you ever wish you could take a pill and not be straight anymore?

I, for one, think it's great. People should be themselves. But some people are uncomfortable with certain aspects of it. Nobody wants their kids around heterosexuals—you know, the child molestation thing and all. Naturally, we're protective. You can understand that, can't you? I'm glad you're not militant about it, not shoving it down anyone's throat the way some of them do.

I know this is personal, but I don't have any other way to find these things out. We didn't touch on the straight lifestyle in college psychology class. I thought the Deviant Behavior chapter would have covered it. But those uptight professors were too embarrassed, so they skipped it. If you don't mind, I'd really like to ask you something. I have always wondered what it's like living in a dual-gendered household. I can't imagine it. I mean, what do you do about the toilet seat? Up? Down? I'll bet that takes some getting used to. I don't know if I could do it.

And what about going out? That's got to

be tough. How do you feel at parties where you're the only mixed couple there? Are your friends OK with it? Do they mind if you dance together? It must be hard always having the same partner lead. Do people stare at you? Or do you go ahead and do it anyway? That is so brave! I really admire you. A lot of places ignore mixed couples now, so you can pretty much get away with it, can't you?

Deep down, we're really all the same, aren't we? Hell, I don't care what you do in the privacy of your own bedroom. I don't even want to think about it. But why do some straight people have to flaunt it all the time? I'm not prejudiced, I think everyone should live and let live. Don't you? A person can't help it if they're straight, or an alcoholic, or whatever.

Did your family have a problem with it? What was it like telling them? Did they reject you? Are they nice to your—what is it you people call your partners?—your spouse? Oh, husband and wife, that's a cute term.

Hey, I have a heterosexual cousin in Omaha—a lot of you are from there, aren't you? I was wondering if maybe you knew her. She's single and doesn't know where to go to meet people. I'll bet you know where the straight bar is there, don't you? Gee, it must be hard trying to find a partner, or to even have the self-esteem to get out there and meet people. I never thought about that. The straight community has its own church, doesn't it? I wonder if I could come along sometime and see what you do. I think I'd be OK being around all those straight people. As long as none of them tried to make a pass at me! Ha, ha, just kidding.

But seriously, I've been mistaken for straight before. Once I saw a straight person I thought was very attractive. That doesn't make me straight, does it?



Sally Sheklow lives and writes in the Pacific Northwest. She is one of the four funny lesbians who founded and perform in WYMPROV!, Oregon's award-winning improv troupe. Contact her at sally@wymprov.com.

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HOW TO GET REAL

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Ten steps for actually achieving your health goals in the new year.

This year I'm gonna... whatever. Heard it be-fore? Maybe even said it before? What's kept you from reaching those lofty goals, anyway? Chances are it wasn't a lack of desire. Well, this year will be different. Take charge of your health and plan for success this year with the following tips for a fantastic you in 2002!

1) SET A GOAL: What is your goal? It doesn't work if you say you're going to eat better this year but you don't know whether you want to gain weight or lose it. So, be as specific as possible. Outline what you want to accomplish with your physique, and write it down. Nothing helps you more through the tough times (when you feel like quitting) than being able to review your game plan. Setting your goal gives you direction and guides you through making the right decisions when it comes to your fitness routine.

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2) FIND A GYM: Weight training is a must for healthy living. If you aren't currently a member of a gym, then take time to research your options. Sure, you can always send away for one of those "home gyms" that are advertised on TV, but, come on, will it really have a chance when

**Guys: Don't leave anything "hanging."
Gals: Don't give yourself a black eye.**

the first thing you see when you come home from work is your TV or refrigerator? Probably not. Put your money to better use. Join a gym.

Just make sure that you research your gym options before signing on the dotted line. Make sure the gym suits your equipment or group class needs, that it's near either work or home, and that it is clean, safe, and friendly. If it helps, make a list of what's important to you before you approach a gym membership desk, and interview at least three locations before making your final decision. If sales staff apply pressure to have you commit immediately ("We're only extending this special offer for today..."), then mark them off your list and move on. Gyms like these are more interested in their sales numbers than they are in their quality.

3) GET HELP: There's something to be said about knowing what you know. If you know enough to realize that you plus that weight bar can cause serious injury (even death) to yourself (and possibly innocent bystanders), then you are smart enough to know when it's time to seek the help of a professional. Personal trainers are excellent guides in this area. They can help you set up your weight routine, suggest appropriate cardio training, and walk you through proper form and technique for getting the most out of each exercise.

4) DRESS FOR SUCCESS: No, I'm not talking "style." No fashion police, please! I'm talking comfort and practicality. Many facilities have mandatory dress codes. Others do not. The perfect rule of thumb is to wear a loose-fitting, sleeved T-shirt, sweat pants (or mid-thigh shorts—sorry, guys, no "Daisy Dukes"), comfortable, well-fitting shoes, and finally, athletic support. Guys: Don't leave anything "hanging." Gals: Don't give yourself a black eye. You know what I mean.

5) RAID THE KITCHEN: Go through your refrigerator and pantry for those foods that are excessively high in fat and low on nutrition. Take these items and throw them out, or donate them to the local food bank. Not making these items readily available will help keep your weight goals intact.

6) STOCK WHOLESOME: When you do replace your food items, be sure to restock on wholesome foods that are low in fat, high in fiber, and have the least processing or

preservatives possible.

7) ORDER OUT: Maybe shopping wholesome or even cooking is completely out of the question. There are many pre-prepared food services that you can choose from. These places take care of everything for you and arrange to have all of your meals delivered right to your front door! Diet Gourmet, Smart Meals, and Epicurean Delight are just a few that come to mind.

8) BE FAITHFUL: To your cardio. It's not uncommon for novices to believe that, through weight training alone, fat can be transformed into muscle. This is not the case. Fat is fat, and nothing else. If you want to get rid of it, you must burn it off. That means consistently adding cardio (walking, jogging, swimming, etc.) to your weight-training routine. Don't let this part of your routine slacken. It really makes a world of difference.

9) PLAN YOUR REWARD: Be good to yourself. For some, just reaching their goal is reward enough. For others, it calls for nothing less than a "I'm great"-fest! So, go ahead and celebrate. Good reward ideas could include getting a massage, buying a new outfit, or taking a weekend vacation to some place relaxing.

10) REASSESS: Speaking of rewards, don't forget to reward yourself with a new goal! Ask yourself, "Where should I go next?" Maybe you want to improve on the progress you've just made, or maybe you just want to maintain it. In either case, reassess your goals to insure your continued success. ■

John-Aaron is a nationally certified personal trainer, member of the International Association 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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Calendar of Events

Deadline for OutSmart's February issue is 5 p.m., Saturday, January 12.

JANUARY

Weekly (Tue., Wed., Thu.)

HIV Testing. The Montrose Clinic offers free confidential HIV testing every Tuesday at The Club Houston (2205 Fannin), 8 pm-midnight; every Wednesday at Mary's (1022 Westheimer), 4-8 pm, and at the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center (803 Hawthorne), 6-9 pm; and every Thursday at Toyz Disco (5322 Glenmont), 10 pm-1 am. Call 713/830-3070 for other testing locations. **PLEASE NOTE:** Free & confidential HIV/AIDS testing is also available from 2-5 pm on the 9th & 23rd in Canoe at Northwoods AIDS Coalition, 1414 South Frazier, Ste. 106. Info: 936/441-1614.

8, 22 (Tue.)

Heal Thyself. Beginning this month, Inner Journey Ministries conducts a Healing Circle with Reiki masters Deidra and Caerlon Arthur every other week at the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. These circles are open to anyone in the community interested in healing, and other Reiki masters are invited to join in a Reiki share. Love offerings are welcomed, with a portion benefiting the center. 7-9 pm @ the center, 803 Hawthorne. Info: 713/524-3818 (the center) or www.innerjourneyministries.org.

10, 20 (Thu., Sun.)

In the Stars. Inner Journey Ministries now offers two astrology classes for laypeople who want to understand the signs of the zodiac and their influence on human affairs. \$25, with a portion of each fee donated to the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. 5:30-7:30 pm on the 10th and 4:15-6:30 pm on the 20th @ the center, 803 Hawthorne. For more info: 713/524-3818 (the center) or www.innerjourneyministries.org.

11 (Fri.)

Margaret Cho. This past fall, the one and only Cho hit the road with her new comedy concert tour, "The Notorious C.H.O." She describes the material in this show as raw and raunchy. Is that somehow different from her previous show, "I'm the One That I Want"? No matter, we're gonna be there. The proud recipient of a Lambda Liberty Award, Margaret Cho won the first-ever GLAAD Golden Gate Award for being "an entertainment pio-

neer who has made a significant difference in promoting equal rights for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity." Call Aerial Theater box office or Ticketmaster for tickets (\$29- on human affairs. \$25, with a portion of each fee donated to the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. 5:30-7:30 pm on the 10th and 4:15-6:30 pm on the 20th @ the center, 803 Hawthorne. For more info: 713/524-3818 (the center) or www.innerjourneyministries.org.



Elvis Lives! Don't put away that white polyester jumpsuit after celebrating the King's January 8 birthday, 'cause you can wear it to ComedySportz (an improvisational comedy troupe), and they'll knock a hunk-a-hunk burning cash off your admission price. Join them for an evening of Elvis mania, where the King lives and improv is more fun than shooting at televisions. Admission is \$10 (\$8 for those in that white polyester jumpsuit). 7:30 & 10 pm @ Lambert Hall, 1703 Heights Blvd. at 17th St. More info/reservations: 713/868-1444.

12 (Sat.)

Twelfth Night is a mask-theme fundraiser presented by the Krewe of Olympus-Texas. Food, dancing, & music by Jerry Atwood. \$20 at the door (one free drink). Cash bar. Charities: Uncommon Legacy, Montrose Clinic, Houston Buyers Club, & PFLAG. 7:30-11 pm @ the Italian Cultural & Community Center, 1101 Milford (one block off Montrose Blvd.). Info: 713/721-4590.

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:** calendar@outsmartmagazine.com. **NO LISTINGS CAN BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE DEADLINE DATE—SAT., JAN. 12.**

12 (Sat.)

Deadline. Today is the deadline for your OutSmart Calendar submissions for our February issue. You can fax them by dialing 713/522-3275 or e-mail them to calendar@outsmartmagazine.com.

12 & 13 (Sat. & Sun.)

Houston Choreographers X6. Six Houston-area choreographers have selected a composer with whom to col-

laborate to create an original composition of dance and taped or live music that will premiere as part of Dance Month @ the Kaplan Theatre in the Jewish Community Center, 5601 S. Braeswood. 8 pm on Saturday, 3 on Sunday. Tickets \$15 (JCC members \$12, students/seniors \$9). For more info: 713/551-7255.

12 & 13 (Sat. & Sun.)

My Fair Lady is the story of Henry Higgins, a short-tempered, self-centered speech professor, who, on a bet, attempts to turn a sooty ragamuffin, Eliza Doolittle, into a well-bred lady. 8 pm on Saturday, 3 & 7:30 on Sunday @ Galveston's Grand 1894 Opera House, 2020 Postoffice. Tickets (\$16.50-\$65) are available by calling 409/765-1894 or by visiting www.thegrand.com.

18 (Fri.)

Positively Artistic. A decade ago, artist and teacher Patrick Palmer established the Positive Art Workshop for adults living with HIV and AIDS. This month, the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center begins offering the popular art classes. Artist Richard Fluhr takes over as the regular instructor, and other Houston artists (including Palmer) will do stints as guest teachers. The Houston chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women provides lunch for the participants. Free. Noon-2 pm every Friday @ the center, 803 Hawthorne, 713/524-3818.

19 (Sat.)

Inbal Dance Theater is Israel's oldest dance company. Their major accomplishment remains the translation & development of the rich heritage & culture of ethnic minorities—their traditions, songs, stories, & history—into the universal language of modern dance. They will make their first appearance in 25 years in the U.S. at 8 pm @ the Kaplan Theatre in the Jewish Community Center, 5601 S. Braeswood. Tickets \$18 (JCC members \$13, students/seniors \$10). For more info: 713/551-7255.

19 (Sat.)

David Dorfman Dance. It's not surprising that David Dorfman is the only modern dance choreographer to receive a profile in *Sports Illustrated*—his movements tend to be rough-&-tumble, full of surprising lifts, collisions, & breakneck momentum. Vocal, playful, & raw, his performers whirl & roll, bounce off one another, & cling together, dancing with an inner turbulence that packs a powerful dramatic punch. Presented by the Society of Performing Arts at 8 pm @ Wortham Center's Cullen Theater. Charge tickets (\$10-\$35) at 713/629-3700 or visit www.spahouston.org.

19 (Sat.)

The Mikado takes you to Japan and to the small town of Titipu, where things aren't going very well. The tiny town is on the verge of being demoted to a village—by decree of the Mikado—unless the Lord High Executioner beheads someone within one month's time. 3 & 8 pm @ Galveston's Grand 1894 Opera House, 2020 Postoffice. Tickets range from \$14.50-\$55 and are available by calling 409/765-1894 or by visiting www.thegrand.com.

20 (Sun.)

Compaq Houston Marathon. This 26.2-mile course starts at 7:30 am (wheelchairs at 7:15) @ the George R. Brown Convention Center. Two of the many charities include the People With AIDS Coalition and the Houston Area Women's Center. Info: 713/957-3453 or www.compaqhoustonmarathon.com.

20 (Sun.)

OrchestraX. A selection of musicians from OrchestraX presents a classical mini-performance at 2 pm @ Borders Books, 3025 Kirby Dr., 713/524-0200.

20 (Sun.)

Grand Opening. Creative Life Spiritual Center officially opens their Great Hall with a ceremony encompassing acknowledgment of the volunteers that made it happen & the donors who funded it; a service of dedication; a keynote talk by a special guest; and a look back through their 16-year history. At press time, it was planned that tours would start at 5 pm, the ceremony at 8, & finishing up at 10 @ the Creative Life Spiritual Center, 5326 Spring-Stuebner, Spring, Texas. More info: Jesse Jennings at 281/350-5157.

21 (Mon.)

News You Can Use. Rich Arenschieldt, director of education and outreach at the Center for AIDS, brings his knowledge of HIV care and treatment to the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center for Medical Monday, a new public forum on the third Monday of every month. Free. 7 pm @ the center, 803 Hawthorne, 713/524-3818.

23 (Wed.)

Ray Hill functions as a gay rights and a prisoners' rights activist simultaneously. He will be giving a talk on gay rights history in Houston and Martin Luther King Jr.'s influence on it. 7 pm @ First Unitarian Universalist Church's Channing Hall, 5200 Fannin. A \$10-donation is requested. The talk will be followed by a wine and cheese social. For more info: 713/524-0973.

25 (Fri.)

Ellen Goodman. Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist, is the featured speaker for Planned Parenthood of Houston and Southwest Texas's annual pro-choice luncheon. Her book *I Know Just What You Mean: The Power of Friendship in Women's Lives* (written with Patricia O'Brien), looks at women's friendships. The focus of her talk will be equality & women's issues. Cost is \$50. Noon in the Westin Galleria Ballroom, 5060 W. Alabama. Info: 713/831-6519.

25 (Fri.)

Kevin Mahogany. Da Camera of Houston, the acclaimed presenter and producer of ensemble music, continues its 2001/02 jazz series with vocalist Kevin Mahogany. Since his self-titled recording debut in 1996 and subsequent appearance in Robert Altman's *Kansas City*, Mahogany has established himself as the quintessential jazz vocalist known for his mastery of many styles including ballads, bop tunes, and blues. 8 pm @ Wortham Center's Cullen Theater, 500 Texas. Tickets (\$25-\$40; students/seniors half price) are available by contacting Da Camera Music Center, 1427 Branard, 713/524-5050, or online at www.ticketmaster.com.

26 (Sat.)

Chamber X is a romantic repertoire of the 19th century performed by principal brass members of OrchestraX. 2 pm @ Pascal/Robinson Gallery, 2307 W. Alabama. FREE. For more info: 713/225-6729 or www.orchestraX.org.

26 & 27 (Sat. & Sun.)

Our Sinatra is a musical celebration of a lifetime of songs that made Frank Sinatra famous. The production will feature a trio of young Broadway singers backed by a 16-piece orchestra. 2 & 8 pm on Saturday, 2 pm on Sunday @ Galveston's Grand 1894 Opera House, 2020



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CIRQUE DU SOLEIL'S DRALION

Limited engagement begins January 17

Fusing ancient Chinese circus traditions with Cirque du Soleil's avant-garde approach, *Dralion* is a celebration of life and the four elements that maintain the natural order: air, water, fire, and earth. *Dralion* propels these four pillars of the universe into a futuristic dimension. Here, the iridescent colors of the costumes are reflected in the metallic glints of a decor that comes straight out of the cinéma fantastique. The music borrows from more traditional sources, then bursts into the electro-symphonic realm of a world yet to come. Innovation soars to new heights as it defies the laws of nature. *Dralion* is Cirque du Soleil at its purest and features more than 55 artists from nine countries, including a house troupe of 37 Chinese acrobats. The multi-talented performers present a variety of high-caliber acts: teeterboard, ballet on lights, hoop diving, bamboo poles, juggling, single-hand balancing, double trapeze, skipping ropes, and more. *Dralion's* soundtrack is an inspired fusion of sounds from East and West, acoustic and electric, with rhythmic and lyrical motifs. At the Emmy Awards ceremonies this past September and November, *Cirque du Soleil Presents Dralion* received three Emmys: "Outstanding Variety, Music, or Comedy Special," "Outstanding Directing for a Variety or Music Program," and "Outstanding Costumes for a Variety or Music Program." You can now witness it live.

What: Cirque du Soleil's *Dralion*

When: Begins January 17

Where: Across from the George R. Brown Convention Center

Cost: \$37-\$60 (children \$26-\$42; other options available)

Tickets: 1-800-678-5440; www.dralion.com; TUTS box office

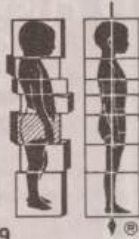


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Postoffice. Tickets (\$14.50-\$36) are available by calling 409/765-1894 or by visiting www.thegrand.com.
27 (Sun.)

Powerful Message. Inner Journey Ministries presents Power Within You, a class on taking control of life and attaining goals in 2002. \$20, with a portion of each fee donated to the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center. 4-6 pm @ the center, 803 Hawthorne. More info: 713/524-3818 (the center) or www.innerjourneyministries.org.

28 (Mon.)

Listen Up. The Margaret Root Brown Houston Reading Series presents Sherman Alexie & Lorrie Moore. Alexie, a Spokane/Coeur d'Alene Indian, is the author of the short story collections *The Toughest Indian in the World* and *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* (the basis of the film *Smoke Signals*) and the novels *Reservation Blues* and *Indian Killer*. Moore's works include the short story collections *Birds of America*, *Like Life*, & *Self-Help* and the novels *Who Will Run the Frog Hospital?* and *Anagrams*. 7:30 pm (doors open at 6:45) @ the Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. Tickets are \$5 (students/seniors free) and are available only at the door on the evening of the reading. Info: 713/521-2026 or www.inprint-inc.org.

31-Feb. 3 (Thu.-Sun.)

Houston Pan-Cultural Film Festival. This 4th biennial festival considers the theme "Direct Cinema: Independent Voices," focusing on independent American filmmakers who have inspired a whole new cinema consciousness in the U.S. & abroad. This community-based film festival brings to Houston esteemed, socially conscious artists, scholars, & filmmakers to conduct workshops on filmmaking techniques as well as to share their passion for art. The festival is organized by Ancestral Films. More info: www.ancestralfilms.org or 713/527-9548.

PLANNING AHEAD

FEBRUARY

February 2 (Sat.)

Doug Varone & Dancers: an exquisite lyricism & eloquent musicality melded with a genius for capturing true human emotion. Presented by the Society of Performing Arts at 8 pm @ Wortham Center's Cullen Theater. Charge tickets (\$10-\$35) at 713/629-3700 or visit www.spahouston.org.

February 6 & 9 (Wed. & Sat.)

Marian Anderson String Quartet. • On the 6th, the quartet is Da Camera of Houston's feature for their free lunchtime performance series, "A Little Day Music." Noon in the Wortham Center's Grand Foyer. • On the 9th, the quartet is Da Camera's feature for their free family series, "Da Camera Goes to the Zoo!" The concert is free with paid admission to the Houston Zoological Gardens (\$2.50 adults, \$2 seniors, 50¢ children 3-12; children 2 & under free). An hour prior to the concert, children have the opportunity to see, touch, & play instruments featured in that day's performance. Concert at 2 pm @ the Houston Zoological Gardens, Hermann Park, 1513 MacGregor Dr. • Program for both: "Center Stage: A Tribute to African-American Composers." For more info: 713/524-7601, ext. 15, or www.dacamera.com.

February 7 (Thu.)

Johnny Mathis. The openly gay crooner is back by popular demand. Don't miss the velvet tones & elegant style that made him a star. 8 pm @ Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. For ticket prices/more info: 713/224-7575.

February 8 (Fri.)

Sérgio & Odair Assad. These Brazilian-born brothers, a guitar duo, perform works of Brouwer, Debussy,

Piazzolla, & Rodrigo. 8 pm @ Wortham Center's Cullen Theater. Tickets are \$20-\$35 (students/seniors half price) and can be purchased by calling Da Camera of Houston at 713/524-5050 or by visiting www.dacamera.com.

February 9 (Sat.)

Heartfelt Living. Learn why your thoughts & feelings shape your life's experiences; how spiritual mind treatment (affirmative prayer) works; plus connect with a group of other like-hearted people. It's the "Science of Mind" winter classes, every Saturday from 10 am-1 pm for 13 weeks @ Creative Life Spiritual Center, 5326 Spring-Stuebner, Spring, Texas. Cost is \$225, plus books. For more info: Jesse Jennings at 281/350-5157.

February 15-17 (Fri.-Sun.)

Homes & Gardens. With over 1,500 exhibits, the 16th annual Texas Home & Garden Show is one-stop shopping for your home & garden. Includes: art, antique, & accessories showcase; gourmet cooking shows; home & garden theater; home improvement, home building, energy efficiency, and A/C & heating experts; and interior & exterior decorating ideas. Admission \$8 (kids under 14 free). More info: 713/529-1616 or visit www.texashomeandgarden.com.

March 2, 2002 (Sat.)

Chocolate Fantasy and Fine Art Auction. Waterloo Counseling Center's second annual fantasy/auction was a huge success! Almost 1,000 people joined in an elegant, fun-filled evening of friends, champagne, chocolate, coffee, music, & art. Revenue from the benefit helps Waterloo to provide counseling services to the HIV+ community and the gay, lesbian, bisexual, & transgendered communities. This funding also makes it possible to offer a sliding scale fee for those who need counseling but do not have the financial resources. Waterloo is forming committees for next year's event; they are planning to add a parking shuttle, a live auction, & new trips. To get involved, call Jack at 713/444-9922.

November 2-9, 2002 (Sat.-Sat.)

2002 Sydney Gay Games. The Houston Montrose Athletic Association with Mark Hoyer of American Express Travel will be the resource contact for the Houston contingent that will be going to the games. Hoyer has worked out a travel package that includes discounted hotel & flight rates. Visit the 2002 Sydney Gay Games website at www.sydney2002.org.au for more info about the events & registration. For reservations, call Mark at 713/365-6266 (reservation cost \$210).

PERFORMING ARTS

♦ **Call Me Madam.** An homage to the great hostess Perle Mesta (whom President Truman appointed ambassador to Luxembourg), this musical starred Ethel Merman as Sally Adams, Madame Ambassador to Lichtenberg, whose unusual brand of diplomacy might even be considered romance. Jan. 3-19 @ Main Street Theater at Chelsea Market, 4617 Montrose Blvd. Tickets are \$20-\$30. More info: 713/524-6706 or www.mainstreettheater.com.

♦ **The Desperate Hours.** A housewife's day starts just as any other day—the husband & kids off to work & school, first of the daily chores completed; all is safe & secure with her world. There is a knock on the door. When she answers it, her life & that of her family will never be the same. Tickets \$10 (students/seniors \$9; matinees \$8). Jan. 4-Feb. 2 @ Theatre Suburbia, 1410 W. 43rd St., 713/682-3525, www.theatresuburbia.com.

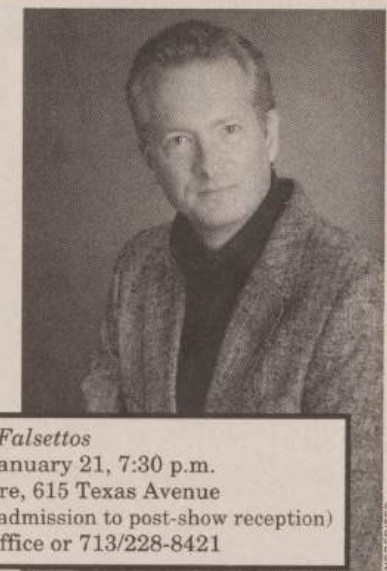
♦ **Experiment with an Air Pump.** In the same room in two different centuries—1979 & 1999—two families grapple with issues of scientific exploration and

FALSETTOS ENCORE

A neurotic family searches for family values . . . again

Falsettos was first presented in August at Ovation to critical and audience raves. Directed by Alley Theatre resident company actor Paul Hope (pictured) and benefitting The Center for AIDS: Hope and Remembrance Project, *Falsettos* is back by popular demand. Using a successful recipe that began with last year's encore presentation of *Follies*, the Alley Theatre will again host this benefit event, followed by a reception with the cast. • Winner of the 1992 Tony Award for Best Book and Best Score, *Falsettos* is a funny and touching story about a neurotic family searching for family values amidst a chaotic contemporary America. Their exploration for together-

ness is set to a pop-flavored contemporary score with "rapid-fire lyrics" that "demand attention," as Everett Evans of the *Houston Chronicle* wrote. • Proceeds from ticket sales will benefit The Center for AIDS: Hope and Remembrance Project, founded in 1995. The center acts as a catalyst for the creation and the establishment of innovative HIV/AIDS research in Houston and advocates for the entire affected population, ensuring that Houston's regional needs are factored into the national and international dialogue about HIV/AIDS.



What: Falsettos

When: Monday, January 21, 7:30 p.m.

Where: Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Avenue

Cost: \$36.50-\$51.50 (includes admission to post-show reception)

Tickets: Alley box office or 713/228-8421

CLIP & SAVE!

Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center Ongoing Calendar

With the new year, many are thinking about making new friends and/or getting more involved in the community. The Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center hosts a multitude of events and groups that offer rich opportunities for meaningful connection.

We publish one-time events in our *OutSmart* calendar, but most of the action at the community center is on an ongoing basis. If you want to hear more about an event or group, call the contact number, or leave a message at the center at 713/524-3818 and someone will get back to you. The center is located at 803 Hawthorne.

WEEKLY

- **Every Tuesday**
- **Lesbian Coming-Out Group,** 7 p.m., 713/524-3818.
- **Every Wednesday**
- **Montrose Clinic HIV testing and counseling,** 6-9 p.m., 713/830-3000.
- **Houston Committee for People's Radio,** 6:30 p.m., 713/523-0119, edi@hal-pc.org.
- **Bi-Net Houston,** 7:30 p.m., 713/467-4380.
- **Every Friday**
- **Positive Art Workshop,** noon-2 p.m., (starting Jan. 18) 713/524-3818.
- **Every Saturday**
- **Q-Patrol surveillance patrol,** 9:30 p.m., 713/528-SAFE.
- **First Monday**
- **Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Veterans of America,** 7 p.m., 713/524-3818.
- **First Tuesday**
- **Pride Committee of Houston board meeting,** 7 p.m., 713/529-6979.
- **Alternate Tuesdays**
- **Inner Journey Ministries Healing Circle,** 7-9 p.m., 281/858-7150.
- **First Wednesday**
- **Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus general meeting,** 7:30 p.m., 713/521-1000.
- **First Friday of the month**
- **First Friday Mixer,** 6-8:30 p.m., 713/524-3818.
- **First Sundays**
- **Polyamory Houston discussion group,** 3 p.m., tableparrot@wt.net.
- **Second Wednesday**
- **Mayoral GLBT Liaison Community Roundtable,** 713/520-1142.

SPECIAL EVENTS IN JANUARY

- **Pride Committee of Houston** volunteer recruitment session. Thu., Jan. 10, 7 p.m., 713/529-6979.
- **Inner Journey Ministries** astrology class. Thu., Jan. 10, 5:30-7:30 p.m., & Sun., Jan. 20, "Power Within You" class, Sun., Jan. 27, 4-6 p.m., 281/858-7150.
- "Claiming Our History," an ongoing Houston GLBT history project presented in partnership with the **Gulf Coast Archives and Museum.** Thu., Jan. 31, 7 p.m., 713/227-5973.

IN THE NEAR FUTURE The Black Lesbian & Gay Coalition, an organization promoting leadership in the African-American GLBT community, will resume regular meetings at the center in February. 713/862-6793.

MONTHLY

- **Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus** board meeting, 7:30 p.m., 713/521-1000.
- **Second Thursday**
- **Community Center** volunteer meeting, 7 p.m., 713/524-3818.
- **Second Friday**
- **Women's Game Night,** 713/524-3818.
- **Second Saturday**
- **First Unitarian Church** volunteer program day, 713/526-5200.
- **Texas Association for Transsexual Support,** 3 p.m., 281/437-2975.
- **Second Sunday**
- **S.I.S.T.E.R.S. (Sharing Inner Strength Through Encouragement & Realistic Support),** 3 p.m., 713/801-0027.
- **People of All Colors Together,** 3 p.m., 713/743-3570.
- **Second Monday**
- **HEAT (Houston Employees' Affinity Team),** 7 p.m., 713/524-3818.
- **Third Friday**
- **Hawthorne Men's Club,** 7:30 p.m., 713/524-3818.
- **Third Saturday**
- **STAG (Some Transgenders Are Guys),** 7 p.m., 281/585-8089, troy61@webtv.com.
- **Third Sunday**
- **LOAF (Lesbians Over Age Fifty),** 2 p.m., 713/869-1482.
- **Dinner at the Center,** 713/524-3818
- **Third Monday**
- **Medical Mondays,** HIV information forum with Rich Arenschieldt, **Center for AIDS** education and outreach director, 7 p.m., 713/527-8219.
- **Fourth Friday**
- **Lesbian Film Night,** 7 p.m., 713/524-3818.
- **Fourth Saturday**
- **Texas Association for Transsexual Support,** 7 p.m., 281/437-2975.

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its effects on human values. In 1979, physicist Joseph Fenwick's household buzzes with scientific experiments, furtive romance, & farcical amateur dramatics. In 1999, Ellen, a geneticist, and Tom, an English professor whose job has become redundant, discover a dark secret buried in the house for 200 years. Jan. 24-Feb. 24 @ Main Street Theater in Rice Village 42540 Times Blvd. Tickets are \$20-\$30. More info: 713/524-6706 or www.mainstreettheater.com.

◆ **A Fertile Holiday** chronicles the Fertle family's trouble-ridden reunion as they attempt to entertain their rich relatives from San Diego. It doesn't help that the Fertle family lives in Dumpster, Texas. Suitable for all ages. Thursdays & Fridays at 8:30 pm, Saturdays at 8 & 10:30 pm, through January 12 @ Radio Music Theatre, 2623 Colquitt. Desserts, munchies, champagnes, wines, beers, cappuccino, & soft drinks are available for purchase throughout the show. Admission is \$16, reservations are required, & tickets must be purchased in advance at the theater or by calling the box office at 713/522-7722.

◆ **Houston Grand Opera.** Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* is the story of love & the difficult choices it requires. Leading the cast is baritone Bo Skovhus as the jaded aristocrat Eugene Onegin adored by shy Tatyana (Bulgarian soprano Zvetelina Vassileva). Jan. 25-Feb. 8 @ Wortham Center's Brown Theater, Texas at Smith. Tickets (\$18-\$225) are available by phone at 713/227-ARTS, in person at the Wortham Ticket Center (in the lobby of the Wortham Theater Center), or online at www.houstongrandopera.org.

◆ **Jitney.** From August Wilson, the acclaimed author of *Seven Guitars* and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Jitney* is an examination of 1970's Pittsburgh. Part of Wilson's decade-by-decade explanation of African-American life, *Jitney* offers a deep look at one community's attempts to hold on to its way of life in the face of threats to tear down the taxi dispatch office that has served as the neighborhood's longtime gathering spot. Jan. 11-Feb. 9 @ the Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. Tickets are \$20-\$50. Info: www.alleytheatre.org or 713/228-8421.

◆ **The Laramie Project.** The brutal murder of gay college student Matthew Shepard—and the onslaught of media attention that followed it—stunned the sleepy prairie town of Laramie, Wyoming. In the aftermath, Moises Kaufman's Tectonic Theatre Project conducted over 200 interviews with the people of Laramie as they struggled to heal their wounds and face the realization that "it can happen here." The result is a play that chronicles darkness & heroism with equal sensitivity. A co-production between Stages and Unhinged Productions. Jan. 16-Feb. 10 @ Stages Repertory Theatre, 3201 Allen Parkway. Tickets (\$32-\$42) are available at the Stages box office or by calling 713/527-0123 or at www.stagestheatre.com. For related article, see our cover story elsewhere in this issue.

◆ **Lilies of the Field.** Homer Smith, an ex-GI, takes a drive through the American Southwest searching for purpose. Meanwhile, a group of German-speaking nuns hope to realize their dream of building a chapel. When their lives collide, they discover rewards far greater than they ever thought possible. Tickets are \$12 (students/seniors \$10). Through Jan. 12, Fridays & Saturdays at 8 pm @ The Company Onstage, 536 Westbury Square, 713/726-1216. Reservations recommended.

◆ **Lonely Planet** "can be classified as an AIDS drama. It could also be tagged a love story, an existential meditation on human isolation & connection, an absurdist comedy. Each label would fit, but none would convey the scope of this intimate yet expansive work..." (*Seattle Times*) This two-character play focuses on friendship, fear, & isolation. Jody owns a map store. Carl, depending on what day it is, waters

plants for corporations, works for a disreputable tabloid, runs an auto-glass shop, or works as a bartender. Carl wants Jody to get an HIV test. Jody wants to remove himself from a world where death reigns supreme. Through a series of comedic games & poignant stories, the author conveys a very funny, very touching portrait of friendship in trying times. Jan. 4-Feb. 2 @ Unhinged Productions, 3304 LaBranch at Elgin. Tickets are \$10 (students/seniors \$8). For reservations/more info: 713/529-6606.

◆ **Marriage Can Murder** takes place at the wedding of Stephanie & Phil. A scheming lawyer, a hallucinating best man, & a sister fresh from the psycho ward further complicate matters. To say nothing of the dead body on the floor. This Mystery Café production plays @ Prima Pasta restaurant, 2710 Richmond. Reservations are required. For more info: 713/944-CLUE or www.mysterycafehouston.com.

◆ **The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told** by Paul Rubnick, who wrote *Jeffrey*, is a unique comedy. The first act recounts major episodes of the Old Testament, only with a twist: Instead of Adam & Eve, the lead characters are Adam & Steve, who decide to start civilization with a lesbian couple, Jane & Mabel. Act two jumps to modern-day Manhattan. Jane is nine months pregnant, and the two women want to marry and want Adam & Steve to join them in the ceremony. Through Feb. 2 (Fridays & Saturdays only) @ Theatre New West, 1415 California. Tickets are \$20. For reservations: 713/394-0464.

◆ **Of Mice and Men.** John Steinbeck's story is an American classic, an examination of the true nature of friendship in an unfriendly world. Set in rural 1930's California, it mythologizes an America struggling to reinvent itself. Jan. 18-Feb. 17 @ the Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. Tickets are \$25-\$45. For more info: www.alleytheatre.org or 713/228-8421.

◆ **Proof.** Set on the back porch of a house in Chicago's Hyde Park, this 2001 Tony Award-winner for Best Play and Best Director is a compelling drama of love, reconciliation, and a brilliant, mysterious mathematical proof. On the eve of her 25th birthday, Catherine, who has spent years caring for her brilliant but unstable father, must deal not only with his death but with the arrival of her estranged sister, the intentions of her father's former student, and the question of whether or not she has inherited her father's madness, his genius, or both. Stars Robert Foxworth. Jan. 2-13 @ Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. Tickets (\$33-\$59) can be purchased through Ticketmaster, online at www.ticketmaster.com, or charged at 713/629-3700.

◆ **South Pacific.** Winner of nine Tony Awards, *South Pacific* is based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *Tales of the South Pacific* by James Michener. Set during World War II, it tells two love stories threatened by the perils of war & prejudice. A spunky nurse from Arkansas falls for a mature, widowed French planter whose children are of mixed race. Concurrently, a young American finds his ingrained prejudice at war with his love for an innocent Tonkinese girl. Stars Michael Nouri (who recently appeared on Broadway in *Victor/Victoria*). Jan. 22-27 @ Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. Tickets (\$54-\$58) can be purchased through Ticketmaster, online at www.ticketmaster.com, or charged by phone at 713/629-3700.

PERFORMING ARTS

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◆ **Androcles and the Lion.** "Every person must be free to be" is the theme of this prize-winning adaptation of the popular Aesop fable. A cast of strolling players presents us with a miserly Pantalone,

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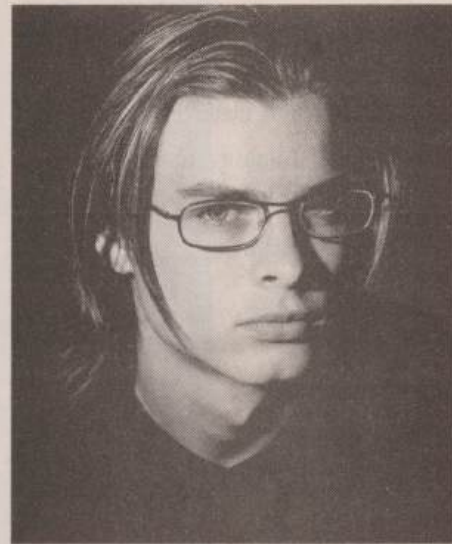
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♦ **Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters** is the timeless folk tale about a man named Mufaro who had two daughters—both very beautiful. One daughter, Manyara, is very selfish; the other, Nyasha, is very kind. As the story evolves, they each discover love & adventure. It is referred to as the African Cinderella. \$6 (\$5 for children under 12). Mon., Jan. 28, at 7 p.m. @ Galveston's Grand 1894 Opera House, 2020 Postoffice, 409/765-1894, www.thegrand.com.

♦ **Romeo and Juliet**. Heralding from feuding families, the Montagues and the Capulets, Romeo and Juliet are star-crossed lovers hiding their affections from the world. Pledging to marry they garner the secrecy & trust of a local clergyman. But can love save them from the terrible anger & violence to which the two families have bound themselves? Recommended for 6th-12th grades. Tickets are \$10 for adults; \$8 for children/students/seniors. Main Street Theater at Chelsea Market, 4617 Montrose Blvd. For more info on family performances (Feb. 15-17): 713/524-6706. Info on school bookings (Jan. 29-Feb. 22): 713/524-7998.

RADIO

♦ **After Hours**. Saturdays, midnight to 3 am. Featuring the QMZ (Queer Music Zone) with Jimmy Carper. KPFT 90.1 FM, 713/526-5738.

♦ **Lesbian & Gay Voices**. Mondays, 8-10 pm. Features, news, music, interviews, reviews, and commentary. KPFT 90.1 FM, 713/526-4000.

ART/PHOTOGRAPHY

♦ **Art-O-Mat** is back. The recycled cigarette machine that dispenses \$5 original works of art first premiered at DiverseWorks and then found a temporary home at Whole Foods. The new Art-O-Mat will be displayed through Jan. 20 @ the Betsey Johnson store in the Houston Galleria on Westheimer.

♦ **Raw Abstractions** are works on canvas from contemporary abstract painter Michelle Y. Williams. The exhibition will run through January @ La Stada Restaurant, 322 Westheimer.

♦ **The Tourist Project** will reach far beyond the confines of the gallery space as New York-based artist Lee Mingwei discovers the city of Houston through its residents' eyes. Volunteer participants selected by lottery will act as "tour guides" and bring Lee to places that are personally meaningful to them. While some participants might choose to guide Lee to popular tourist attractions, others might elect to visit more private locations, such as an automobile, dormitory room, or café. In this fun, poignant process of telling and listening to stories, the city comes to be defined by the multiplicity of experiences it plays host to. Jan. 17-Feb. 24 @ Rice University Art Gallery. For more info: 713/348-6069 or www.rice.edu/ruag. Mingwei will speak at 6 pm at a free, public opening celebration on Jan. 24 from 5:30-7:30 pm.

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Business News



The Houston Gym has relocated with a new, much larger facility.



BOTH PHOTOS: B.J. SMITH

• **Houston Gym** announced the grand opening of their newly constructed fitness facility. Their new facilities, located at 1501 Durham Street between the River Oaks/Memorial/Montrose neighborhoods and the Houston Heights, contain over 7,500 square feet of exercise area with new state-of-the-art equipment and expanded locker rooms. Houston Gym will also have extended operating hours.

Erected by Pinnacle Construction, the metal-finished building was designed with a vaulted single-slope roofline to expand the interior space of the structure and to allow members to exercise in a

comfortable, yet expansive space. The air-conditioning ductwork, electrical fixtures, and the steel superstructure remain exposed to complete the clean industrial loft-style appearance. The architects designed the structure to complement the surrounding neighborhoods, which include a variety of brick/stucco and metal-framed townhomes. The project

was fully financed by Comerica Bank-Houston.

The most notable equipment addition is the new 12-station state-of-the-art cybex VR2 equipment. This equipment is designed to accommodate users of all sizes and exercise levels, from rehabilitative work to competitive bodybuilding. All staff members have been thoroughly trained on the use of this equipment and will be instructing members old and new on the proper techniques and benefits of these exciting new machines. "This new equipment will enable Houston Gym to tailor-make 30- to 45-minute exercise programs for active Houstonians

who want to shed a few pounds, and build and tone their bodies," says **Troy Daniel**, club manager. "Then we always have free weights to add different exercises to routines over time."

"Over the past seven years, Houston Gym has become a local institution with a solid reputation and has attracted a wide range of clientele from absolute beginners to nationally known competitive bodybuilders and fitness enthusiasts," says **Johnnie West**, program director. "In addition, we've attracted some of Houston's top personal trainers who can offer our clients an unparalleled level of professional instruction on the use and benefits of exercise and nutrition. Our new facility will enable us to attract more members and ensure that they are properly trained on the wide variety of equipment that is now available to them."

During January, Houston Gym will be offering a variety of attractively priced grand opening specials to ensure that each individual interested in starting and staying with an exercise program has the opportunity to do so now. With obesity, diabetes, and heart disease on the rise in the United States and in Houston, what better time than right now to reverse that trend for you? For more information, call 713/880-9191.

• **Brigid's Place**, a nonprofit-ecumenical organization supporting the spiritual development of women, announced the hiring of **Corren Domingo** as the new program director. Domingo, born in Karachi, Pakistan, has worked for organizations including D.A.R.E., M.D. Anderson, and The Women's Center.

Brigid's Place, housed at Christ Church Cathedral, offers classes, lectures, discussion groups, weekend workshops, and retreats where people can ask questions relating to their spiritual journeys, address their doubts, and become



Carter Heyward

empowered to meet the challenges of life. The organization, named after St. Brigid, a fifth-century Irish Celtic saint who founded a double monastery of nuns and monks, is based on the social concept of equality between men and women. The group was known for their wisdom, compassion, hospitality, and healing.

Both a gay man and a lesbian are included in upcoming events. March 8 & 9: "Mystical Paths to Wholeness" with **Andrew Harvey**, gay mystic, author, speaker, and future director of the "Center for the Divine Feminine" in Anselmo, California.



Harvey is the author of *The Essential Gay Mystics*, as well as several other books. May 10-12: Workshop with lesbian/feminist priest, **Reverend Carter Heyward**, author of *Saving Jesus from Those Who Are Right*. Brigid's Place is located at

Christ Church Cathedral, 1117 Texas Avenue. For more information, call 713/590-3333.

• **Bunnies on the Bayou, Inc.**, is planning their annual Easter party and seeks deserving organizations to benefit from the 2002 fundraising event scheduled for March 31. What started out 23 years ago simply as a small gathering of friends sharing good music, cocktails and conversation on Easter afternoon, has evolved into a spectacular benefit attracting thousands.

To be considered as a beneficiary of the event, the organization requires details of the proposed project or activity their organization's funding would support, including the specific dollar amount requested, a copy of the organization's IRS determination letter recognizing 501(c)(3) status, along with current financial statements (profit/loss statement, balance sheet) and a summary of the organization's purpose or mission statement. Brochures, press clippings, and other types of information will also be helpful in the evaluation process.

The deadline for receipt of the information is Friday, February 8, 2002. The organization will make their selection and notify all candidates by mid March. All selected beneficiaries will be required to provide a brief follow-up report six months after receipt of funding summarizing the expenditures made with the money received.

Please send all proposals to: Bunnies on the Bayou, Inc., P.O. Box 66832, Houston, TX 77266, Attn: Charities Committee. Please contact **Jim Taylor** with any questions. Day phone: 713/313-1671, evening phone: 713/526-9213. ■

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SignOut by Lilly Roddy

Well, our good friend Mercury goes retrograde from mid-January to early February—so get those new projects started before January 13 or you will have to wait until February before you get another good start time. • Stay alert January 9 and January 25–27. The hope of New Year's Day will come tinged with fear from last year. People want to feel up and excited, but you will notice they are trying a tad too hard. The latter part of January will be a time of reflection for the nation.

Aries (March 21–April 19) Your views turn more directly to a hyperrealistic and practical way of looking at life. Long-term security invades your brain and becomes your overriding concern. Any investment better have a very foreseeable return. Some may view you as a bit cold or indifferent to their lives. Friendships are up for review when Mercury goes retrograde. They have to have a place in your life or you may just let them go. You are even more direct with people after the 19th. Be careful that you are not stepping on those toes for fun. Some people respond angrily.

Taurus (April 20–May 20) The first half of the month, you are ready for a rest and should take it while you can. A change in your routines would really help. You could take a trip or just a short trip to the beach... say the Bahamas? Be back by mid month, because your career hits the fan. Those problems you have been trying to placate need emergency surgery. You may feel an enormous lack of loyalty from those whom you work with. Choose your friends carefully, as this will really count this month.

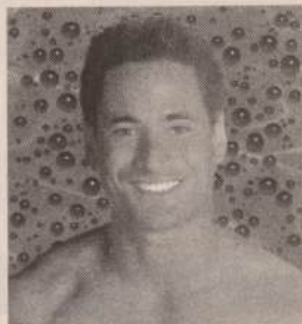
Gemini (May 21–June 21) Work seems busier even than last month. And by the way, your disgust is showing. You can easily step on those sensitive digits that people have stuck out in your path to trip you up. One of those feet belongs to the boss, so you should try putting on a friendlier mask. That said, your avoidance talents are way low. If you can get away in the early part of the month, it would help. Just be back in town at mid month when your ruler, Mercury, goes retrograde. All those troublemakers will really need your help then, and you can be the star.

Cancer (June 22–July 22) Romantic relationships are written in red magic marker on the calendar this month. You say you've been too busy? You're right there, and if you've forgotten your lapses, just ask your partner. They can remind you. Time to renew those old ties. Put down those restraints! If you are not as emotionally connected as you want to be, you may find yourself look-

ing for some stable, long-term, physical, parent-like figure to run your life. Pay attention to joint finances and investments at mid month. You may want to reconsider where you keep your money.

Leo (July 23–Aug. 22) Now to clean up the work environment. You are in charge of how well others function together, sort of the workplace relationship counselor. If you can't create the drama, then attracting it to you is almost as much fun. Some social distance would help you draw some limits. Your own relationship needs some work, as old problems resurface after mid month. Your partner feels distant, off in some dreamland contemplating their intellectual prowess. A good slap should bring them back into their physical body.

Virgo (Aug. 23–Sept. 22) Relationships are certainly in the spotlight again this month. Drudgery



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and routine are definitely wearing away the love that exists. Do something to inject some electricity into this part of your life. Or the problem will be brought to you in a much less happy presentation. Get your career life in order. Who is the boss of your life? Quit living in the past. Get back on that exercise program. This will be even more important by mid month. And don't run with the scissors and don't chew with your mouth open.

Libra (Sept. 23–Oct. 23) Time for some rest and relaxation before you get back on the tilt-a-whirl. Home is your solace and your escape. Family members will want to visit, but tell them your dance card is too full. You are *très artistique* this month and may even have a place to express this side of you by mid month. Relationships are certainly heating up for you by mid month. Even fighting can just be a sign that you need to pay attention to your partner. Everyone needs attention and you have been getting plenty. Share some.

Scorpio (Oct. 24–Nov. 21) This is a month of mixed blessings. On one hand, you are probably more organized than you have been in a while. And yet, the search continues to slake that elusive thirst that burns in your inner being. You are ready for a decision, but decide what? Part of you wants to crawl into bed and stay there. Another part wants to explore the mountains of Tibet. Will security and fear control your deci-

sions once again? Will you break free from the limitations of the past?

Sagittarius (Nov. 22–Dec. 21) Financial security and self-worth are your entree menu items as you try to get a grip on what you are doing and where you are going. You want more from life, people, your career, and everything that means anything in your life. And you will figure it out. Don't worry if by mid month you change your mind—it is just a chance from the Universe to review your choice before you set the fence post in cement.

Capricorn (Dec. 22–Jan. 19) As we experience the birth of the new year, you are ready to experience your own rebirth. You are clear about your strategy and how to get where you are going. This can be a very rewarding year, as most of the planets are going to help you along. Be sure not to miss your opportunities. Get your workplace in order. Yes, it may seem dull, but you need to face those issues you have been avoiding. And no, band-aid solutions won't do. You need to go in and replace the equipment. If old money issues resurface, address them. Otherwise, they will follow you around.

Aquarius (Jan. 20–Feb. 18) The new year always brings you into a time of retreat. You have somewhat overextended yourself in December and are ready for a break. Only those things that are most important will fit into your schedule. And you will be more sensitive than usual. As you take a ruthless hand to your schedule, relationship partners may turn extra needy. Pat them on the head, and they will be satisfied for a time. Otherwise, their whining will only get louder. By mid month, you are very melancholy rethinking your choices as your birthday approaches.

Pisces (Feb. 19–March 20) The new year is like a breath of fresh air for you. You are more social and ready to be with friends. You are not so burdened by the past year and the shift in consciousness you've experienced. Practicality enters the picture and you are ready for some long-term choices. You are starting to rebuild your home, both inner and outer versions. And you will be your own judge and jury this time. You are extremely reflective by mid month and may even choose to go on a spiritual pilgrimage. You will be back by early February.

Lilly Roddy is a Houston-based astrologer. She can be reached at lillycath@aol.com or <http://lillyastrological.com>.



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MARCUS POTTER

Well, there's this whole idea: You leave me alone, I leave you alone. And it's even in some of the Western literature, you know, live and let live. Even my gay friends bring it up sometimes. I mean basically what it boils down to: If I don't tell you I'm a fag, you won't beat the crap out of me. I mean, what's so great about that? That's a great philosophy?

—Jonas Slonaker
The Laramie Project

For more on The Laramie Project, see page 26.

SceneOut



OUT IN HOUSTON

The Black Tie dinner was held on November 17 at the George R. Brown Convention Center.

1 Actor **Alec Mapa** was guest speaker.
2 Honoree **Kevin Davidson** (left) with event co-chair Carlos Reyes.

3 **Janie Lopez** with Santa at Shell's SIEP party, December 6 at the Sheraton Suites.

The Names Project had a quilt panel dedication for World AIDS Day.

4 **Sheila Jackson Lee** (left) presented a city proclamation to Names Project director **Alex Soto**.
5 Leading the candlelight procession.

6 The Lovett Inn's holiday party, December 9: innkeeper **Tom Fricke**

(2nd from right) with (l to r) **Jeffrey Kuchar, Tad Dvorak, John Ochoa, and Jesse Gutierrez**.

Bering United Methodist's Christmas luncheon was December 9.

7 (l to r) **Jason Sechrest, Kenny, and Jim Benton**.
8 **Linda Enger** (left) and **Valerie Silk**.

The Han-Net holiday mixer was December 7 at the community center.

9 (l to r) **Tony Colby, Rosana Daumas, Michael Magnason**.
10 Han-Net moderator **Brandon Wolf** (right) with **Ray Hill**.

11 The PWA Holiday Charity Fundraiser was December 9: **Don Gill** (left) with **Bob Boutan**.

12 **Paul Long** (left) and **Richard Cole** opened Cole's Restaurant on November 28.

13 At the Bayou City Boys Club Toy Drive on December 9, **Matt Krol** (president, right) presented an appreciation award to **Ricky Davidson**.

14 World AIDS Day HIV conference sponsored by Houston Buyers' Club took place on December 1 at Bering United: (l to r) **Fred Walters** of the Houston Buyers Club, guest speaker **Dr. Lark Lands, Dr. Patricia Salvato, and Nelson Vergel** of Body Positive Wellness Center.

15 Grand opening of de-Murs Hair Studio took place on December 11:

J.T. Demers (center) with **Brett Fey** (left) and **Nicole Annette**.

16 **Kyle Fu** (middle, in vest) had an art opening November 27 at Mo Mong. **Emerson Wen** (kneeling) designed the outfits for (l to r) **Spacey d'Bree, Val Rodz, Lisa Stewart, Fu, D.S. Isacson, Max Boyd-Harrison, Susan Sheedid**.

17 **Roy Green** carries the Olympic torch on December 10.

A Christmas Songfest on December 2.

18 Gay Men's Chorus of Houston.
19 **Sharon Montgomery** (left) and **Jerry Atwood**.
20 (l to r) **Mike Evans, Tricia Lynn, and Mike Collins**.



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