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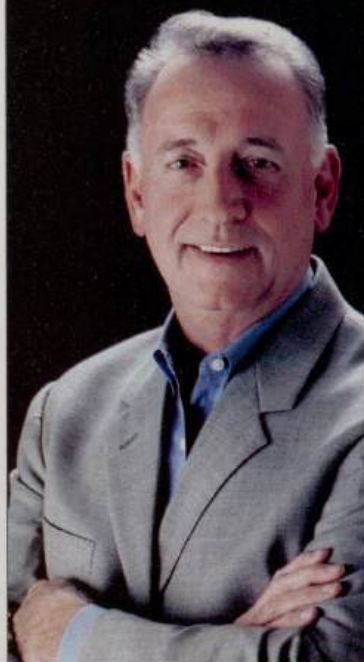
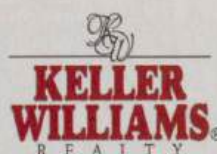
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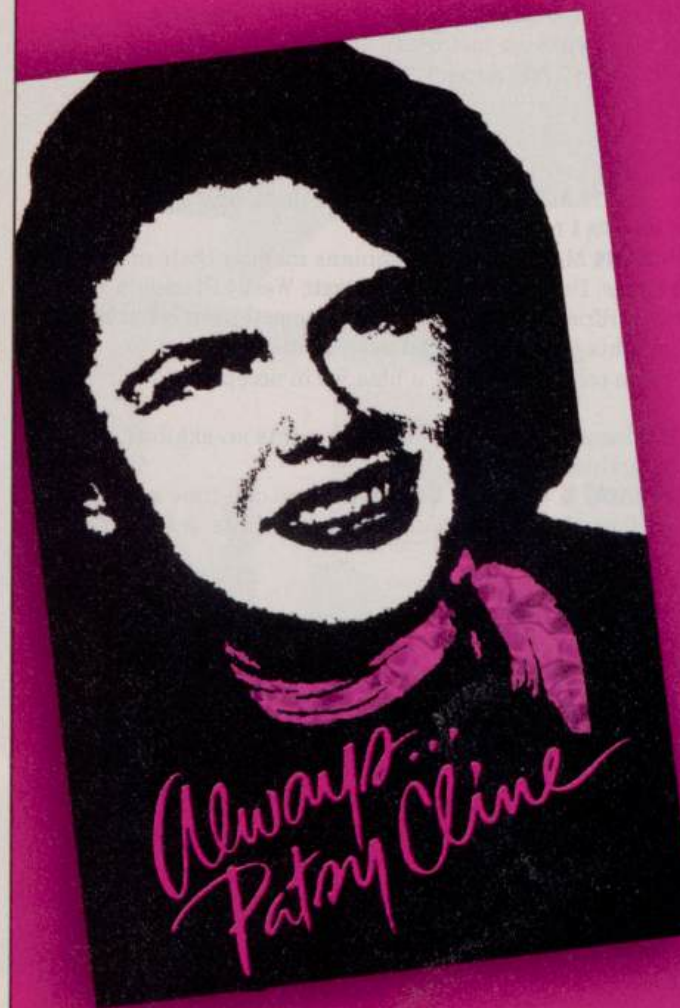
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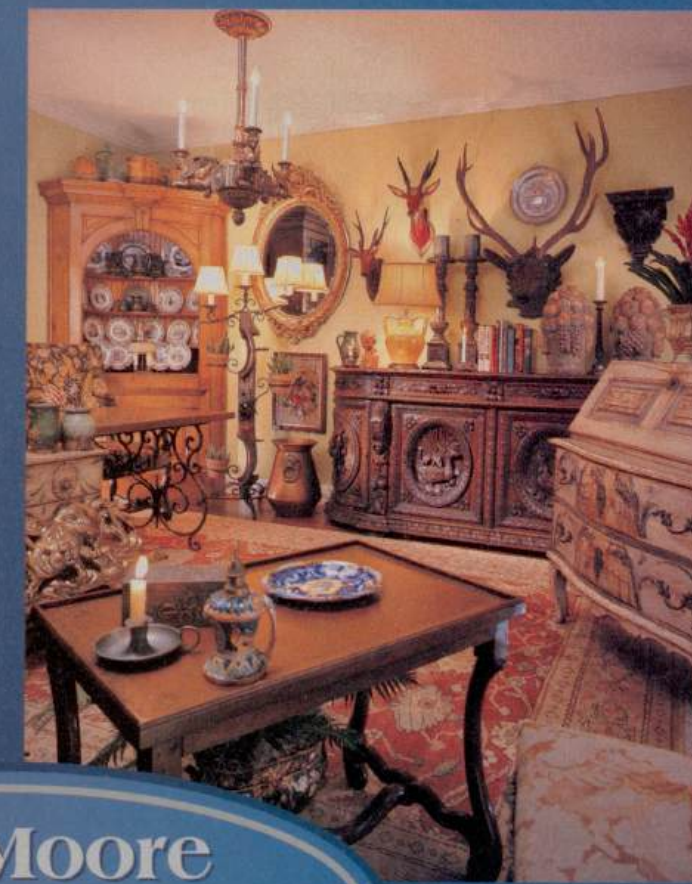
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Letters

MORE 3-D GLEE

I wanted to take a moment to let you know how impressed I was with the overall layout and presentation of the *OutSmart* 3-D issue [April 2004] featuring k.d. lang on the cover. I expected for the issue to have a 3-D cover; however, I was amazed that the format was consistent throughout the entire magazine! I particularly enjoyed the picture of the president ["Nice Day for a Right-Wing Wedding"].

Gina Rotolo
Elmore Public Relations
Houston

EDITOR'S NOTE: K.d. lang performed on April 30 and May 1 with the Houston Symphony, which is represented by Elmore Public Relations.

Just got the 3-D issue . . . and it is truly amazing. Congrats on pulling this off (and pulling it off so well!!!)

Corey Eubanks
San Francisco

CORRECTING THE RECORD

In your April 2004 article "Legacy of Learning," you stated Peggy Rudd helped establish the Houston

Transgender (TG) Unity Committee. This is not the case. Peggy Rudd came up with the idea of the Unity Banquet and along with René Fenner's help started that annual event.

The Houston TG Unity Committee was the idea of Lilly Roddy. Her idea was to have all the officers of the Houston groups meet once a month to share ideas and goals. Desirée Walton took Lilly's idea a step further and formed the Unity Committee. That was back in 1999.

The first banquet the committee hosted was in 2000 at the Westchase Hilton. Before that Peggy and René had each local group host the banquet on a revolving basis.

Brandi Williams
Willis

611: ANOTHER VIEW

As an almost daily visitor to the 611 Hyde Park Pub for the past four months or so, I must take exception with Mr. Johnson's letter to the editor in the current month's issue of *OutSmart* ["Letters," May 2004]. The activity at the corner has nothing at all to do with the 611 Club. I have never seen the people that hang out at the corner inside the 611. I've seen police cars questioning them at least half a dozen times. It is apparently a police problem, not a 611 problem. Also, the 611 has a reputation of kicking out anyone caught smoking grass on the patio. Finally, the bartenders and barbacks at the 611 are among the best in Houston, in my opinion.

That's why I'm happy to call it my "home bar."

John Hubert
Houston

SHINE ON, SHARON



I just wanted to commend you on your interview with Sharon Gless ["Gless Glows," May 2004]. She has long been one of my favorite actresses, and I even got to meet her when she was a celebrity grand marshal of the San Francisco Pride parade a few years back. But I have never learned so much about her and gotten such a strong sense of what a great person she is until I read Blase DiStefano's interview. Kudos!

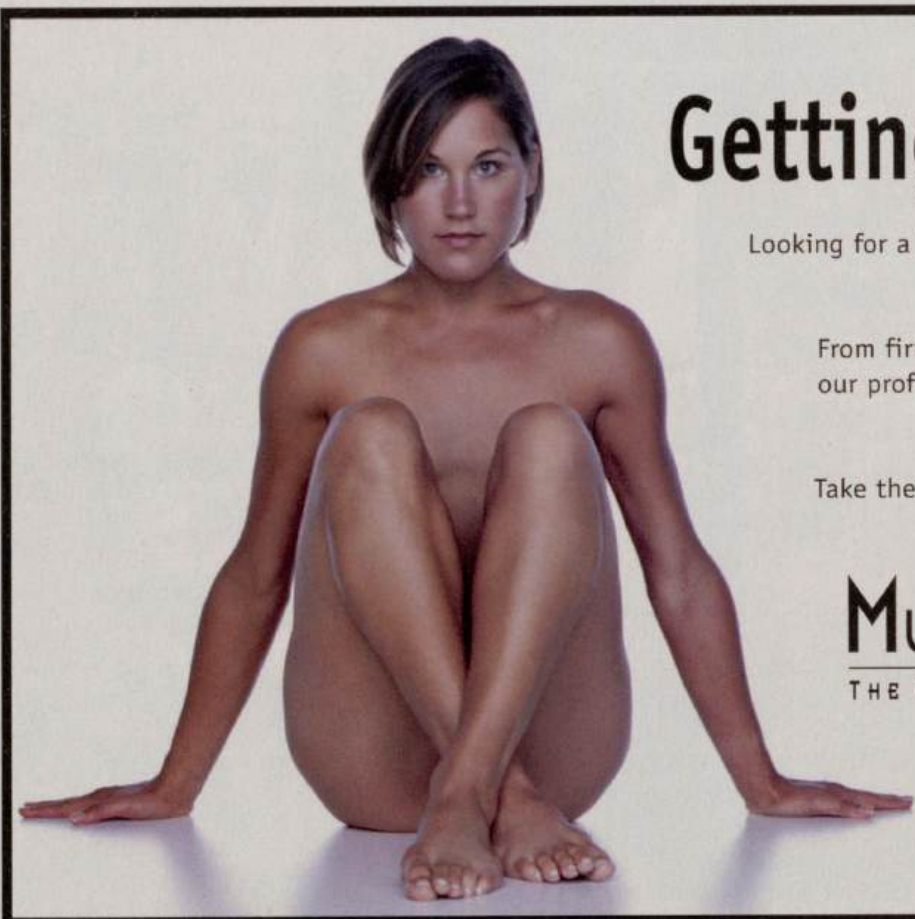
Mike McGinty
San Francisco

The article on Sharon Gless is terrific, and the cover looks really great. Such a long, nice interview. You really got some great quotes from her.

Jean Bishop
New York City

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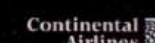
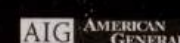
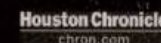
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PROM AND PROPER. On June 4, Colleen Herndon (r) and Yvan Ramires will attend the prom with the dates of their choice. Herndon will take her girlfriend, Layla Alvandi, and Ramires will go with his boyfriend, Nick Nicolas. For the 11th year, the H.A.T.C.H. Alternative Prom will welcome all GLBT and questioning youth between 13 and 20 as well as adults looking for a better big-dance experience than they may have endured in high school. The 7 p.m.-midnight event at the Magnolia Ballroom is free to youth, \$25 at the door for adults.

Photographed by Yvonne Feece



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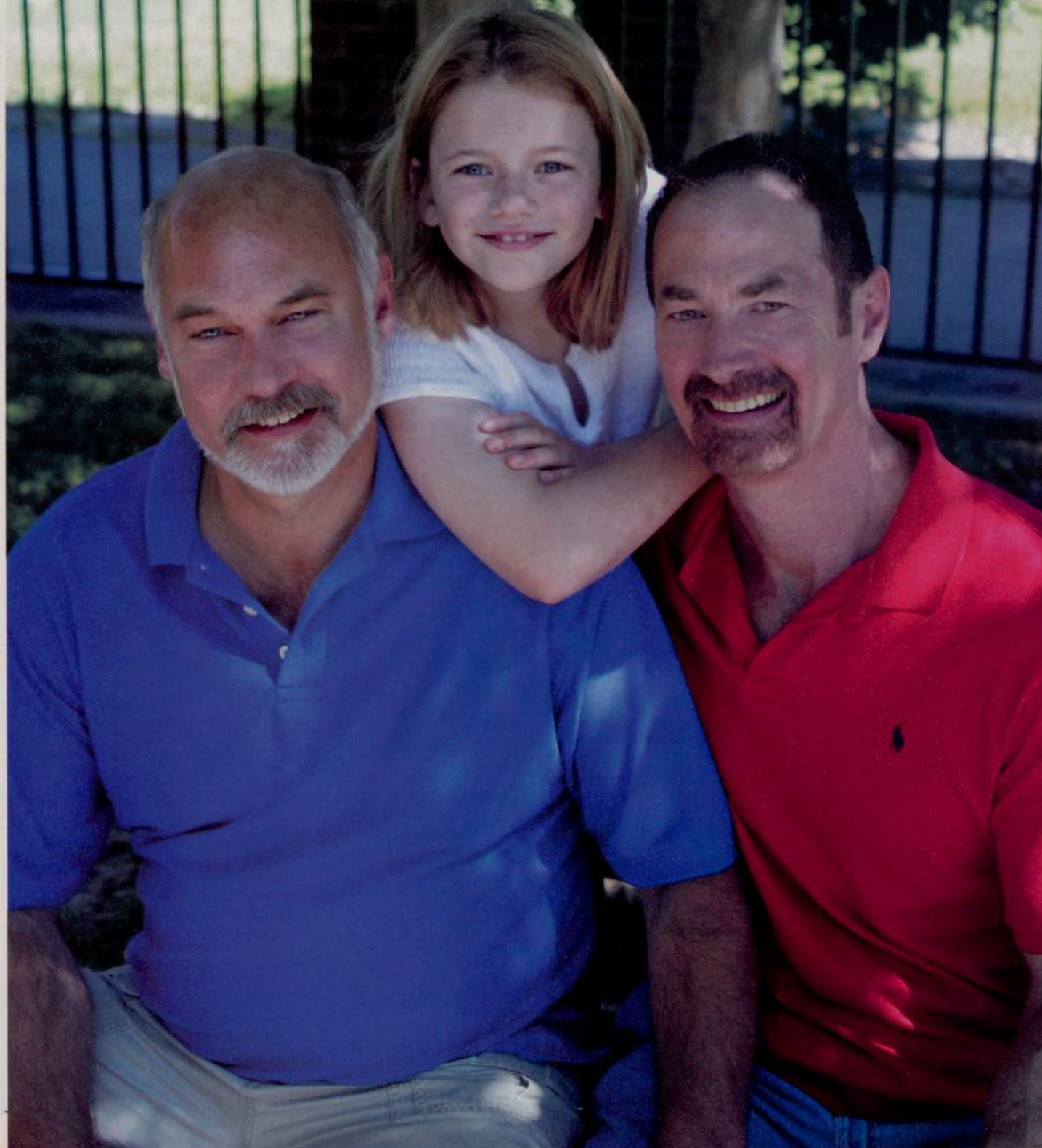
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DEAR OLD DADS. On Father's Day, June 20, we particularly celebrate two-dad households at this moment of controversy over same-gender marriage and gay/lesbian families. Eight-year-old Stacy Robinson (c) will enjoy the day with her dads Chuck Robinson (r) and Andy Mock. Along with fathering an active mostly-A student, Robinson—who also has an 18-year-old son—works in the insurance business, and Mock is a sales rep for a ribbon company. The whole family belongs to Houston Gay & Lesbian Parents, which will embark on a five-day Caribbean cruise from Galveston on June 14.

Photographed by John Conroy



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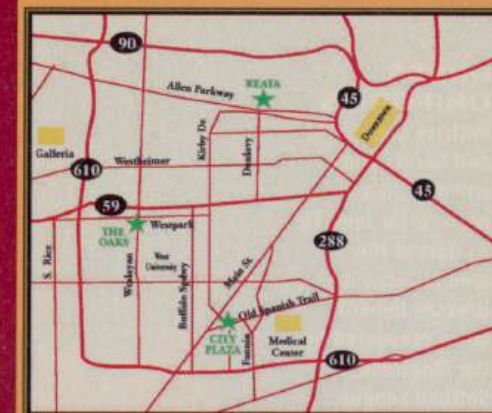


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DRESS UNIFORMS. Patrick Schaad (l) and Gerald Ennis will doll up and perform on June 19 as part of the annual Jocks in Dresses benefit show presented by the Montrose Softball League. Dubbed "Drag as Big As Texas," the event at Rich's Houston promises lots of burly guys in frocks—and some cross-dressing gals this year, too. The renowned Atlanta diva Bubba D. Licious—a drag queen with her own bobble-head figurine—will host the party. Proceeds will support the league and the Houston GLBT Community Center.

Photographed by John Conroy



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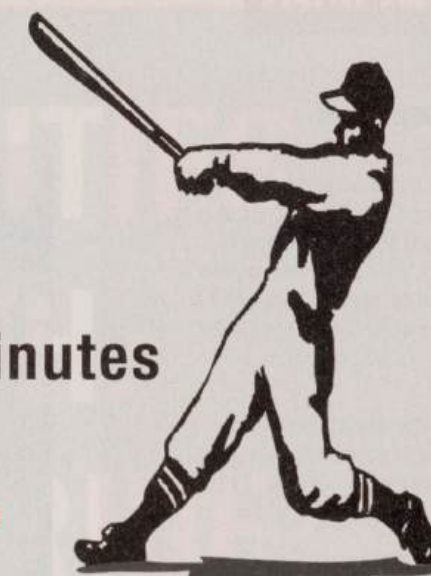


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DATEBOOK

• Shari Goldsberry, president of the local Log Cabin Republicans chapter, speaks at the **Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus** general meeting on June 2, 7 p.m., at the Houston GLBT Community Center. Details: 713/521-1000.

• The **Thomas Street Clinic Advisory Council** meets June 8, 11 a.m., at the clinic. Details: 713/873-4000.

• On June 10, mayor Bill White and city controller Annise Parker speak at the meeting of the local **National Gay & Lesbian Journalists Association** chapter (location and time not determined at press time). Details: ThatCurtis@aol.com.

• John Lawrence and Tyron Garner, petitioners in the landmark *Lawrence v. Texas* sodomy case—overturned by the Supreme Court a year ago this month—receive the Extra Mile Award at the June 11 Evening of Courage dinner hosted by the **National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce** in Washington, D.C. Details: www.nglcc.org.

• **Montrose Softball League** holds playoffs on June 13 and June 20 at Slo-Pitch City Softball Complex. Details: www.montrosetballleague.com.

• HIV/AIDS educator Nelson Vergel will present the seminar “**Key Survival Skills for HIV+ People**,” sponsored by Roche Laboratories, on June 16, 6-9 p.m., at KeyStar Event Complex. Details: powertx@aol.com.

• The Orange Show presents “**Best of Aurora Picture Show, Vol. 2**,” a selection of favorite films screened at the Heights micro-cinema, during Cinema al Fresco on June 26, 9 p.m. Details: www.orangeshow.org.

• The Houston chapter of **American Veterans for Equal Rights** meets the first Monday of the month, 7 p.m. at the Houston GLBT Community Center. ■

JOEL'S LEGACY



On March 27, the Center for AIDS dedicated its information center in memory of the late **L. Joel Martinez**, one of its founders. In attendance were (foreground, l-r) Martinez's mother and sister, **Teresa** and **Becky**, and (back row, l-r) founding board member **P. Joe Shaffer**, founding board chair **Neal Manne**, executive director **Thomas Gegeny**, board first vice chair **Steve Loden**, and board chair **Margaret O'Donnell**.

AUCTION RAISES AIDS FUNDS

A June 17 art auction will raise funds for the Southeast Texas Legal Clinic program that provides free legal assistance to people living with HIV/AIDS. The 6-10 p.m. evening, Art for Caring, at the KeyStar Event Complex will feature original work by local and regional artists, including Harry Power, whose paintings appear in the new Blue Book HIV/AIDS resource guide.

The nonprofit clinic has provided the HIV services for more than 12 years. “We serve people who are already struggling to meet financial and medical obligations,” executive director Jerry Larson says. “Paying for an attorney is simply not an option for them.”

Admission to the event is \$5. A silent auction of products and services will also raise funds.

GOOD BOOK

The 2004-2005 Blue Book of HIV/AIDS resources published by the Ryan White Planning Council is now available at locations that include the council office and the Houston Regional HIV/AIDS Resource Group. Details: www.rwpc.org.

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RALLY MARKS MARRIAGE MILESTONE

On May 17, Houstonians gathered at City Hall to celebrate the historic Massachusetts court ruling that sanctioned same-sex marriages in that state. Among the speakers at the event—organized under the acronym MATE (Massachusetts And Texas Equality)—Rev. Dwayne Johnson of Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church offered this exhortation: “People of Houston, the eyes of Texas are upon you. So what are they going to see? The eyes of Texas will see a people working for justice. They will see a people who love each other, they will see a people who are standing up for rights, for justice, for equality, and most of all for love. The eyes of Texas are upon you, so don’t give up until those eyes see the equality we all deserve.”

Photos: Yvonne Feece
Reporting: Joyce Gabiola

Voices for change: Speakers at the rally included (clockwise from top left) Michelle Dean (with microphone) and Kelly Gilbert with their children (l-r) Kyle, Ashley, and Devyn; Randall Ellis, executive director of the Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby; attorney and transgender activist Phyllis Randolph Frye; Ray Hill, confronting a protestor who had rushed the stage; and Rev. Dwayne Johnson of Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church.



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PRICE OF PIETY

Some religious leaders promote politics over theology

Many bishops and priests in the Catholic Church have begun denying communion to Catholic politicians who support any type of abortion-rights legislation. The presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, Senator John Kerry, has recently been told by more than one bishop not to bother coming to the communion table. If Kerry attempts to take communion, those bishops say they will withhold communion from Kerry because of his support for abortion rights.

Now the Catholic bishop of a Colorado diocese has gone a step farther. He has told the priests in his diocese that it is appropriate to withhold communion from any parishioner who supports any candidate who favors abortion rights or gay rights.

The idea that Catholic politicians should ultimately be accountable to their bishops, or the Vatican, first popped up during the 1960 presidential campaign of John Ken-

nedy, the first and only Catholic ever elected president. When Protestants voiced their concerns that, if elected, Kennedy would answer to the pope, Kennedy made it clear he would not. The Catholic Church did not respond by threatening Kennedy. And it certainly did not threaten Catholics who planned to vote for him.

Almost 50 years later, Kerry is saying essentially the same thing that Kennedy said. Kerry has stated that his decisions as president would "be guided by his obligation to all the people of our country and to the constitution of the United States." Not the Catholic Church, and not the Vatican.

So why are so many Catholic leaders threatening Kerry, and politicians like him, who might personally oppose abortion but defer to the electorate and the Supreme Court's 30-year-old decision that Americans have a constitutional right to choose to have an abortion?

It would be nice to believe that those Catholics who are threatening to withhold communion from politicians and Catholic voters do so out of piety, not politics. But, if that were so, those same Catholic leaders would threaten to withhold communion from any politician or parishioner who supports the death penalty, the right to divorce, contraception on demand, stem-cell research, or even the war in Iraq (which the Vatican opposed). They're not.

What is clear from the Catholic leaders' decision to threaten only those who support abortion rights and gay rights is that those leaders are injecting themselves into the political process for political reasons, not religious ones.

And that's okay. If churches—Catholic or otherwise—want to engage in political lobbying on controversial issues like abortion and gay rights, or become the

continued on page 28

MORE OF US?

Same-gender marriage will breed queer folk, opponents fear

Will gay marriage produce more homosexuals? For many who oppose gay marriage, the prospect that it will lead more people to homosexuality is a powerful (if often unstated) reason to oppose it. They need not fear: Gay marriage is unlikely to have that effect, though it will probably make it *seem* as if there are more homosexuals. But even if gay marriage did have the effect of increasing the number of homosexuals in the population, that would not be reason by itself to oppose gay marriage.

Gay marriage will likely affect public attitudes about homosexuality. Gays will be seen in stable, committed, long-term relationships. Those relationships will enjoy as much respect as the law can provide because they will be accorded rights, privileges, and protections equal to heterosexual marriages. They will be called *marriages*, both in the law and in our culture. This will provide a

language of ritual in which to speak about gay relationships that is familiar to straight Americans. Gay couples will no longer be "partners," but spouses or husbands or wives. Gay couples will have engagements, weddings, and honeymoons. These words will be used, for the first time, without winks and nods, without knowing exaggeration.

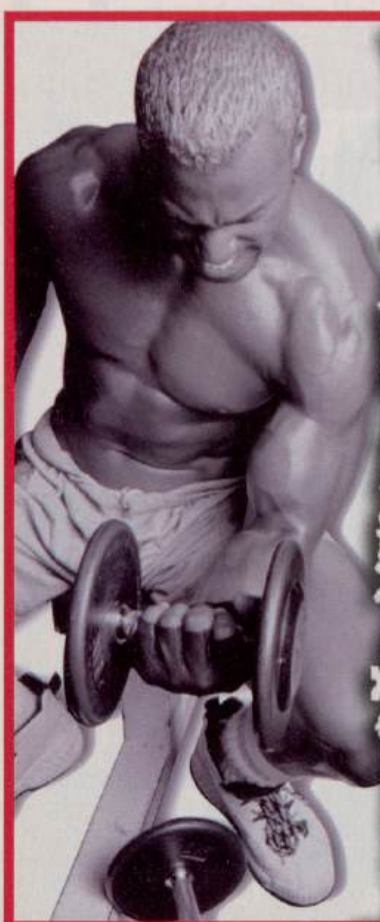
We can expect, therefore, that over time gay marriage will have the effect of softening opposition to homosexuality in general. It will help alleviate some of the stigma that attaches to homosexuality.

That is not the only, or even the primary, reason to support gay marriage. The better reasons to support it are to encourage long-term coupling among gay men and women, to reduce the individual and social miseries and costs often associated with being single, to protect existing gay couples from significant legal and social disadvantage, and to support gay families in which children

are raised. But reducing the hatred of homosexuals will certainly be a welcome consequence of recognizing gay marriages.

For some, however, this positive by-product of gay marriage carries a significant risk. Gay marriage, in this view, will be a subsidy for homosexuality. And everyone knows that when you subsidize something you get more of it. Similarly, stigma is now part of the cost of homosexuality. Reduce the cost of something and you get more demand for it. Presto, more homosexuals.

Everything we have learned about human sexual orientation over the past half century confounds this seemingly logical conclusion. Human sexual orientation appears to be both unchosen and unchangeable. Whether it is biologically or genetically determined, or simply set at a very young age, sexual orientation does not respond to social influences designed to lead it in a different direction. Efforts to "treat" →



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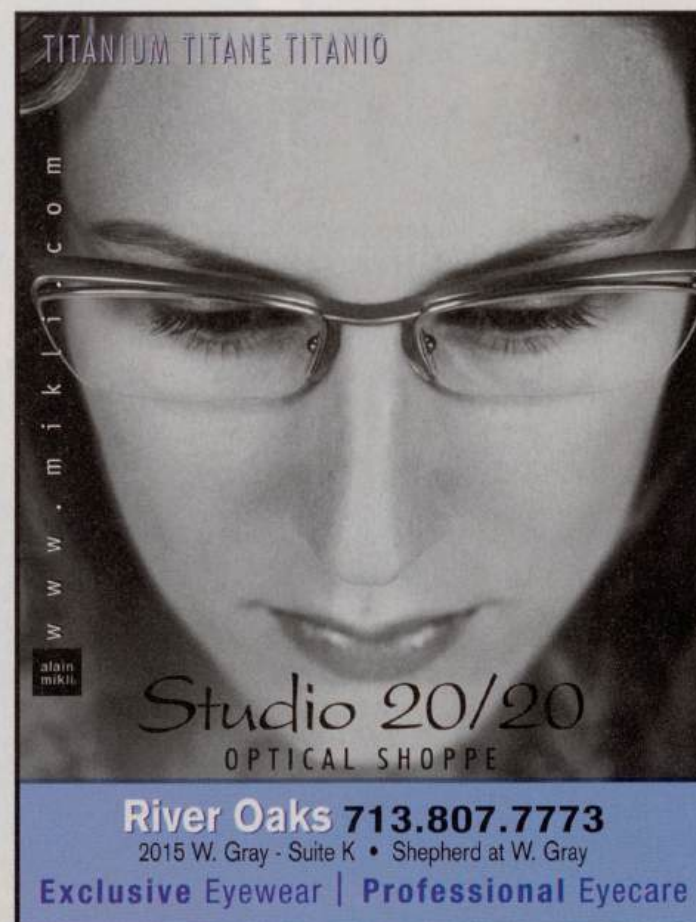
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"Still Not Happy?"

LeftOut continued from page 26

"religious" arm of a political party, they should be able to do so. But their political efforts should not be tax-exempt.

Lobbying organizations have to pay for the privilege to affect outcomes in elections. They are not tax-exempt. If religious leaders want to turn pulpits into political podiums, they should have to forfeit their tax-exempt status. Otherwise, why not form the First Church of the Human Rights Campaign?

Writing from the liberal side, Houston attorney Daryl Moore has a general practice and is board certified in civil appellate law.

OutRight continued from previous page

or to "convert" homosexuals have a long history of failure and no reliable evidence of success.

Further, we have no good evidence for the existence of "waverers," people whose sexual orientation is on the line between homosexuality and heterosexuality and who may be led in one direction or the other by social and personal influences. Homosexuals are not created by seduction, recruitment, or propaganda.

As conservative legal scholar and federal judge Richard Posner has concluded, homosexuality appears "to be no more common in tolerant than in repressive societies." For example, there is no evidence that the relative acceptance of homosexuality in the Netherlands and Belgium, both of which recognize gay marriage, has caused an increase in the number of homosexuals.

So gay marriage will not likely increase the number of homosexuals. It will, however, increase levels of happiness among existing homosexuals. How could that be a bad thing?

By helping to reduce the stigma of homosexuality, gay marriage will also increase the proportion of homosexuals who are open and honest about their sexual orientation. That's because the potential costs of being out—like losing a job, alienating family members and friends, and risking hate violence—will be reduced. So after gay marriage is recognized, it may well seem there are more homosexuals than before.

Perhaps, however, even if gay marriage does not increase the number of homosexuals, it will increase the amount of homosexual sexual activity. Again, this would count as a significant cost of gay marriage to many who oppose it.

Will gay marriage lead to an increase in homosexual sexual activity? It is hard to say. On the one hand, we may conjecture that the stigma-reducing effect of gay marriage may lead to more homosexual experimen-

tation, and at a younger age, by homosexuals and even by heterosexuals.

On the other hand, gay marriage may reduce homosexual activity in other ways. As I have argued, gay marriage would not be a subsidy for homosexuality in general because sexual orientation is immune to a system of rewards and punishments.

But gay marriage *will* be a subsidy for homosexual monogamy. And everyone knows that when you subsidize something, you get more of it.

So the overall effect of gay marriage may be neither a net gain nor a net loss in homosexual activity.

All of this discussion is predicated on the assumption that there is something bad about homosexuality; otherwise, there would be nothing to fear from an increase in the number of homosexuals or homosexual activity.

And the judgment that homosexuality is somehow bad rests, in turn, on essentially religious grounds. Try as they might to resist this characterization of their position, religion is what opponents of gay marriage must ultimately rest their case upon.

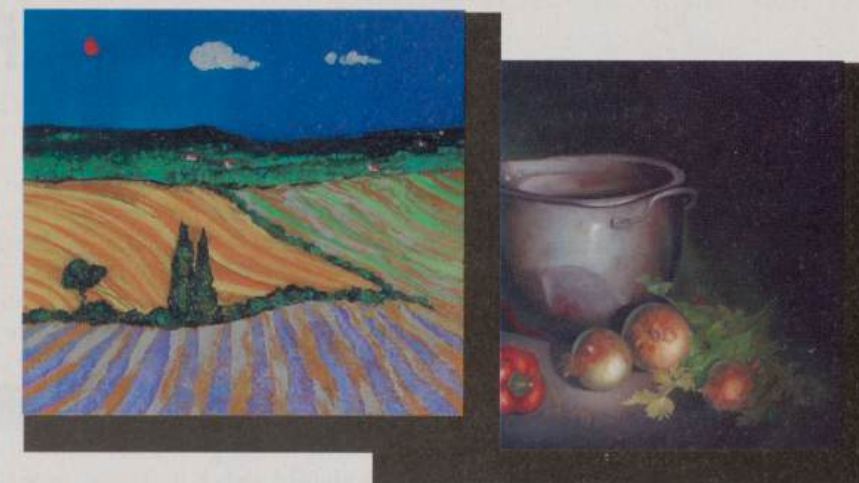
Writing from the conservative end of the spectrum, Dale Carpenter began his column for OutSmart in 1994, when he lived in Houston. Now residing in Minneapolis, Carpenter is a University of Minnesota Law School professor.

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by Annise D. Parker

PRIDE AND MORE

After more than 100 days in office, the controller reports

First and foremost, let me wish everyone a happy Pride Month! I know there are those who complain each year about why we need to celebrate or be proud of being GLBT. Simply put, we aren't. We aren't proud of something in our lives that is immutable and indelibly part of who we are. We are celebrating the fact that we are still here and still thriving in the face of insults and assaults, indignities and inequities. We're alive for one more year. Our lives get better every year, and our worth and dignity as human beings is more affirmed each year. That's worth celebrating.

Second, let me bid a sorrowful farewell to my friend, trusted advisor, and invaluable political teammate Grant Martin. He and spouse Paul Fromberg have moved to San Francisco. Grant managed my three successful council campaigns, my controller's campaign, and the heartbreaking Prop. 2 campaign on city domestic partner

benefits. He helped elect friends like Ada Edwards and Garnet Coleman and helped my fellow activist Sue Lovell run a strong council campaign. He launched PVA (Progressive Voters Alliance) from my campaign, and we helped it grow together. He is irreplaceable and will be missed.

Office Update

As I write this, slightly more than 100 days have elapsed since I took office as the new city controller.

Overall, the controller's fiscal watchdogs are working extremely well as a team to guard taxpayers' dollars, save money, and maximize the safe investment of public funds.

First, I must commend my 76 staff members for making this job so much easier than it could have been. My three deputy controllers and the city auditor are top-notch professionals who think far outside

the bureaucratic box. They lead a capable and hardworking staff.

The treasury division under Jim Moncur continues to shine. Our investments are rated AAAf, and our debt ratings (essentially the city's credit rating) range from A1 on up.

My auditing division, directed by Steve Schoonover, has found more than \$100 million in potential savings in the past five years through unannounced audits. The team recently exposed virtual lack of controls at a health department pharmaceutical warehouse.

Mary Ann Grant keeps the operations and technical services division humming along, producing vendor and payroll checks, checking to ensure we have money to pay for items on the council agenda, responding to open records requests, and archiving city records.

When former controller Judy Gray-Johnson left earlier this year to become

finance and administration department director, I was most fortunate to acquire the expertise and leadership of F&A assistant director Susan Bandy. If that name rings a bell, it's because Susan did such an incredible job on the 2012 Olympic effort. Now she directs the staff that produces the monthly financial and operating reports as well as the annual financial report. (Find out more about my team by visiting my web page.)

Mayoral Marvel

Despite a (remarkably) few political missteps with council members and some serious anxiety over city pension underfunding, Mayor Bill White's honeymoon continues with much of the public.

The midnight oil (or an alternative fuel) burns at City Hall, and it's casting light on a range of issues this hands-on mayor is determined to tackle. The pace of change and improvement is impressive.

Performance Audits

I was pleasantly reminded about one of my top priorities this morning when council member Shelly Sekula-Gibbs brought up the fact that last year council passed my motion requesting a charter amendment to allow the controller to conduct performance audits.

She wondered what difference it might have made if my office had been allowed to conduct a performance audit of the municipal pension system and noted that council needs this kind of help scrutinizing city departments.

Previous mayors have fought acknowledging that the controller has this authority. But at the request of Mayor White, my office conducted an unprecedented performance audit of city and Metro street and bridge construction contractors. Although the controller's audit division conducts financial, inventory, and contract compliance audits, it has rarely conducted audits in which we evaluate whether or not performance goals are reached. Interestingly, we found that most of the project overruns were caused by unforeseen conditions or inadequate design work, not the contractors. We also discovered that the records in public works for the period examined were so inadequate that they could not have been effectively used to establish contractor accountability. (The full audit report is available through my web page.)

Pension Board

The reception has been quite positive to my suggestion that the controller or my representative serve on the pension board. I think most people understand this would be →

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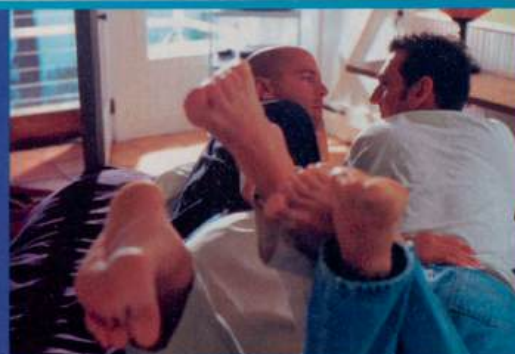
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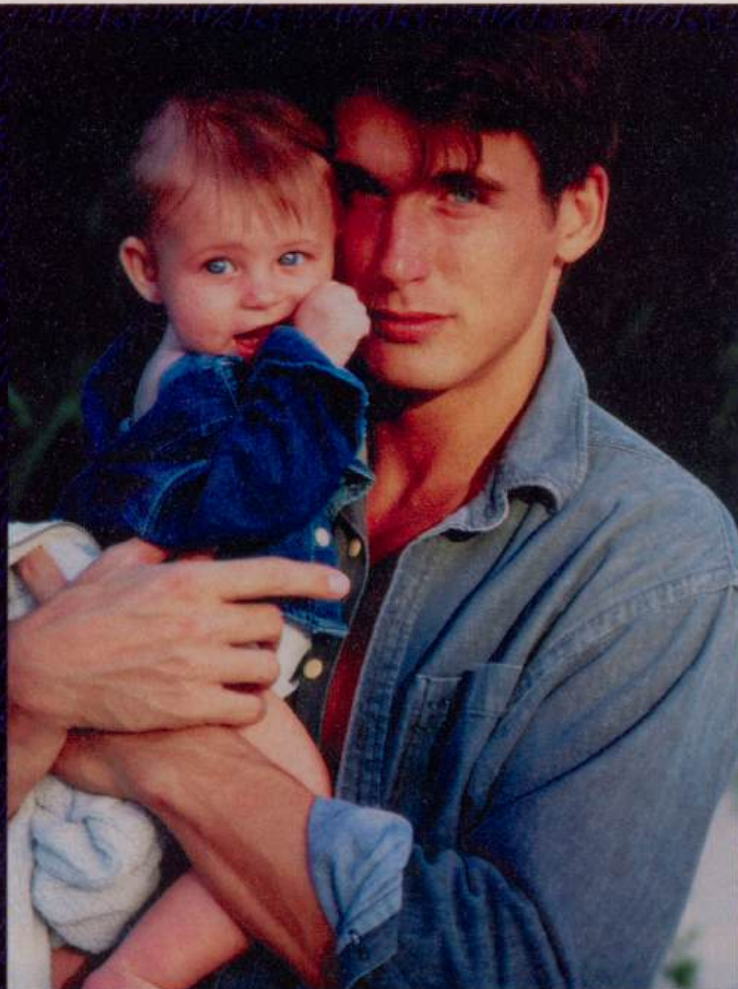
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InsideOut continued from previous page

a logical extension of my role as the city's chief fiscal watchdog.

Money Matters TV show

The June controller's office show will examine the fiscal year 2005 budget presented to City Council in mid-May. *Money Matters* can be seen at 2 a.m., 8 a.m., 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Mondays on the Municipal Channel (Warner Cable 16, Kingwood 14, TCI 16, Phonoscope 2, and TvMax 20.)

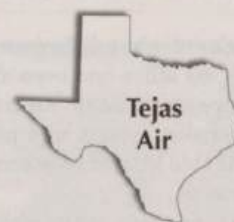
Annise Parker is city controller and the highest-ranking openly GLBT-elected official in any of the 10 largest U.S. cities. She has contributed a monthly column to OutSmart since June 2002. The controller's website is www.ci.houston.tx.us/citygovt/controller. To receive her newsletter, contact controllers@cityofhouston.net.

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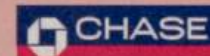
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Once again, it's time to celebrate—our history, our accomplishments, our vibrant community. To mark Pride '04, we visit several Houstonians making their mark, from an entrepreneur to members of a new rock band, and help you plan your June with highlights from the Pride events calendar.

WELL COACHED

5 business questions for Mattison Grey

by Tim Brookover • Photo by Yvonne Feece

Empower, the June 12–13 expo presented by the Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce, will feature presentations by a range of experts in the community. We checked in with one of these mavens, Mattison Grey, the business and career coach.

Tim Brookover: What can Empower visitors expect from your presentations this year?

Mattison Grey: People can expect them to be fun, educational, and inspiring. My goal is to give people something that they can take home and use immediately in order to get more of what they want.

What is the one point you hope people will take away after they see you?

How to stay focused on their big goals, while managing all the other stuff.

What is one thing people can do to reach their personal goals?

The most important thing people can do is write down their goals in a clear, measurable way *and* create a “by when” date. In other words, have a way to know when you have reached your goal and make a deadline. A great example of this that we have all experienced: When you were in school,

there was always a date for each test. The test was going to happen whether you were ready or not, so consequently most of the time you were pretty prepared. What would have happened in school if the teacher decided you could take the test whenever you wanted to? Deadlines are absolutely the key to getting things done.

What is a common mistake people make in striving to attain their goals?

The most common mistake people make is not creating a system of accountability. Most people can't truly hold themselves accountable. You have to find some way or someone outside of yourself to hold yourself accountable to do what you said you are going to do. Ask a friend, teacher, or coach to help you stay accountable to your goals. If you know someone is going to be checking on you, you are more likely to do something. I often say as a coach

that my job is to make clients do what they want to do.

Where can people who don't make it to Empower catch you?

On June 25, I am presenting “Reality Selling,” a day-long fee-based seminar at the Houston GLBT Community Center that will show how to find out what your customers *really* want and help them to get it. Anyone whose income depends on the quality of their interaction with people can benefit. Then, in cooperation with the community center, I will be starting a free coaching evening in July. This will take place one evening a month, and everyone is invited [dates and times were not set at press time]. Also watch for the Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce series of entrepreneurship seminars beginning in August and the Leading and Learning educational program beginning in September.

For details on presentations by Grey and other smart people at Empower, taking place at the George R. Brown Convention Center, check the chamber website, www.ghglcc.org. →



Up in the air: Mattison Grey juggles a few of the props she uses in her coaching presentations. Grey will offer advice at the June 12–13 Empower expo.

DEATH BECOMES HIM

Writer Dean James publishes his latest murderous mystery

by Olivia Flores Alvarez • Photo by Yvonne Feece

As I sit down with Dean James in a cramped office at Murder by the Book, the mystery bookstore he manages, I notice he's wearing a Rice University shirt. That seems fitting since his alma mater is the setting for his latest book, *Death by Dissertation*.

His 13th book and one of three to be released in 2004, *Death by Dissertation* (Silver Dagger Press) revolves around the murder of a Rice University graduate student, Charlie Harper. Andy Carpenter is unlucky enough to find the body, and when Rob Hayward, who once broke Andy's heart, becomes the primary suspect, Andy steps in to help clear Rob's name.

Olivia Flores Alvarez: You set the story at Rice University.

Dean James: Yes, it's set in the history department of Rice. None of the characters in the book are based on real people, of course, but I used the physical layout of the library and offices and so forth.

Some of the action also happens in Montrose.

A little bit, yeah. There's not much, because so much takes place in the history department at Rice and in the library, but there are a few scenes in the neighborhood.

There's a bookstore one character visits that seems very familiar.

That was basically Crossroads Market. That's now gone, sadly. I didn't use names for anything, but I'm sure some people will recognize the bookstore.

You have a degree from Rice in medieval history, which is true for your lead character as well.

Yes, my degree is in medieval history, with a specialty in England. I gave my character Andy that same specialty because that's what I know best. It was fun to make him a medievalist and have him work with those kinds of topics.

Some of your other books are set in England.

Right, the series about the gay vampire is set in England. That character, Simon, is a medieval historian by training, and he writes nonfiction books about medieval England. He also writes mysteries and romance novels under a pseudonym.

I'm not going to ask you if he's based on you. Since I've seen you in the daylight, I'm going to guess you're not a vampire.

No, no, I'm not. [Laughs] We're both gay, we're both medievalists, and we both write books, but other than that we're very different.

A lot of gay fiction has only gay characters doing only gay things in only gay settings and is meant for only gay readers. Your work isn't like that at all. The world you create is very much like the real world. Some characters are gay, some are straight, some we don't know about. You have a mix of characters with different sexualities, from different backgrounds, of different races and personalities.

I just went to a writers' conference in New Orleans, the Saints and Sinners Literary Festival. It's all gay writers in all different fields, everything from poetry to erotica. Being among them, I sometimes felt that my characters aren't gay enough. Everyone is so political and writes lots of explicit sex and all this stuff. I write for a fairly broad audience.

I want to reach mystery readers, not just gay mystery readers. I write for anyone who likes this type of cozy mystery, where there isn't a lot of violence. Grandmothers can read this and not be upset because there isn't a lot of gore or torture or anything like that.

I try to write for people who love mysteries. That's my audience, that's who I think of when I write.

I can see where people who aren't gay would want to read this.

My thought, and not to get too political about this, but my thought is that we have to get along with everybody. I don't see the

sense of bashing people over the head with this. This is a light book. I'm not trying to push an agenda down their throat. If I were writing an essay, maybe that would be different. But this is written for entertainment, and my job here is to entertain people.

Maybe people who are not gay will pick this up, maybe even someone who is a little homophobic will read it and then think, "Hey, these characters aren't that bad after all." Maybe.

The main thing is this is written to entertain. And it's not about gay characters vs. straight characters. It's all mixed up. There are some gay characters that are good, some gay characters that are bad. Some of the straights characters are nice, some are awful. Just like real life, there is some of everything.

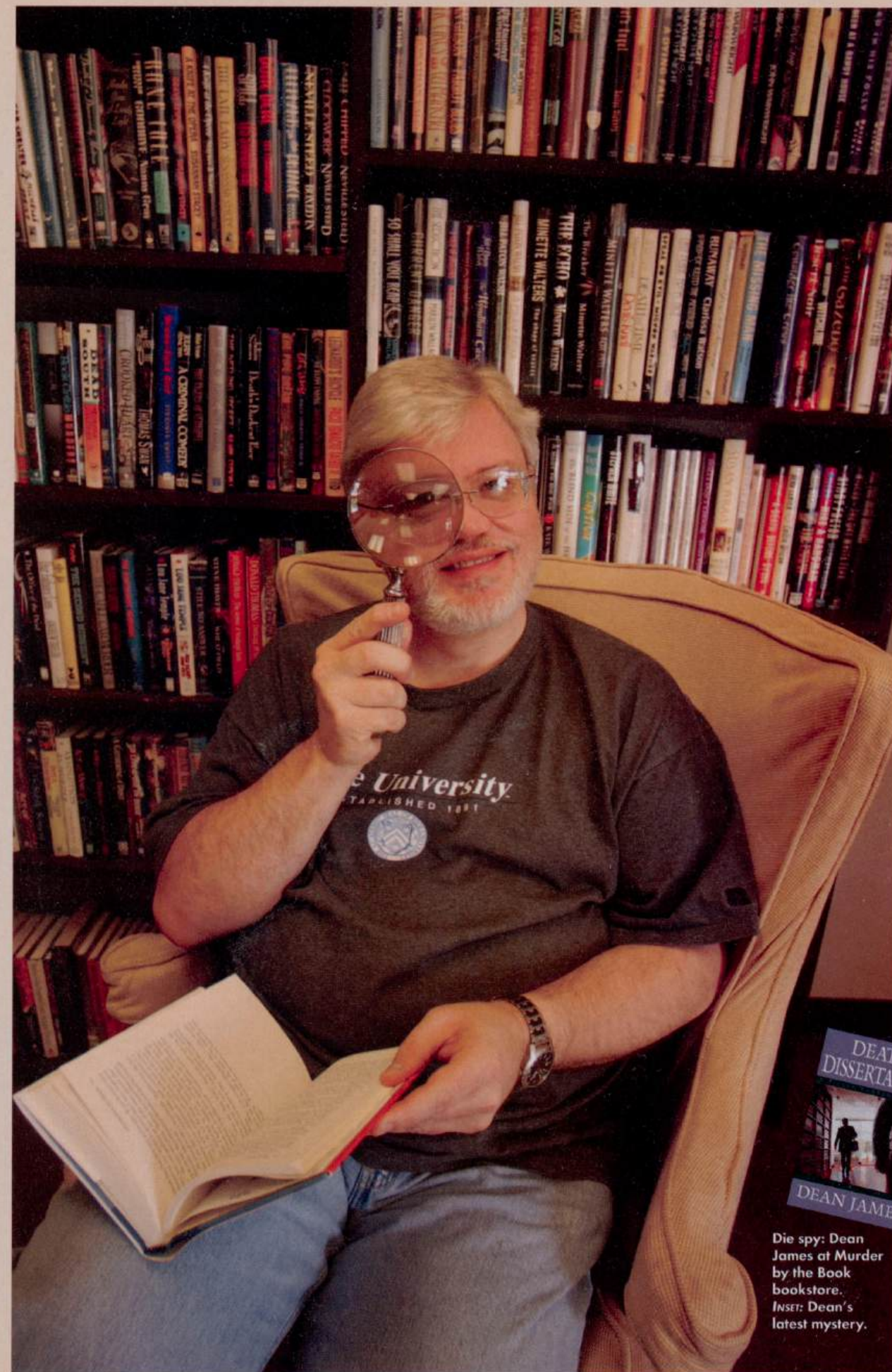
One of your gay characters that is very, very bad is Charlie Harper, who, it seems, harps a lot. He is a nasty piece of work, isn't he? He is. [Laughs] I enjoy writing nasty characters; they're fun to play with. Plus I think I write them well. I'm sure that says something about me, but I'm not sure what.

This book is out from Silver Dagger Press.

Yes, it's a small press that's doing Southern mysteries. The family that owns it is actually Baptist, so them doing a gay mystery is kind of unusual. But they wanted books that weren't too violent and that didn't have explicit sex. Those aren't the kinds of books I write anyway, so one day I called them up and talked to the person who acquires titles for them and told her about this book and that the main character was gay. I asked if I could send it to her and she said, "You know, that might open up a whole line of marketing for us." And then they accepted it for publication.

They're very broad-minded, which surprised me. That isn't my experience with most Baptists, but maybe I'm not their experience of most gay people. Maybe we surprised each other.

Olivia Flores Alvarez, who contributes regularly to OutSmart, interviewed k.d. lang for the April issue.



Die spy: Dean James at Murder by the Book bookstore. INSET: Dean's latest mystery.

READY TO ROCK

*Hardly your typical cover band,
Gurfriendz debuts this month with a rooftop show*

by Collin D. McClure • Photo by Gavyn Aaron

When you think of rock cover bands, what comes to mind? Starved college guys dressed in torn and tattered jeans and thrift-store T-shirts, practicing diligently in one of their parents' garages, perhaps. Their attempt to imitate the greatest rock bands of the last 25 or so years fails to yield them a record deal, but they continue on as their break just may one day come. Typical, right?

Enter Gurfriendz, a not-so-typical cover band whose coming-out party this month will change the way you think about one particular, generally soft-spoken part of the community. While tearing down barriers and stereotypes, the group just wants to play good music. What makes this band so different than any other cover band? As the first and only transgender rock band in Texas, Gurfriendz is ready to turn some heads when it debuts on Pride parade night on June 26.

I first meet Krystin Herrington of Gurfriendz on a rather chilly evening. I walk into a local Montrose hangout not knowing what to expect. One of the beautiful bouncers swings open the double doors, and I see a group of girls peering over the outside furniture. One of them gestures to me. "I'm Krystin, over here." As I walk over, the band members stand up, and my first impression of Krystin is *Wow, she's really tall and what great legs.*

Wearing stiletto black boots, Herrington stands about 6-foot-4. She has style and a grace about her that even some genetic women lack. A male-to-female pre-op transsexual, Herrington hopes that this new type of cover band impresses her hometown Pride revelers.

As the band's spokesperson and rhythm guitar player, Herrington reveals her love of music and the newly formed Gurfriendz

as she sits with her beautiful multicolored guitar. She is the strong one of the group, the one who takes care of business and who you would go to if you have a problem. Before giving up music for a while (prior to Gurfriendz), Herrington kicked up her boots in a country-western band on the north side.

Next to introduce herself is Jenifer Baker (lead guitar/vocals), who I come to realize is the funny one, the girl you want at the party. Her love of heavy metal music has grown over time, and the passion of playing the guitar for 21 years has led her to the band. A techie by day, Baker is a loving husband and a proud parent of two children. Baker credits Van Halen, Evanescence, and The Edge of U2, arguably one of the greatest guitarists of all time, as musical influences.

Tall, thin, and blonde: That is how you would describe Kelly Carson, the Gurfriendz bass player. Like the rest of the group, Carson is a techie by day. Meeting Herrington and the rest of the group on the Houston Cover Girls web discussion group, Carson joined the band for the same reason they all did—the simple love of music. That love shows with all of them and their willingness to do whatever it takes to please the fans. They just want to play and make people happy.

Lori Sette, the drummer, is just 20 but has already been playing for six years. She comes from a family of drummers, so maybe the talent is genetic. Sette has worked in Austin and Houston—in styles that range from punk to industrial to modern rock. A cross dresser with a supportive girlfriend, she is the newest Gurfriendz member.

Shy and reserved, lead singer Jersey sits dressed all in black. Her reserved demeanor counters the girl from Jersey City carica-

ture, but breaking stereotypes is what Gurfriendz is all about. The other male-to-female pre-op band member, Jersey (who also met Herrington on the Houston Cover Girls group) maintains a quiet attitude that doesn't hint at the fact that she is the lead singer of a rock band.

Gurfriendz is a new band. Still, the members are music-world veterans with over 40 years' combined playing experience. They are ready to rock Montrose with a live show on the Mary's roof on the night of the parade. As usual, Mary's will sell a limited number of tickets for rooftop access. And on the roof with Gurfriendz is a perfect way to rock into the night.

And the band definitely rocks, performing covers from heavy metal to the all-encompassing rock ballad. The gamut of rock is truly covered from Bush, the hard Godsmack as well as Audioslave. Throw in fan favorites like "When I'm Gone" by Three Doors Down and Nickelback and you'll be jumping and moshing in no time.

Sure, they're a cover band. But, honestly, how often do you see members of the transgender community in a band, much less a rock band? Although Gurfriendz is the only transgender rock band in Texas, they are not alone in the nation. The San Francisco underground group Lipstick Conspiracy boasts being the first in the trans community to form a rock band. The debut album from Lipstick Conspiracy, which will perform on the main stage at the San Fran pride festival this month, recently hit stores.

No album is in the works as of yet from Gurfriendz, but one thing is for sure. They rock. Watch out, babes, Gurfriendz is coming out!

Collin McClure is a music journalist. This is his first contribution to OutSmart. →



Rock this town: The first trans rock band in Texas, Gurfriendz is ready to go. Band members are (l-r) leader singer Jersey, drummer Lori Sette, lead guitar/vocalist Jenifer Baker, and rhythm guitarist Krystin Herrington (not pictured: bass player Kelly Carson).

LONG LIVE THE QUEEN

*A new documentary profiles
Houston drag queen Wendy Chicago*

by Tim Brookover • Wendy Chicago photos by Mark Johnson

Wendy Chicago is nothing if not candid. As she prepares for a drag show, she glances into the camera and admits with a smile and disarming clarity: "Mama has a little drinking problem."

This startling moment of honesty amid the artifice is just one remarkable scene from a new documentary about Chicago, the 70-year-old Houston drag queen, directed by Walt Zipprian. The film will premiere during a June 18 show at the Axiom, home of the innovative theater company Infernal Bridegroom Productions, where Zipprian is an actor.

Zipprian began working on the documentary five years ago. He first saw Wendy perform in 1988 at the Lazy J, the now-closed, down-at-heel Montrose bar.

"I was at the old Pot Pie restaurant, having breakfast," Zipprian remembers. The waiter mentioned to him and a friend that he was appearing in a show that night for drag queens over 50. "We knew we had to go."

The waiter failed to impress. "But Wendy just bowled me over. She was by far the most creative one. While the other drag queens were trying to be somebody else, she was just Wendy. And she did all these songs by black women—Sarah Vaughn, Dinah Washington."

Zipprian, who had never made a movie, filmed Chicago at her cluttered one-bedroom Hyde Park apartment and backstage and onstage at EJ's

and Mary's. He and editor (and co-producer) Mark Johnson then faced the task of whittling down 20 hours of footage into a compact, yet rich, 20 minutes. At less than half an hour (the length of a typical network sitcom sans commercials), the film may seem unexpectedly short. Viewers may find themselves wanting more Wendy. But Zipprian packs a tremendous amount of material into the short format: a well-off Midwest childhood, strained family relationships, love, loss, and, of course, a few drag queen tips.

In fact, the brevity of the film adheres to the hoary show-business adage "Always leave 'em wanting more."

"We wanted to tell a short story," Zipprian says. "I also thought that Wendy was interesting for 20 minutes, but she might not be so interesting for an hour."

The film opens with Chicago preparing for a show and concludes with an uncertain yet riveting performance at Mary's. This final scene (actually the first filmed) sums up the particular strength of Zipprian's work: the gaze that is frank, though not unkind or ugly, and the eye for detail. He reveals that Chicago is a survivor, not a high-gloss, Vegas-style queen. Sometimes she forgets the words, and her lip-synching is generally an approximation, at best. She is rangy with a care-worn face. As she totters

across the stage, the camera catches the sparse, indifferent crowd familiar to anyone who has attended a bar show.

Zipprian, who works by day in the medical center, has submitted the documentary to the Houston Gay & Lesbian Film Festival and plans to enter the film in the next round of nationwide festivals for 2005. (In these efforts he gets help from his partner Rob Baker, who handles publicity-type duties. Baker is also an Infernal Bridegroom hand and a talented artist.)

Wendy Chicago will perform after the premiere of the documentary. By the way, she only uses her drag name, Zipprian points out. Even he does not know her birth name. "I thought," the filmmaker says, "she was just too fabulous to go to memory."

Tim Brookover is OutSmart's editor.



Ready for her close-up: Wendy Chicago is the star of Walt Zipprian's documentary that premieres on June 18 at the Axiom. Opposite page: The director, photographed outside his Midtown house, worked on the film for five years.

WORD POWER

A conversation with poet and performer Donna Garrett

by Aaron Coleman • Photo by Steven David

I arranged a meeting with my friend and fellow poet, Donna Garrett, at the trendy watering hole, the Hollywood Cafe. Parked at a table on the patio, resplendent in a fedora and a white linen blouse (or was it a shirt?), was the poet goddess herself. She started the interview with her mantra.

Donna Garrett: Praise be unto God Jehovah, in the name of Jesus. Praise be unto God Jehovah, in the name . . . [Smiles and laughs] It's good to see you.

Aaron Coleman: It's so good to see you and be seen. I always call you the "poet goddess," because that's how you strike me—with this presence, and this resonant voice. It makes you stop.

That's a lot to say, and I thank you. It makes me feel good that you say that to me, and many people say that to me. They say, "If you're talking, we gotta listen." And that's a good thing, because I've got something to say.

Let's talk about you personally. Tell me about your beginnings.

When I was young, and we're talking years back, when I was in school, I used to write poems and songs. I didn't take them seriously. But I didn't want to work in my field of study. I didn't want to teach. After going to college to be a teacher, I realized I didn't want to be that.

Where did you grow up?

In Birmingham, Alabama. I came up during the civil rights age. I was right in the middle of what went down. I've got this play that I'm working on, and I talk about that. And I have poem that I talk about how I "sneaked away" to attend a demonstration that my parents had forbidden me to go to.

Were you always a rebel?

Always! My mom used to always say that I was defiant. I had my own way to doing things. My father was a minister, and the "church dress up thing" just went on and on. I hated it. My mother always preached

"foundation, foundation, foundation," because I have always been overweight. Honey, when I finally got the chance to free myself . . . Well. I just wanted to be comfortable and in my own element, which was hard for me to do all while

I was coming up. I just didn't fit the mold. I guess I had to go through that to get to where I am now. If I hadn't have been that, I wouldn't have gotten to be this.

And we're so glad that you are "this." [Both laugh] So your writing started in school?

Yes, I wrote about life—life as I saw it—wrote about love, about the Motown experience—the music I would sneak and listen to, because we weren't allowed to listen to secular music. And because I have always been very spiritual, I would write about God. I believe that God is in every individual. He certainly reigns in me. I praise God wherever I am. I don't wait to go to church.

You know, I feel that I wouldn't be here without His grace and mercy.

Hallelujah! That's all I got to say to that! You know, around '95 or '96, I began to take my writing seriously. After a serious illness in '91, I left my job and the rat race, which made me reconsider and stop and think about my life and direction. And during this time I wrote intensively. It was a process that continues to this day.

So what are you currently working on?

A play—a revival, in fact, entitled *I Can Float*. I first presented it in 2000 at Theatre New West. I have taken it back to the drawing board and done more work on it. I was recently requested to present it at the Oakland Box Theater, in Oakland, California. Whether that will happen or not is up in the air. Once I have it like I want it, I would present it on a street corner—you know Donna Garrett!

You'll draw a big crowd! Would you read something for me?

Sure. I'll read you the first poem from the play:

It was the South...it was fruitful...beautiful...and deadly
Deadly to your chocolate skin
It was shameless and proud...proud of its shackles and shame
It was the times as seen in the weary brown eyes
Of the seeds of kings
It was pain,
for it all hurt
It hurt your being, it banged and gutted
It shredded your body...made latte of your mind
And caused your soul to scream
Oh it was a way of life
Rooted deep, so deep in fear
See the horror, feel her terror
For it was slavery, reaching and struggling to destroy
Look at the children, feeling but not knowing
Disconnected, unhooked
And detached
Taken away to never see roots again
Uprooted and misplaced
Made to feel the inhumanity of a people
Reeking in madness, wallowing in hate
And rejoicing over an ill-gotten nation
Listen at their cries
More poignant than the bobwhite
That sings in the early dawn
And look, look how they dehumanize
The tyrants struggling to keep a people naked
Shake your heads in dismay, for this is history
And they say that history repeats itself
But despite it all, they evolved
They grew, and they hung on
Until their fingers were bloody
And their bones showed through, bright and white
Oh, they hung on through the hanging
Held on tightly when their women and children
Were unjustly entered...leaving their wounds
Contaminated with unwanted sawdust
Yes, it was strange fruit...but it was never consumable
And it rotted quickly, permeating the magnolias and dogwoods
Overtaking the sweetness that should have filled the air
It was hopefulness out of hopelessness but we emerged
We prayed and we talked to our God and we lived
Not to have history echo the injustice of generations
We lived to regain and retain all that we forfeited to
The dreadful masters, those tyrants from hell
We lived to reconnect and prosper
We lived to rise
We lived to resurrect the spirit of our gallant
Beautiful ancestors
We lived to thwart any chance of a disgraceful comeback →



Rebel writer: "My mom used to always say that I was defiant. I had my own way of doing things." Donna Garrett will read at Black Heritage Gallery on June 5.

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Word Power

continued from previous page

Of an evilness, that extinguishes the spirit and
Annihilates the heart
Oh, we lived to learn...lived to proclaim: Never,
never
We will allow the attempted abolishment of a race
No...we won't let history repeat itself, because
We live

That was epic and magnificent, Donna.

The play from which that poem is from talks
about my childhood, my defiance, the civil
rights movement, my difference, and when
I go to college and I find there are others
like me, find out that my feelings had a
name.

**Donna, how does that poem reference the
now? Can you talk about the disconnect
between lesbians and gays and the
disconnect between the white and the
black gay communities?**

There is a disconnection. But what was once
miles apart are now blocks apart. Just the
fact that you and I are sitting here, now,
having this interview to be in *OutSmart*
magazine, is an indication, right there, that
we are not as far apart as we were.

**But you know what, I think that it might
have as much to do with that as it does
that cream rises to the top. And that you
can't be as good as you are without
somebody finding out about it!**

[Laughs] But you know there has always
been cream. They stir it briskly, so that you
can't see it. But now, I'm having a chance to
speak, I'm reaching out myself, looking for
support. There's a bridge not just between
gays and lesbians, but there's a bridge

between gays and gays, lesbians and
lesbians. Just like there is a gap between
blacks, light and dark...

AC & DG [in unison]: Hello??? [Laugh]

There are gaps everywhere. But that's what
me and your job is, as poets, as speakers, to
address it, baby. And when I got the mic, I
address it! Hey! I got the mic. It's my job to
deliver a message.

**Did you experience discrimination from
other blacks as a child?**

You mean, did they say, "You black thing,
you?" Of course!

Haters?

Mmm hmm. Like, "This one, she's got such
pretty hair, and yours is so nappy." [Laughs]

**And now everybody is trying to get nappy
hair!**

Everybody is trying to get nappy hair! It's
funny out the script just flips. Discrimination
has come to me in some
many different forms, because I'm a lesbian,
black, a woman. I'm a cross dresser. By some
people's definition, I'm transgendered. I got
stuff going on. I'm handicapped.

What roles does music play in your life?

I think in another life, I was a singer. I love
to do my work with music. I have a CD out
called *Honest Dialogue*, and I got a chance
to work with the band Phuz. They were
medicine for my words. I have another
mantra I use that I put to jazz music,
"Go with me with me stay with me,
go with me with me stay with me. "I put it
anywhere

What else is on your menu?

I'm looking to get with my sisters to find an
open mic venue. I have been talking to the
House of Finesse, which is a beautiful
venue. I'd like to do something on a smooth
jazz level—white tablecloths, fresh-cut
flowers. We want to be nice to the people,
letting them listen to "the flow." I am
working with a Russian filmmaker on a
trailer. I have an Italian manage for my
production company, Blue Moon
Productions, Rose Venestante Schmidt. I'm
bridging the roads to diversity, honey. I ain't
in no hurry. Although I am coping with
chronic liver disease, to give hope to all those
people out there who are suffering with the
same, I am going to live my life to the fullest.
I'm gonna bump it up a notch!

Poet and performer Aaron Coleman
collaborated with his partner, artist David
Eduardo Flores Perez, on the story and
dialogue for the comic strip "Diva Man," which
appeared in our April issue. ■

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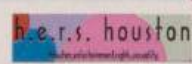
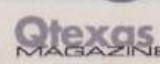
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for the Straight Guy" and DJ Marc Tarbox



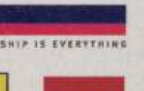
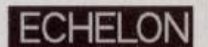
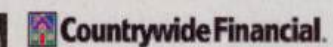
LIFT OFF IS JUNE 12
9:30 pm - 3 am



Jai

The "Queer Eye for the Straight
Guy" culture gayru will appear
at LIFT OFF and at Empower.
Don't miss this opportunity to
meet Jai. It's all about culture.

Lift Off Tickets include Empower 2004
registration: \$40.00. One day admission
to Empower is \$5.00 at the door. Tickets may be
purchased at ghglcc.org, pridehouston.org or by calling
the Chamber at 713-523-7576.



PROUD



MONTH

A selected listing from a very full June calendar

Take a deep breath. Unless you have cracked the whole cloning thing, you simply can't make all the events during the month devoted to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender pride. But you can pick some favorites. Here are selected highlights from the official lineup compiled by the Pride Committee of Houston. Check out www.pridehouston.org for more details and the complete calendar.

LHI Rainbow Health Fair

Saturday, June 5, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

The Lesbian Health Initiative will provide free services by appointment, including mammograms and HIV/STD testing and counseling at Montrose Clinic. www.lhihouston.org

Profiles in Pride:

That's Entertainment

Monday, June 7, 7:30 p.m.

Each Monday in June, the *Texas Triangle* will present documentaries on GLBT people in show business, beginning with the landmark 1995 film *The Celluloid Closet*, at 1415 California. Other movies in the series: *Radical Harmonies*, Dee Mosbacher's new chronicle of the

women's music movement, and *Out of the Closet, Off the Screen: The Life of Williams Haines*.

www.txtriangle.com

Eat Out & Chip In

Thursday, June 10

Several local restaurants will donate a portion of tabs from meals on this day to the Houston chapter of DIFFA/Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS. Participating spots include Barnaby's, Benjy's in The Village, Cabo Montrose, Carmelo's Italian Restaurant, Dessert Gallery Bakery & Cafe, Niko Niko's Greek & American Café, St. Pete's Dancing Marlin, and Zula New American Cuisine. www.diffa.org

The Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals 1933-1945

Friday, June 11

Holocaust Museum Houston opens this exhibition that recounts the Nazi's attempt to eradicate homosexuality. Volunteers from the Gulf Coast Archive & Museum of GLBT History will help unpack and set up the show. See page 64 for more info. www.hmh.org

Houston Pride 5K Fun Run & Walk

Sunday, June 12, 7:30 a.m.
The Houston Montrose Athletic Association has added a one-mile walk to the course, which will begin at Sabine and Allen Parkway. Proceeds will benefit AssistHers. www.geocities.com/houstonpride5k

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Empower
Saturday June 12, 18 p.m.
Sunday, June 13, noon 5 p.m.
 The Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce has moved the annual community expo to June this year. New attractions at the George R. Brown Convention Center event will include a Pet Pavilion and a Kid's Pavilion.
www.ghgcc.org

Lift Off: Our Launch into Pride
Saturday, June 12, 9:30 p.m.-3:30 a.m.
 Jai Rodriguez, the culture maven from Bravo's *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, will serve as guest emcee and perform at this party and dance, the official Pride kickoff celebration at the George R. Brown Convention Center. DJ Mark Tarbox from Los Angeles will spin tunes beginning at 11 p.m. Proceeds will benefit the co-hosting chamber and Pride Committee.
www.pridehouston.org



Marshaling for pride: 2004 grand marshals (l-r) Jim Null, Jerry Simoneaux, Sonna Alton, and Sue Null will lead the parade along Westheimer and beneath the chandelier suspended over Montrose (see page 48). Not pictured: Randall Ellis, executive director of the Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby of Texas, which is the organization grand marshal this year.

Grand Marshal Reception
Friday, June 18, 7-9 p.m.
 The marshals of the 2004 parade will be honored at this event in the JPMorgan Chase lobby downtown. DJ Limey will provide music.
www.pridehouston.org



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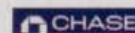


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Diva time: Direct from Atlanta, the renowned Bubba D. Licious will emcee the June 19 Jocks in Dresses event at Rich's Houston. The Montrose Softball League event will benefit the Houston GLBT Community Center and the league. For more, see page 20.

Free Will and Wanton Lust

Friday, June 18, 8 p.m.

Unhinged Productions will present the Nicky Silver comedy again on June 19 and June 25 at Stages Repertory Theatre.

www.u-p.org

Equality Knocks Pride Block Walk

Saturday, June 19, 8 a.m.-1 p.m.

Volunteers will gather at the Houston GLBT Community Center, then go door-to-door spreading the word about marriage equality in this effort organized by the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus, Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby of Texas, and Progressive Voters in Action. To volunteer: 713/521-1000, ext. 2.

www.equalityknocks.org

Jocks in Dresses

Saturday, June 19, 7-10 p.m.

The renowned drag performer Bubba D. Licious will emcee the annual Montrose Softball League cross-dressing show at Rich's

Houston. Proceeds will benefit the Houston GLBT Community Center and the league.

www.montrosesoftballleague.com

XALT 2004

Sunday, June 20, 7 p.m.

Community Gospel Church will host an evening of praise and worship featuring local talent.

www.communitygospel.org

Pride Week Interfaith Worship Service & Community Reception

Sunday, June 20, 7 p.m.

Sponsored by the Interfaith Alliance for Inclusiveness, the service at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church will feature Dr. Louie Crew, the Episcopal activist and Rutgers professor, with music provided by the Gay Men's Chorus Ensemble, the Bering Chancel Choir, the Resurrection MCC choir, and the Taylor David Trio. An 8 p.m. reception will follow the service.

Details: 713/812-9014 →

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Tickets go on sale Monday June 21,
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Baile Internacional 2004

Friday, June 25, 8 p.m.-1 a.m.

The Latino group GLOBO (Gays and Lesbians Organized by Orgullo) will present the annual black-tie gala at Guest House Suites/Inn. Proceeds will benefit local nonprofit groups.

www.globohouston.org

Official Pre-Parade Party

Friday, June 25, 9 p.m.-3 a.m.

Grammy-winning DJ Hex Hector of Miami will spin classic remixes at this bash at Boaka Bar/Mercury Lounge. A portion of proceeds from official parade parties will benefit the Pride Committee.

www.pridehouston.org

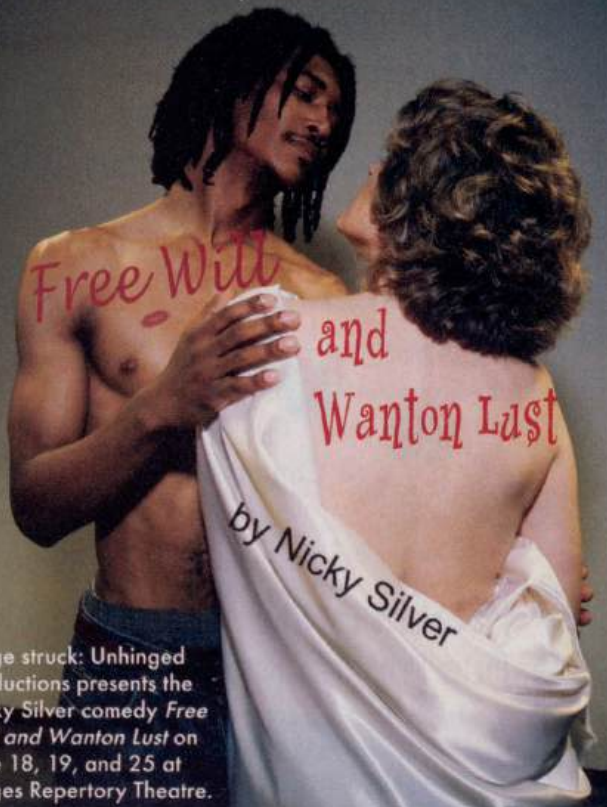
Pre-Parade Festival

Saturday, June 26, 4-11 p.m.

Before the big event, stop by Westheimer and Yoakum for the brand-new Pride beer garden. The M2M Entertainment dance tent will feature Texas DJ talent. Cabo Montrose will host VIP bleacher seating for the parade.

www.pridehouston.org →

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presents



Free Will and Wanton Lust
by Nicky Silver

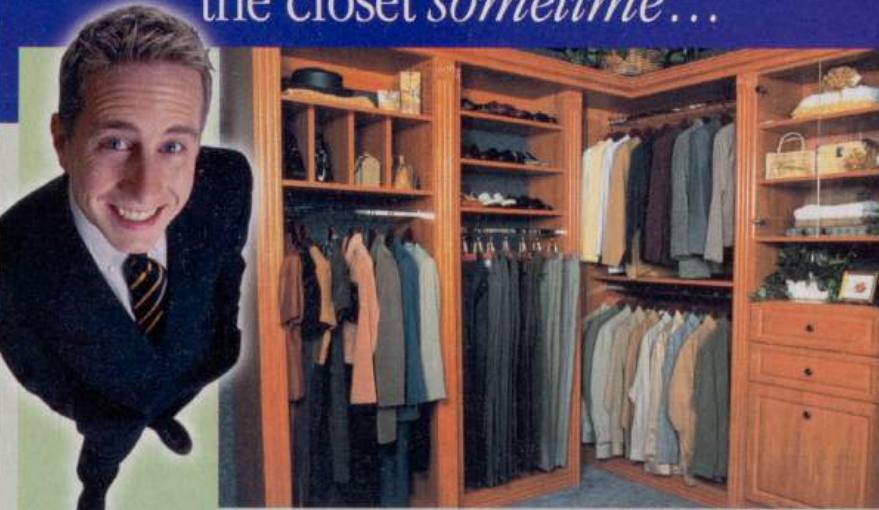
Stage struck: Unhinged Productions presents the Nicky Silver comedy *Free Will and Wanton Lust* on June 18, 19, and 25 at Stages Repertory Theatre.



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Proud Month *continued from page 54*

The Parade

Saturday, June 26, 8:45 p.m.

The nighttime parade rolls with more than 130 entries along Westheimer from Woodhead to Whitney.

www.pridehouston.org

Official Pride Post-Parade Party

Saturday, June 26, 10 p.m.-4 a.m.

Club favorite Pat Hodge sings her Billboard top 10 hits, including "Love Revolution," at Club GO downtown. New York DJ Warren Gluck will provide additional music.

www.pridehouston.org

Official Pride After-Party

Sunday, June 27, 3:30-10 a.m.

The festivities continue through the morning at Opus with a performance by dance-music icon Dynasty and more music spun by DJ Dawna Montel of Los Angeles.

www.pridehouston.org



After the parade passes by: Pat Hodge will perform "Love Revolution" and her other hits at the post-parade party on June 26 at Club GO.



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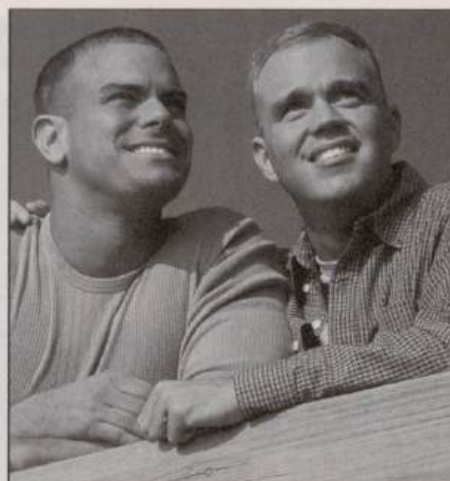
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Both Sides Now

Once smitten, now bi shy, our writer still pleads acceptance for the bisexuals among us

by Thomas Blanton



In bi dreams?:
Gina Gershon (l)
and Angelina Jolie.



Back before I met Jack and got all domesticated and life-partnerish, I was single. And like a lot of single men, I dated. Oh, how I dated. Most of my attempts at even casual dating failed miserably, and as such are not worth mentioning outside of an anger-management seminar. There was, however, one particular guy who stood out from the rest: Let's call him Rolondo. He was an ex-hockey player turned med student, so not only was he beefy, but he would eventually be able to support me in the tax bracket to which I'd like to become accustomed. We met online (don't judge me), spent some time together, and clicked immediately. Everything was leading up to that blissful moment when you wake up and it takes you a second to remember where you are and what you did with your pants. Unfortunately, he killed the mood. Killed the mood dead, in fact, with those 10 little words no gay man ever expects to hear: "Just so you know—I'm kind of seeing this girl."

He wasn't a celebrity living a double life to protect his career, nor was he confused about his sexuality and desperately clinging to a shell-shocked fag hag with a traumatic history of getting involved

with closeted homos. He was "kind of seeing this girl," just like how he was "kind of seeing" me. My precious Rolondo was a bona fide, in the flesh, the-grass-is-greener-on-both-sides bisexual.

Of course, I totally didn't believe him. I mean, haven't we all, at some point or another, claimed bisexuality? Most of us did it when we were taking our first baby steps out of the closet, pretending we'd eventually meet a respectable lass and settle down, rather than dealing with the fact that we'd gone through puberty and still thought girls were icky. And gay or straight, everybody has the One They'd Switch For. Jack has made it clear that he plans to dump me for

Gaze for gals?: Thomas Blanton (l) and Jack Richardson.



Angelina Jolie, which frankly, I have no problem with, considering I'd smother him with a pillow if I thought it would make Gina Gershon like me.

I'd always thought true bisexuals were mythological, like unicorns, or conservative environmentalists. I mean, sure, I'd known people who swore up and down that they were bi, but I never bought it. Most of them were just trying to be bohemian, and almost always freaked out when someone of the same sex tried to flirt with them. It never occurred to me that some people out there were honestly and equally physically attracted to boys and girls.

Rolondo and I tried to date for a while, but I wanted a boyfriend, and he wasn't ready to settle down with anyone, so we promised to stay in touch and then never called each other. Looking back on the whole Rolondo affair, though (or as my buddy Patrick puts it, "That time you really were the other woman"), he had it rough. He couldn't introduce me to his straight friends, since they all assumed he was straight, too. At the same time, he couldn't introduce a girl to his gay friends, since they all thought he was calling himself bisexual because he hadn't come out to his parents. →

Jeff Vannice, PhD

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Wouldn't it be nifty if bisexuals could just go out and find more accepting friends? In a lot of cases, they can't. While society in general is slowly becoming more accepting of gays and lesbians, bisexuals are still viewed with skepticism and animosity. Think about it. Heterosexual culture is rife with lesbian chic and metrosexuality, suggesting that it's titillating and fashionable to appear gay, so long as you're actually straight. Gay culture isn't much better. Just look at our porn stars: Is Jeff Stryker bi? Of course not. He's "gay for pay." I can't even meet a deadline when a paycheck depends on it, much less have visually stunning sex with someone completely opposite of what I'm attracted

to in front of a camera crew and production assistants. A porn star calling himself bisexual just doesn't sell, but if it's a "totally straight" actor who just so happens to do gay films, then pass the popcorn and slo-mo the good parts.

Okay, so maybe porn doesn't make the most credible example. But the fact is, a lot of us have problems with bisexuality, and, well, sometimes that makes us kind of hypocritical. We want our sexuality validated, but we don't want to validate the sexualities of others. We rally against stereotypes, but view bisexuals as either confused or slutty. Overall, we're not doing too hot a job of contributing toward a truly inclusive and understanding world.

Pride is coming up at the end of this month. While you're standing in line for one

of the three Porta-Potties the city puts out for the thousands of parade-goers, or while you're trading punches with a drag queen over a plastic beaded necklace, take a moment to reflect on what the event really represents: the freedom to love whomever you want; the joy of being proud of who and what you are; and, most importantly, the knowledge that you have a community that accepts you. Let's do what we can to make sure that community is being just as accepting of all the different, wacky, beautiful people who make it up.

And if you run into Gina Gershon, tell her to call me.

Thomas Blanton offered his take on queer eyes and straight guys ["Kind Eye for the Slovenly Guy"] in our March issue.

Alan Cumming

(Out, 11/99, Steven Druksman)

Steven Druksman: Inquiring minds want to know [if you're gay].

Alan Cumming: Well, no, I wouldn't say I was gay. But I wouldn't say I was straight.

Bisexual?

Bisexual, I suppose... I think that people here are much more willing to want you to be one or the other.

That's a generous way of saying it.

OK, desperate for you to choose. And if you don't choose one (because you aren't either), then they think that you're not willing to fess up. I think it's endemic of the way people in America close themselves off sexually... and then awake and wear whatever uniform they choose. And then they can't change into other things, because that's what they are...

So it means that it would be inconceivable for them to have sex with someone of the opposite sex or someone of the same sex, depending on their "sexuality." When in fact, it isn't that simple. And I find that people are a wee bit resistant to the notion of someone being *not* one or the other.

Melissa Etheridge

(Us, 12/95, Fred Schruers)

Fred Schruers: Do you feel bisexuals are a force in their own right and may be more so as time goes on?

Melissa Etheridge: I believe that it will be the bisexuals that make the change in the world. The twentysomething generation right now is very "Hey, you have a choice. You fall in love with people, and you have the choice."

Art Alexakis

(Everclear band leader)

Ray Rogers: When I heard the lyrics to your next single "Heartspark Dollarsign," about "a love so pure" meeting "a hate so blind," it reminded me of meeting my boyfriend's father.



Compiled by Blase DiStefano

Art Alexakis: That's really hard. I went through a period in my life when I dated guys as well, when I was 18, 19. I think all people are bisexual, or have the ability to be. I mean, love is love. If you feel love and you're treated with love and respect, then f--k the rest of the world.



Anthony Perkins
in *Psycho II*

Anthony Perkins

(Split Image, 9/96, Charles Winecoff)

"If bisexuality means you can get it up with a woman, then I think [Anthony Perkins] was," Ben Bagley [theater producer] asserts. "I don't think it was his sexual preference. But I think he found the right woman [Berry Berenson]. I can't imagine him with any other woman. In fact, I refer to her as 'boyishly fetching' in my liner notes."

Andy Dick

(Us Weekly, 5/08/00, David Wild)

In 1997, the comedian complicated his life by announcing, in *TV Guide* of all places, that he was bisexual. "If I could rewind life I would go back and erase that bisexual comment, because it's gotten me into trouble," Dick says now. "I would just do what Ricky Martin says, like I am just a very sexual person. People can't fathom the idea of bisexuality. Straight people just say, 'Oh, right, you're gay.' And gay people say, 'Oh, yeah, right, you're gay.'"

Judy Davis on Judy Garland

(The Advocate, Anne Stockwell, 2/27/01)

Judy Davis: There's a tape of [Judy Garland] talking to [her fourth husband, actor] Mark Herron. She says, "I just need to tell you how you've hurt me. I went to bed and put on something pretty... and I fell asleep, and sometime later I woke up, and you still weren't—you don't—I feel I'm not wanted." Well, of course she wasn't wanted, because Mark Herron was gay. Didn't she know? She understood bisexuality, absolutely; there's enough evidence to suggest she had bisexual relationships herself... But it's almost as if she didn't understand homosexuality. Sexuality, for her, didn't have those divisions.

Liz Smith

(gossip columnist)

(Us Weekly, Jonathan Van Meter, 10/09/00)
Jonathan Van Meter: A lot of fuss has been made about your sexuality since [your book] *Natural Blonde* came out. But it seems important to you that people not label you as "lesbian gossip columnist Liz Smith."
Liz Smith: Well, they will anyway. It's perfectly OK. But don't ask me to do it, 'cause tomorrow I might change my mind again. Remember when someone asked Noel Coward what he thought about some guy walking down the beach? And Noel Coward said, "I think he'd go either way for a box of chocolate." I always feel I might go either way for a box of chocolate. ■

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Nicole BEFORE

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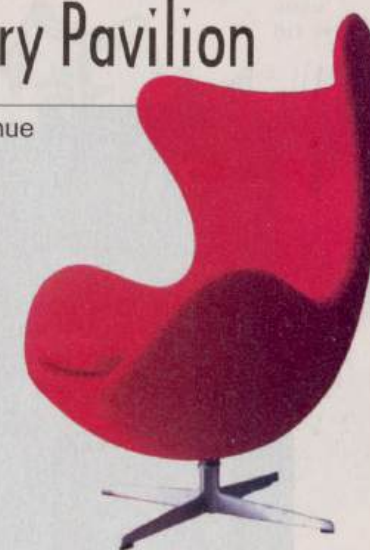
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Holocaust Museum Houston
presents an exhibition
on the Nazi campaign
against **homosexuals**

Identification pictures of a prisoner accused of homosexuality, who arrived at the Auschwitz camp on December 6, 1941. He died there three months later.
Photo: NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU/UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM

Paragraph 175, the melancholy
1999 documentary directed
by Rob Epstein and Jeffrey

Friedman, recounted the
systemic attacks on and
imprisonment of gay men
by the German National
Socialist regime. As the film
explained, men who survived
the work camps and concen-
tration camps were not
necessarily free after the war,
driven underground by the
notorious antigay legislation
of the film's title. Some were
even forced to serve out their
Nazi-imposed sentences.

On June 11, the Holocaust
Museum Houston illuminates
this chapter in our history
when it opens *Nazi Persecution
of Homosexuals 1933-1945*.

Through photographs and
documents from the
collection of the United
States Holocaust Memorial
Museum, the
exhibition
examines the
history of the
Nazi attempt
to eradicate
homosexuality
across the Reich.

The exhibition
continues through
September 19.

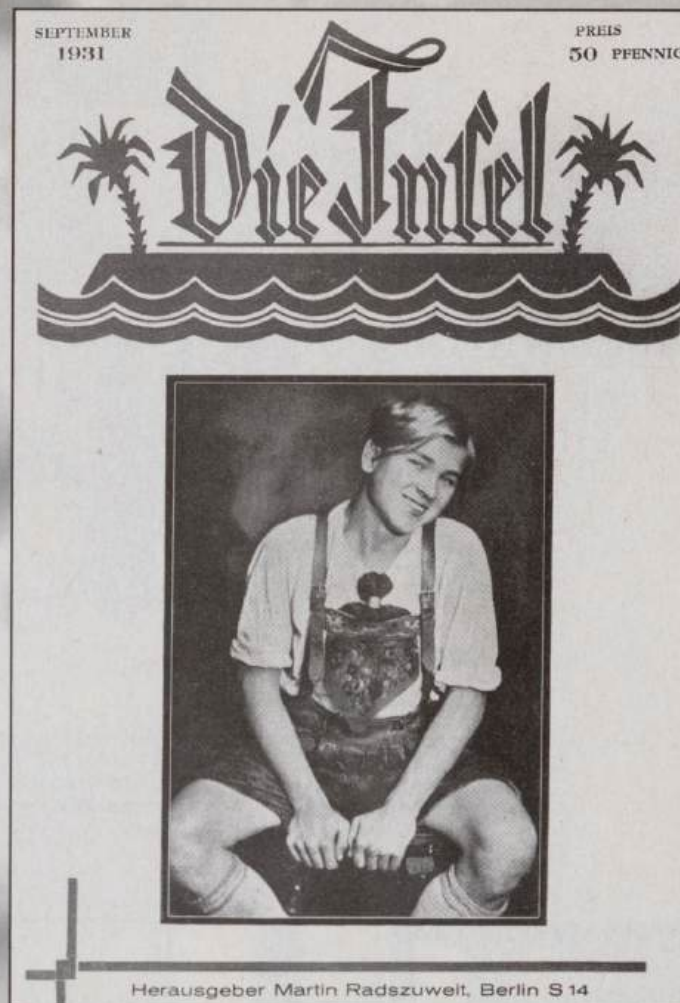


A 1907 political cartoon
depicting sex-researcher
Magnus Hirschfeld,
drumming up support for
the abolition of Paragraph
175. The banner reads,
"Away with Paragraph
175!" The caption reads,
"The foremost champion
of the third sex!"

Photo: USHMM

Solidarity, a Richard Grune lithograph from a series,
Passion des XX Jahrhunderts (Passion of the 20th
Century). Grune was prosecuted under Paragraph 175
and from 1937 until liberation in 1945 was incarcerated
in concentration camps. In 1947 he produced etchings
detailing what he witnessed in the camps.

Photo: SCHWULES MUSEUM, BERLIN/USHMM



Cover of the September 1931 issue of *The Island*, a magazine
for gay men, edited by Martin Radzuweit. Although illegal, homo-
sexuality was generally tolerated in pre-Nazi Germany, particularly
in urban areas.

Photo: USHMM



A 1907 political cartoon
depicting sex-researcher
Magnus Hirschfeld,
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detailing what he witnessed in the camps.

Photo: SCHWULES MUSEUM, BERLIN/USHMM



Prisoners at forced labor in the Mauthausen concentration camp. Beginning in 1943, homosexuals were among those in camps killed in an SS-sponsored "extermination through work" program.

Photo: NEDERLANDS INSTITUUT VOOR OORLOGSDOCUMENTATIE/USHMM



An operating room at Sachsenhausen concentration camp. After November 1942, camp commandants could order the castration of prisoners in unspecified "special cases," thus permitting the compulsory castration of incarcerated homosexuals.

Photo: GEDENKSTÄTTE UND MUSEUM SACHSENHAUSEN, ORANIENBURG/USHMM

Kennzeichen für Schutzhäftlinge in den Konzentrationslagern					
Form und Farbe der Kennzeichen					
Politisch	Peru- verbrecher	Emigrant	Bibel- forscher	Gemein- schaftlich	Rechtlos
Grund- farben					
Abzeichen für Rassengeltung					
Häftlinge der Straf- kompanie					
Abzeichen für Juden					
Besondere Abzeichen					
	Ind. Auf- schreiber	Auf- schreiberin	Nacht- wache	Häftlings- nummer	
	Note	Kreuze	Feierabend- Angehörigen	Häftling 1a	

The pink triangle (second column from right) was the designated camp badge for male homosexual prisoners, as shown on this undated chart, "Distinguishing Marks for Protective Custody Prisoners." In addition to the basic badge (top), variations marked repeat offenders, prisoners in punishment battalions, and homosexual Jews.

Photo: DOKUMENTATIONSARCHIV DES ÖSTERREICHISCHEN WIDERSTANDES, VIENNA/USHMM



German police file photo of a man arrested in October 1937 for suspicion of violating Paragraph 175.

Photo: LANDESARCHIV, BERLIN/USHMM



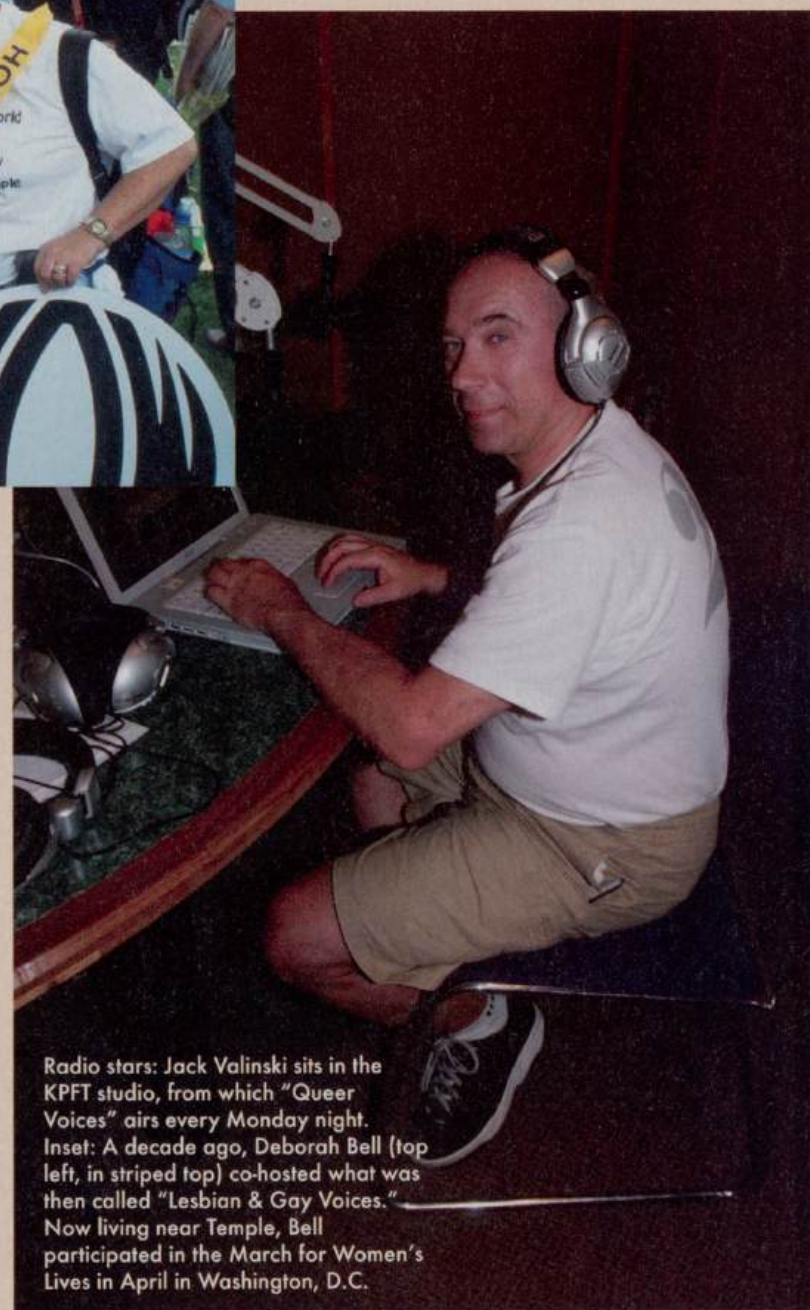
Freundespaar (Couple), 1925, by August Heitmüller (1873-1935), from the collection of the Schwules Museum [Gay Museum] in Berlin.



Check Up Jack Valinski & Deborah Bell

Of the two one-time radio hosts, one is still on the air and the other left town, but both remain activists

by Joyce Gabiola
Valinski photo
by Yvonne Feece



Radio stars: Jack Valinski sits in the KPFT studio, from which "Queer Voices" airs every Monday night. Inset: A decade ago, Deborah Bell (top left, in striped top) co-hosted what was then called "Lesbian & Gay Voices." Now living near Temple, Bell participated in the March for Women's Lives in April in Washington, D.C.

Every month during our 10-year celebration, we revisit an individual we interviewed or who played a significant role in the issue published a decade ago. →

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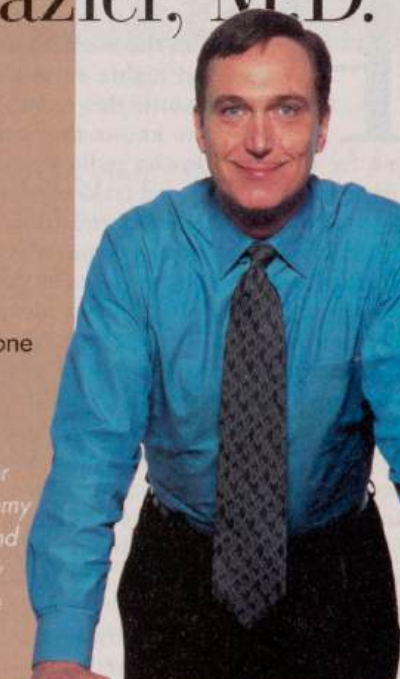
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People listen to the radio as they butter their English muffin in the morning or on weekend nights en route to their favorite club or bar, but everyone knows that prime time for tuning in to the radio waves is during the time we spend trekking across the city in our vehicles to and from our daily destinations. Some people enjoy the KRBE morning trio, and others listen intently to NPR or sing praises along to Christian radio. Is it news that valuable programming for the GLBT and general community is tucked into off-peak radio hours? *Queer Voices*, produced and co-hosted by Jack Valinski, airs on Monday evenings at 8. Try recording *Everwood* and tune in. Valinski admits that the hours are not optimal for the maximum number of listeners, but he points out, "We are lucky to have such a space."

The June 1994 *OutSmart* featured Valinski and activist Deborah Bell as the voices of what was then known as *Lesbian & Gay Voices*. Valinski and Bell say today that they cannot recall exactly how they met, but KPFT definitely brought them together. With creativity and dedication, their program evolved, and Valinski and Bell became the voices behind a program aimed at the interests of the GLBT community, but also one intended to promote awareness among society.

Of course, such success is not achieved without obstacles. The program faced a major challenge, Valinski recounts, after it was canceled in November 1992 while Bell was away working on the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Equal Rights and Liberation. The powers at KPFT had tried to move away from specialty programs, Valinski says. The supportive community held a demonstration at a station meeting, but *Lesbian & Gay Voices* was not heard again until March 1993. "Houston has had some of the longest-running programs in the country devoted to GLBT programming or that are GLBT-inclusive, thanks to KPFT, even though at times it has been a struggle," says Bell, who left the program in 1995 in support of her partner, who had experienced conflicts with station management.

"It's also a challenge to keep the show fresh and have new people on, but we are lucky to have people who are dedicated," Valinski says. He is referring to Glen Holt,

Jone Devlin, JD Doyle, and Mary Morissette. "Jone is an incredible book reader, so it's great to see her interview authors. JD probably has the biggest collection of queer music. These people are experts in what they do, but they don't have big heads." Valinski's favorite aspect of *Queer Voices* is being able to talk to people in the community. He loves the intimacy of radio programming, which he says is like holding a conversation with someone sitting around a table.

Everyone who works on *Queer Voices* volunteers their time and talents, including Valinski, who also works his whazoo off all year as program coordinator for the Pride Committee of Houston. Valinski, one of the founders of the Pride Committee, also volunteers with the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus. The Syracuse University graduate earned a degree in radio and television and moved to Houston for a job with an ABC-owned radio station. (Kathy

Valinski and Bell agree that the biggest issue a decade ago was HIV/AIDS. "It was a challenge for the community to focus, and maybe we've lost focus now," Valinski says. "Also, hate crimes and the fear of getting bashed for being queer was a big concern," adds Bell. "The murder of Paul Broussard brought that home in Houston."

Whitmire was elected mayor on the day he arrived.)

Valinski and Bell agree that the biggest issue a decade ago was HIV/AIDS. "It was a challenge for the community to focus, and maybe we've lost focus now," Valinski says. "Also, hate crimes and the fear of getting bashed for being queer was a big concern," adds Bell. "The murder of Paul Broussard brought that home in Houston. I think we still have to be very cautious, but there is so much more understanding now on both those issues."

Valinski and Bell also mention the 2003 overturning of the sodomy law as a momentous change in history. They have witnessed the GLBT community's progress over the many years, including how the media portrays the community in connection with the Pride parade. "There's

more of a balance of who we are, as opposed to previous years when the media would spotlight only drag queens and the leather community," he says. "There's definitely better coverage, which has a lot to do with our visibility." Since media portrayal is more positive than not, Valinski remarks, "I thought we'd be a lot further along with how the world is, how the country is. It seems that the country is so divided. The marriage thing is scaring them."

Bell now lives in a rural community outside Temple, Texas, where buffalo have been recently spotted roaming up her driveway. A former Houston Pride parade grand marshal and member of numerous organizations such as the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, and Stonewall Democrats, Bell works for a medical institution and remains an activist. As a long-standing member of the National Organization for Women (NOW), she also serves as the moderator for an online discussion group known as the Feminist Online Network (FEMNET), which focuses on the greater Houston area, but reaches subscribers in other states and countries. Bell recently returned to Washington for the March for Women's Lives, which took place on the 11th anniversary of the GLBT-rights march in 1993. Bell carried the NOW banner that was carried in the 1978 March for Extension of the Equal Rights Amendment, the first march she attended as a NOW activist.

Valinski has gone from toiling in a large corporation years ago to working for a small organization. He says he is happy as he remains focused on the things that truly matter to him: community and friends.

For those of you who are new to *Queer Voices*, when you tune in, you won't ever hear disc jockeys yapping with Jessica Simpson. *Queer Voices* is a weekly opportunity for GLBT-interest programming where members, events, and issues of the local community are highlighted and discussed. Leaders of national organizations have been featured on the program, but for the most part the *Queer Voices* team aims to keep the program as local as possible. "Nobody is a star," Valinski says. "We do the program for the community. Stars are the people who are in the program."

Joyce Gabiola interviewed therapist Patrick Vachon for the "Check Up" feature in our May issue.

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LookOut

by Tim Brookover



HOW RADICAL. Two members of the Radical Faeries community in Nashville, Crazy Bear and Ribbon, have designated June 5 the inaugural Faerie Godfathers Day. Proclaimed "throughout the galaxy" by the Faerie Empress Sassi Fae, this new holiday honors older gay men for the valuable role they play in the community. In Houston, the revived Radical Faerie Circle plans to pay tribute to its senior members. This month, we also recognize our favorite godfathers. These distinguished gentlemen include friend of the *OutSmart* staff Damien Yalch, who has work in the Art League of Houston HIV Outreach Program exhibition on display through June 30 at Wells Fargo-River Oaks. Yalch is pictured above (l) with program instructor Kermit Eisenhut.

OY! Gay? Lesbian? Jewish? On June 15, stop by Meteor, bubeleh, for the first gathering of the new Jewish Gay and Lesbian Social Group. Toast "L'Chaim" to **Sandy Brauer**, who is organizing the tribe, sponsored by the Jewish Community Center Singles Connection. At the first meeting, couples as well as singles are welcome. Mazel tov!

GOOD WORKS. Community Gospel Church will host its first golf scramble on June 19 at World Houston Golf Course. **Michelle Dean** and **Kelly Gilbert** are tournament directors.

Over Pride weekend, the glamorous **SoFonda St. John** and **boy patrick** will present a 48-hour "totterthon" at KeyStar Event Complex. The fun will begin with a show on Friday and conclude on Sunday with a spaghetti supper dubbed "A Return to Mel's Diner." Proceeds will benefit Leatherpup Productions and The Assistance Fund and the Montrose Clinic Women's Program, designated charities of the Empire of the Royal Sovereign and Imperial Court of the Single Star.

Start combing out those hairpieces. **Paige Mahogany** and **Chloe Douglas** of Community Awareness for Transgender Sup-

port have alerted me that they are making plans for Wig Out, an upcoming fundraiser for CATS and the Houston GLBT Community Center.

Q-PATROL NEEDS YOU. In late April, a burglary at the community center resulted in the theft of four Nextel communications units that Q-Patrol uses on its weekend surveillance runs through Montrose. The phones are valued at \$250 each, reports **Chris Arasin**, Q-Patrol chairman. After such a major blow, the organization that helps keep our community secure needs support more than ever. To make a donation: 713/528-SAFE or QpatrolHouston@yahoo.com.

IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD. Poet **Donna Garrett**, interviewed by **Aaron Coleman** on page 42 of this issue, will participate in a Juneteenth reading, "The Color of Money," at Black Heritage Gallery on June 19.

For the Houston Outdoor Group, it's the berries this month. On June 19, some members of the intrepid organization, affectionately known by the porcine acronym HOG, will journey to Moorehead Blueberry Farm in Montgomery County to

harvest the fruit. Pickers will include **John Allen**, **Jon Gray**, and **Frank Kelley**.

Our *amigos* at GLOBO (Gays and Lesbians Organized by Orgullo) are particularly busy *ahora*. They are presenting Baile Internacional, the dance at the Guest House Suites/Inn on June 25, and every Wednesday they are now hosting Latin Nights/Noches Latinas at Cabo Montrose. **DJ Papi** spins *caliente* music at the weekly evening, co-sponsored by the Gay & Lesbian Rainbow Pages.

After the parade passes by, Montrose Clinic will observe National HIV Testing Day on June 28 by offering a free test with results in 20 minutes.

The Chase P.R.I.D.E. team sponsors an exhibition featuring artists **Cristen Cliburn**, **Richard Fluhr**, **McKay Otto**, and **Elisabeth Smith** at the JPMorgan Chase Heritage Hall through June 30.

Longtime readers of this magazine know **Lilly Roddy** as a dedicated astrologer, a writer, a musician, and a transgender activist. You may not know that she is also a skilled martial-arts instructor. In July, Roddy will begin teaching karate/tai chi classes on Monday evenings at the Houston GLBT Community Center. Sign up now by contacting her at Lillycath@aol.com. ■

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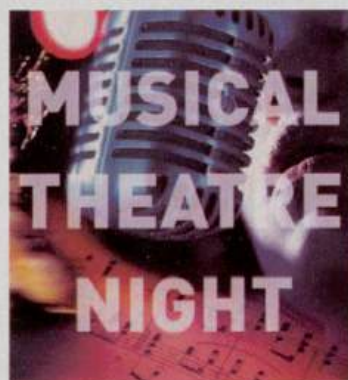


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Hugh Jackman

(Entertainment Weekly, 3/26/04, Benjamin Svetkey)

[I]f any Wolverine fans have been turned off by his wholehearted investment in a gay musical love story [*The Boy from Oz*], well, "those aren't the sort of fans I'd want anyway," he says.

Still, the part may have helped prompt persistent speculation about his offstage life. "I'm supposedly having an affair with my assistant," he says, volunteering the latest tabloid gossip while sitting in his dressing room at the Imperial Theatre. . . . "My assistant's name is John." He rolls his eyes. "I have a wife . . . and a kid . . . and I'm very happy about that. But I guess it's a sign that I'm moving up the ladder. The gay rumors are starting."

Jai Rodriguez

(Jane, 5/04)

[W]hen I'm on the set for 14 hours a day, I think about the people who stop me on the street to say thank you because the show gave them the courage to come out, or made their husbands behave and smell better, or just made them laugh until they peed their pants. It's all worth it.

Alicia Silverstone

(Jane, 5/04, Woody Harrelson)

Woody Harrelson: So what do you think of Bush? Doing a fine job so far?

Alicia Silverstone: . . . I will say that I think that it's kind of crazy that with all the real stuff that's going on in the world, that we're discussing whether gays should get married. It's just the government legislating morality. It's absurd. For not only Christian society, it seems unbelievably judgmental, and what Jesus was kind of telling us was not to judge.

Bill Maher

(Interview, 6/04)

All marriages are same-sex marriages. You get married, and every night it's the same sex.

Sandra Bernhard

(Interview, 6/04)

Every person deserves equal rights no matter who they love. Laura Bush enjoys certain privileges and look, she's made a hideous choice—but it's none of my business.

Margaret Cho

(Interview, 6/04)

What I tell straight people in my stand-up is that if you watch *Will & Grace* but don't support gay marriage, then f-k you. Taking the flowers of a culture without easing the burden of minority is like when white people took rock 'n' roll from black people in the '50s. "I love that song, but please don't use that drinking fountain."

Queer Quotes

Compiled by Blase DiStefano



Nia Vardalos

(The Advocate, 4/27/04, Alec Mapa)

Alec Mapa: You met your first gay guy during *Grease*?

Nia Vardalos: Isn't that funny? And I remember just being surrounded and feeling at home. It was quite a joy to be able to show my album collection and have somebody go, "Oh, my God—I have that one too!" Instead of somebody going, "Wait—you don't have Led Zeppelin?" It was really joyous to have my friend Ray say, "Can I borrow *Music Man*?" "Yeah, sure!" 'Cause I had the Robert Preston recording. OK, I'm a gay man.

Nia Vardalos (seen here in the recent *Connie & Carla*): Led Zeppelin or *Music Man*?

Karen Black

(The Advocate, 5/11/04, Howard Feinstein)



Karen Black (seen here in 1982's *Come Back to the Five & Dime Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean*): lotsa work to cross gender lines?

Re: the transsexual character she played in *Come Back to the Five & Dime Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean*. "Joanne was very hard for me to find," Black says. "It's painful for her that she is a man who has become a woman. I'm very feminine, so it's painful for me to do the reverse. She's going out to find the girl, and I'm going in to find the

guy; we cross in the middle. A transsexual woman worked with me [before the filming]. We went bar to bar in New York. She'd tell me, 'No, no, you cross your legs this way, you smoke a cigarette this way.' It was months of work. . . ."



Brad Pitt:
casual attire?

Brad Pitt

(Entertainment Weekly, 2004 Summer Movie Preview)

"[After completing filming of *Troy*,] I shaved my head, stopped going to the gym," he says. "I still wear skirts, however. For casual Fridays."

Bruce Vilanch

(The Advocate, 4/27/04)

Don't stop me if you've heard this: A suburban mother is sitting in her living room, pale and ashen (her, not her living room—her living room is salmon with peach highlights). Her husband comes home and tells her she looks terrible. She tells him that she's just been cleaning out their teenage son's bedroom and his closet is filled floor-to-ceiling with gay-bondage porno. "What are we going to do?" she asks. "Well," replies the husband, "I can't spank him."

HARVEY'S TORCH HITS DVD

Anne Bancroft, Matthew Broderick, and Brian Kerwin team with Harvey Fierstein



Not the same old song: *Torch Song Trilogy* stars Harvey Fierstein (front) and (l-r) Matthew Broderick, Brian Kerwin, and Anne Bancroft.

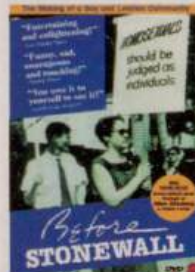
Harvey Fierstein wrote and stars in this groundbreaking film adaptation of his smash Tony Award-winning play *Torch Song Trilogy*. In this sometimes-humorous but always-poignant story, Fierstein plays Arnold, a female impersonator and nightclub

singer who must learn to deal not only with his unaccepting mother (Anne Bancroft), but also with the three loves of his life—his first lover Ed (Brian Kerwin); Alan, the lover he lost, played by multiple Tony Award-winner Matthew Broderick; and David (Eddie Castrodad), the boy he wants to

adopt. • Fierstein provides an audio commentary to discuss his roles as both actor and writer in this film and how the film's themes are "as current as today's *New York Times*." • 1988. Directed by Paul Bogart. • From New Line Home Entertainment (www.newline.com).

MORE DVD/VHS PREVIEWS

Before Stonewall



The Emmy Award-winning *Before Stonewall* pries open the closet door, setting free the dramatic story of the sometimes-horrifying public and private existences experienced by gay and lesbian Americans since the 1920s. Revealing and often humorous, this widely acclaimed 1984 film, narrated by Rita Mae Brown, relives the emotionally charged sparking of today's gay rights movement, from the events that led to the fabled 1969 Stonewall Riots to many other milestones in the brave fight for acceptance. *Before Stonewall* lets you experience the fascinating and unforgettable, decade-by-decade history of homosexuality in America through eye-opening historical footage and amazing interviews with those who lived through an often brutal closeted history. Features Allen Ginsberg, Audre Lorde, Harry Hay, Barbara Gittings, and more. • From First Run Features (www.firstrunfeatures.com).

Monster



Director Patty Jenkins (Independent Spirit Award winner for Best First Feature) burrows deep beneath the tabloid headlines of a man-hating serial killer to unearth a love story blossoming among the horrors and pathologies of two misfits—Aileen Wuornos (Charlize Theron), a drifter prostitute who kills her johns, and Selby Wall (Christina Ricci), a girl who's sent by her parents to live with an aunt to "cure" her homosexuality. After a chance encounter, their love flourishes, while their financial situation becomes desperate. Wuornos continues prostituting to keep the relationship alive. This fuels a deadly rage, unleashed in a string of lurid killings, and turns her into a monster. • Theron won both an Oscar and Golden Globe as Best Actress for her eerie portrayal of Wuornos in this 2003 film. • From Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment (www.sonypictures.com). • Also available as a stand-alone release or as part of a 2-pack

with *Monster* is the documentary *Aileen: Life and Death of a Serial Killer* from director Nick Broomfield. This searing, in-depth, up-close-and-personal documentary is the second film from Broomfield on the life and final days of Wuornos, America's first female serial killer. Included on the DVD are Wuornos's last interviews before her execution.

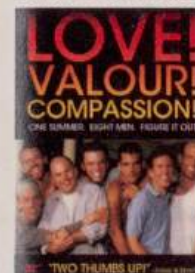
Die Mommie Die



In a performance that earned him the Special Jury Prize for Acting at the 2003 Sundance Film Festival, openly gay Charles Busch stars as fallen pop diva Angela Arden, a heroine in the grand tradition of Hollywood's formidable females: tough yet tender, ruthless yet seductive, extremely warped yet oddly sympathetic. *Die Mommie Die!* wittily evokes classic Hollywood genres, notably the "women's pictures" of the 1940s to 1960s and the glossy suspense

melodramas of the 1960s. • 2003. Written by Busch and directed by Mark Rucker, *Die Mommie Die!* also stars Frances Conroy (*Six Feet Under*), Natasha Lyonne (*But I'm a Cheerleader*, *If These Walls Could Talk 2*), and Jason Priestley (*Love and Death on Long Island*, *Common Ground*). • From Sundance Channel Home Entertainment (www.sundancechannel.com).

Love! Valour! Compassion!



Multiple Emmy and Golden Globe-nominee and Tony Award-winner Jason Alexander joins the original off-Broadway cast for the film adaptation of Terrence McNally's Tony Award-winning play *Love! Valour! Compassion!* (Best Play, 1995). Eight gay men spend three summer holiday weekends together at a rural country house. What transpires is a tender, humorous, and poignant story about love, valour, and compassion among friends. In this 1997 film version, John Glover resumes his Tony Award-winning performance as a pair of twin brothers and re-joins other original cast members Stephen Spinella, Justin Kirk, Randy Becker, John Benjamin Hickey, and Stephen Bogardus. • Directed by Joe Mantello. • From New Line Home Entertainment (www.newline.com).

Three of Hearts



Kelly Lynch stars as heart-broken nurse Connie, who has just been dumped by her girlfriend Ellen (Sherilyn Fenn). Determined to win back Ellen's love, Connie enlists the services of a down-on-his-luck male escort named Joe (William Baldwin) to woo Ellen and ultimately break her heart, forcing her back into Connie's loving and awaiting arms. Will Connie's scheming and manipulation work to her advantage, or will her plan backfire, igniting unforeseen passions between Joe and Ellen? Not everything is as it seems in this romantic comedy. Joe Pantoliano costars. Included on the DVD is an alternate ending not seen in theaters. • 1993. Directed by Yurek Bogayevicz. • From New Line Home Entertainment (www.newline.com).

The Incredibly True Adventure of Two Girls in Love



Winner of the Outstanding Independent Film Award at the 1996 GLAAD (Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) Media Awards, *The Incredibly True Adventure of Two Girls in Love* tells the story of Randy (Laurel Holloman) and Evie (Nicole Parker), two high school girls from the opposite sides of the tracks. From the clothes they wear and the friends they associate with to their economic backgrounds and their tastes in music, they have almost nothing in common. After a chance encounter, the two girls become inseparable friends. As their friendship blossoms into something greater, will their love be strong enough to overcome their own differences and stand up to the →



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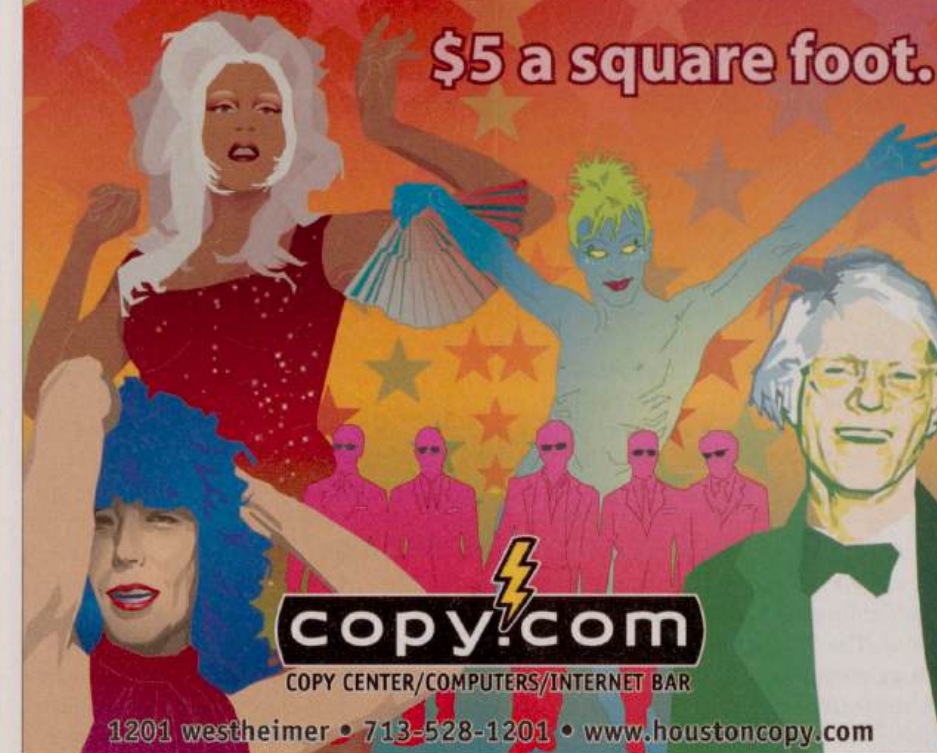
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BOXED LESBIANS



The Lesbian Romance Collection

• Butterfly Kiss

Eunice (Amanda Plummer) and Miriam (Saskis Reeves) are a pair of unlikely lovers on a lethal road trip through Britain. Eunice, an unpredictable social outcast, meets Miriam, a beautiful-yet-withdrawn gas station attendant, and before long, the two are on the road and in love. Even when Eunice starts murdering horny truckers and pesky salesmen, Miriam believes she can save her friend. The question is, can Miriam make Eunice good before Eunice makes Miriam bad? • 1995. *Butterfly Kiss* was directed by Michael Winterbottom.

• Peach, A Bitter Song, and Lavender Limelight: Lesbians in Film

Featuring the Amazonian star of *Xena: Warrior Princess* as you've never seen her before, *Peach* (1995) stars Lucy Lawless as a sexy tow-truck driver attracted to a young Maori woman. In *A Bitter Song* (1990), she plays a kind nurse who helps a troubled young girl. • The DVD also includes the hour-long documentary *Lavender Limelight: Lesbians in Film*, which goes behind the scenes with candid interviews of America's most successful lesbian directors.

• The Watermelon Woman

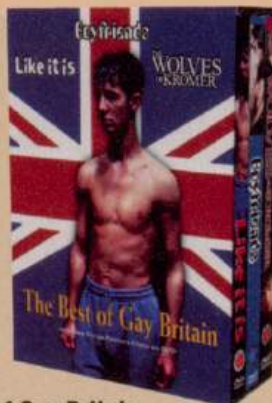
Cheryl Dunye's debut feature (1996) is as controversial as it is sexy and funny. Dunye's character (Cheryl) is a twenty-something black lesbian working as a clerk in a video store while struggling to make a documentary about Fae Richards, an obscure black actress from the 1930s. She is surprised to discover that Richards (known popularly as "the watermelon woman") had a white lesbian lover. At the same time, Cheryl falls in love with a very cute white customer (Guinevere Turner) at the video store.

Both boxed sets are from First Run Features (www.firstrunfeatures.com).

FIRST RUN FEATURES CREATES A COMMUNITY

As a way of curating their eclectic collection, First Run Features has created a "Community" section on their website, which highlights certain themes in their catalog. The Spring 2004 section is dedicated to the topic of "Love, Sex and Marriage" with an emphasis on the current national debate over the issue of same-sex marriage. The site features a film series, director interviews, links, and a forum section that includes a history of marriage in the U.S. as well as a page that encourages readers to write to congress to express their opinions about the proposed constitutional amendment. To access First Run Features' Community page, go to <http://firstrunfeatures.com/community.html>.

BOXED GAYS



The Best of Gay Britain

• Like It Is

A refreshingly enjoyable and upbeat look at gay life, *Like It Is* takes us into the world of gay nightclubs and the music industry of London. A young ultra-cool record producer has an encounter with a country lad who makes his money through illegal bare-fisted boxing, changing both their lives as they try to negotiate their relationship through the pretense of London's cutting-edge nightlife. The Who's Roger Daltry costars. • 1998. *Like It Is* was directed by Paul Oremland.

• Boyfriends

A queer *Big Chill*. A British counterpart to *Love! Valour! Compassion!* This is a "witty, wise, romantic comedy" (*L.A. Times*) with a freewheeling sexual attitude and comedic sensitivity. Six men staying together in a cottage on the beach—three couples at varying stages of their relationships—find themselves in various situations that define modern gay relationships. • 1996. Written and directed by Tom Hunsinger and Neil Hunter.

• The Wolves of Kromer

The Wolves of Kromer tells the story of a small village in the English countryside where two handsome young wolves (James Layton and Lee Williams)—outcasts considered dangerous to their society—meet and fall in love. Narrated by British pop icon Boy George, *Wolves* is a tale of young male love fighting the hypocrisy of older generations, combined with an old-fashioned Agatha Christie murder mystery. • 1998. Directed by Will Gould.

DVD/VHS continued from previous page

negativity of family and friends? • 1995. Written and directed by Maria Maggenti, who provides a commentary track. • From New Line Home Entertainment (www.newline.com).

Son Frère (His Brother)



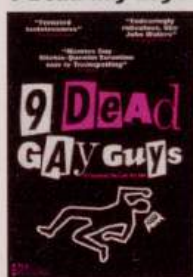
Thomas (Bruno Todeschini) and Luc (Eric Caravaca) are brothers. Thomas is straight; Luc is gay. Unable to accept his brother's homosexuality, Thomas distances himself. When Thomas contracts a terminal illness, he intrudes into Luc's contented life and asks him to be his caretaker. Luc begrudgingly sacrifices his lover, his job, and his comfortable life to care for his dying brother. Through the rounds of doctors and the demanding challenges of catastrophic illness, the brothers are forced to examine the meaning of their existence and their powerlessness in the face of impending doom. They return to their childhood home on the beach, reconnect with their past, and ultimately forge a new and vital relationship. • 2003, French with English subtitles. Directed by Patrice Chéreau. • From Strand Releasing (www.strandreleasing.com).

The Embalmer



Peppino (Ernesto Mahieux), a taxidermist who stashes contraband in corpses for the Mafia, may be underestimated, but he shouldn't be underestimated. After he persuades the handsome Valerio (Valerio Foglia Manzillo), a waiter of heroic proportions, to be his well-paid assistant, he shows his new protégé a good time by hiring prostitutes to entertain them both. But Peppino's eyes are not on the girls... and Valerio's new girlfriend Deborah (Elisabetta Rocchetti) knows it. The battle for Valerio's affections is about to take a deadly turn. • Director Matteo Garrone started with a simple question: How does a man who isn't especially rich or goodlooking seduce a young, handsome man who doesn't happen to be homosexual? The well-crafted screenplay keeps the audience wondering why the tall and beautiful Valerio stays with the crafty, diminutive, and possibly dangerous Peppino. • 2002, Italian with English subtitles. • From First Run Features (www.firstrunfeatures.com).

9 Dead Gay Guys



Politically incorrect and offensively funny, this satire employs the most outrageous clichés and hilarious stereotypes as it follows two straight lads as they set out in search of a rumored stash of money. • Irishman Kenny (Glen Mulhern) joins best friend Bryon (Brendan Mackey) in London in search of "legitimate, lucrative work," and soon the two young men are turning tricks at the local gay

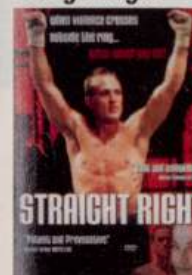
bar, servicing queers and UFOs (ugly fat old men) to subsidize their alcohol consumption. Soon, the Queen (Michael Praed), a local gay legend known for the size of his appendage, is dead, and rumors start about his lover, an Orthodox Jew, and a hidden stash of money. Scheming to get their hands on the loot, the Irish duo embarks on a journey that leads to a series of far-fetched comic deaths. Along the way, the two young men start questioning their own sexuality and if there really might be love without money. • 2002, UK. Written and directed by Lab Ky Mo. • From TLA Releasing (www.tlareleasing.com).

Issues 101



College freshman Joe Phillips (Michael Rozman) is new to school when he mistakes a rush invitation as a come-on from a fraternity brother. He's no less confused after a hazing ritual between him and his "big brother" Christian (Dennis W. Rittenhouse Jr.) takes an intense and intimate turn. After Joe sets Christian "straight" about his sexual interests, Christian confesses that he is straight... but with issues. • A twisted love triangle forms when Christian turns a weekend with his girlfriend into a double-date, inviting his gay sibling (Jeff Sublett) and Joe. Trouble starts when Michael and Joe hit it off and Christian is left to face his own issues. • 2002. Written and directed by John Lincoln. • From Culture Q Connection (Ariztical Entertainment, www.ariztical.com). More info: www.issues101.com.

Straight Right



Caleb Johnson (Brent Smith) is a young boxer training for an important fight that could catapult him into the big time when he witnesses a chilling act of abuse that rips open his own repressed memories of childhood violence. Everything he cares about in life is put at risk when he decides to take matters, and the law, into his own hands. Will his marriage, career, and future survive his fight for right? Will he? Director P. David Ebersole's taut noir examines the moral ambiguity that separates hero from villain and vengeance from violence. • 2000. • From Ariztical Entertainment (www.ariztical.com).

Ben & Arthur



Arthur Sables (Sam Mraovich, also director and writer) wants desperately to be married, while his lover Ben Sheets (Jamie Brett Gabel) doesn't see the need and is happy with the way things are. Arthur's brother Victor (Michael Haboush) is a major obstacle to his plans: a religious fanatic obsessed with saving his brother from a sinful lifestyle. Just as Ben and Arthur finally start making progress with their wedding plans, Victor shows up with sin on his mind and a gun in his hand. • 2002. • From Culture Q Connection (Ariztical Entertainment, www.ariztical.com).



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YOU SAY WE NEED A REVOLUTION

Well, it's here. Margaret Cho's *Revolution* premieres on Sundance Channel during their 6th annual "Out Loud" celebration

Revolution is the centerpiece of this year's "Out Loud" event, when a GLBT-themed documentary will air every Monday at 8 p.m. as part of DOCday, with LGBT-themed films airing every day in June. Joining *Revolution* in the "Out Loud" lineup is a wide selection of feature films, documentaries, and shorts about gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender life.

Revolution finds Margaret Cho tackling a range of topics with the same acerbic, no-holds-barred humor that has made her a comedy phenomenon and the hero of the lgbt community. Frequently using her life as raw material, she holds forth on everything from the Bush administration to the entertainment offerings of Thailand's red-light district; from the functional flaws of a certain diet plan to a theologian's highly specific interpretation of gay love. *Revolution* was filmed live at the Wilmet Theatre in Los Angeles during Cho's critically acclaimed, sold-out 2003 national tour. Airs Tuesday, June 22, at 8 p.m., the 24th at 9 p.m., the 26th at 10 p.m., and the 27th at 9 p.m.

1 Gasoline is a sexy, edgy Italian road movie about Stella (Maya Sansa, r) and Lenni (Regina Orioli), lesbian lovers who go on the lam after an argument with Lenni's mother leads to a fatal accident. U.S. television premiere.



Airs Thursday, June 3, at 8 p.m., the 9th at 3:05 a.m., and the 28th at 2:35 a.m.

2 His Secret Life. After her beloved husband is killed in a traffic accident, an Italian woman (Margherita Buy) learns that he led a double life with a gay lover (Stefano Accorsi, pictured). Her discovery leads to an unlikely friendship, and more. From Ferzan Ozpetek, the director of *Steam: The Turkish Bath*. U.S. television premiere. Airs Friday, June 18, at 7 p.m., and the 29th at 10 p.m.

3 Zus & Zo. Nominated for Best Foreign Film at the 2003 Academy Awards, this Dutch comedy follows the efforts of three sisters who are determined to prevent their gay brother's marriage to a woman—which would entitle him to sole ownership of the family's seaside hotel in Portugal. Pictured (l-r): Monic Hendrickx, Sylvia Poorta, Anneke Blok. U.S. television premiere. Airs Tuesday, June 8, at 9 p.m., the 12th at 10:35 p.m., the 22nd at 2:45 a.m., the 26th at 3 a.m., and the 30th at 8 p.m.

4 Our House: A Very Real Documentary About Kids of Gay and Lesbian Parents. A frank examination of what it means to grow up with gay or lesbian parents, *Our House* profiles children in five families who are facing the usual ups and downs of family life while encountering varied reactions from extended



family, classmates, teachers, neighbors, and public officials. Pictured: Rochelle (l) and Pat and their family. Sundance Channel premiere. The documentary airs Monday, June 21, at 8 p.m., the 24th at 5 p.m., the 25th at 4:30 a.m., the 26th at 3 p.m., and the 28th at 11 a.m.

5 Soldier's Girl. Based on a true story, this sensitive, exquisitely acted drama chronicles the tragic love affair between Private Barry Winchell (Troy Garity, l) and transgendered nightclub performer Calpernia Addams (Lee Pace). Sean Hatasy costars as Garity's terrifyingly volatile roommate. Winner of a 2004 Peabody Award. Sundance Channel premiere. Airs Wednesday, June 16, at 8 p.m., the 19th at 11:35 p.m., the 25th at 8:35 p.m., and the 29th at midnight.

6 Son Frère. In need of support before undergoing a rigorous series of medical tests, Thomas (Bruno Todeschini, r) turns to his gay kid brother Luc (Eric Caravaca) whom he hasn't spoken to in ages. Director Patrice Chéreau brings an astute eye to this uncompromising dissection of the many complex emotions that can arise when families try to cope with a serious illness. Airs Wednesday, June 2, at midnight, and the 26th at 8 p.m.

7 The Tasty Bust Reunion. A stylish and triumphant look back on events surrounding the 1994 police raid on the "Tasty," a queer dance club in Melbourne, Australia, where 463 patrons were lined up and strip-searched at gunpoint. But clubsters fought back, leading to a landmark lawsuit. Pictured: Michael Monty. U.S. television premiere. The documentary airs Monday, June 14, at 8 p.m., the 20th at 3:10 a.m., the 23rd at 3:30 a.m., and July 1 at 2 a.m.

8 Garden follows a year in the lives of Nino (l) and Dudu, teenagers who fled abusive households and now work as male prostitutes in the "electricity garden" in downtown Tel-Aviv. Their bleak prospects are further complicated by their nationalities: Nino is Palestinian and Dudu is Arab-Israeli. U.S. television premiere. The documentary airs Friday, June 7, at 8 p.m., the 10th at 10 p.m., the 14th at 10 p.m., and July 1 at 3 a.m.

9 Hush! Balancing droll humor with insightful drama, this Japanese film follows the travails of a young gay couple and a socially maladroit young woman as they consider starting a family together. Pictured: Tanabe Seichi. U.S. television premiere. Airs Wednesday, June 9, at 8 p.m., the 17th at 1 p.m., the 20th at 11 a.m., the 25th at noon, and the 29th at 4 p.m.

These are only a few of the many LGBT films to air on Sundance Channel during Gay Pride Month. Others include *Go Fish*, *Wigstock: The Movie*, *Big Eden*, *The Times of Harvey Milk*, *Aimee & Jaguar*, *Different for Girls*, *The Business of Fancydancing*, *Longtime Companion*, *Desert Hearts*, *Lan Yu*, *Trembling Before G-D*, *Fire*, *The Fluffer*, and many more. For a complete list of films and/or to confirm schedule, visit www.sundancechannel.com.

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FREE APPRAISAL

Television

continued from
previous page



Dad comes out: Anton Yelchin (c) stars in *Jack*. His parents are played by Ron Silver (l) and Stockard Channing.

JACK IN JUNE

A film with a gay dad premieres on Showtime on Father's Day

Anton Yelchin stars in the title role in *Jack*—a Showtime original picture for all ages—the story of a 15-year-old boy who must come to terms with his parents divorcing, his own puberty, and the revelation that his father (Ron Silver) is gay. The film takes place in 1982, so we already know that Jack is not gonna be a happy camper when it comes to having a gay dad. However, Yelchin makes the kid so sweet and rational that even his anger seems subdued and therefore less effective. But Jack's transition from hatred to love is moving and worth the wait... especially when mom's in the picture. Jack's mom is portrayed by none other than Stockard Channing, the woman who played: the wife of Harvey Fierstein's lover in *Tidy Endings*, a friend to drag queens in *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything!* Julie Newmar, the mother of a lesbian in *The Truth About Jane*, the therapist of a lesbian in *A Girl Thing*, the mother of a gay guy in *The Matthew Shepard Story*, and the friend who unites a woman and her gay brother in *The Red Door*. • Premieres on Showtime on Sunday, June 20, at 7 p.m., with a repeat airing on the 26th at 12:45 p.m. —Blase DiStefano

ALSO ON SHOWTIME DURING GAY PRIDE MONTH



THE OPPOSITE SEX

The Opposite Sex: Jamie's Story focuses on Jamie (pictured), 47, a male-to-female gender reassignment candidate formerly known as Jim. A macho man from a small town in Michigan, she has been married to Brenda for 25 years and fathered their 12-year-old daughter. Premieres on Showtime on Monday, June 7, at 8 p.m., with a repeat airing on the 23rd at 8 p.m. *Sexual Dialogues: Men to Women* follows on both nights at 9:15. —Troy Carrington

JOSH ARONSON/SHOWTIME

MORE AND FURTHER TALES OF THE CITY

Throughout June, Showtime will air back-to-back episodes of the miniseries Armistead Maupin's *More Tales of the City* and *Further Tales of the City*. The *Tales* are based on Maupin's classic saga of San Francisco life including the romantic entanglements of several gay characters searching for love and acceptance. Just a few of the stars (pictured, l-r): Olympia Dukakis, Laura Linney, and Bill Campbell. Airs every Tuesday throughout June beginning at 8 p.m. —Suzie Lynde



SHOWTIME

PETER'S FRIENDS

Peter's Friends is a witty British ensemble drama that stars Stephen Fry in the title role. Peter is a wealthy aristocrat who invites the members of his long-ago Cambridge theater troupe to his estate for a reunion—one that is fraught with romantic assignations, broken hearts, rekindled friendships, and one very startling revelation. Kenneth Branagh and Emma Thompson costar. Airs on Showtime on Thursday, June 24, at 8 p.m. —SL

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IN THE LIFE

Tony Award-winning actor Cherry Jones returns to special host "Social Engineering," *In the Life's* (7/2) 12th annual LGBT pride episode.



• In "Political Science," *ITL* examines how the science around homosexuality has been politicized, from the 19th century when sexologists coined the term "homosexuality" through the 20th century and today. Interviews with early activists including Barbara Gittings (pictured at left) and Frank Kameny detail how they dramatically overturned the APA's classification of homosexuality as a mental disorder and forever changed the course of history. Other interviews include historian Lillian Faderman and conversion-therapy survivor Martin Duberman.



PFLAG pride: (l) The founder of PFLAG's African-American offshoot, PFLAG Family Reunion, Maple Flagg (l), marches with members; (r) Calvin and Joyce Rock, members of Muskogee, PFLAG's Oklahoma chapter.

• What began as a small support group for parents whose adult children had come out of the closet, PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians And Gays) has now evolved into one of the GLBT community's largest support organizations. In "PFLAG Evolution," *ITL* celebrates the 30th anniversary of an organization whose mere existence helps combat the homophobia that still surrounds its members' children.

• This month's Real to Reel profiles "Bombay Eunuch," a film investigation into what has become one of India's most secretive subcultures. Once considered spiritually divine, Indian eunuchs have now become objects of mockery and have resorted to begging and prostitution for survival. Interviews include filmmakers Alexandra Shiva and Sean MacDonald.

• When Joseph McCarthy took on the communist menace of the 1950s, he added a second identifier of un-Americanism—homosexuality. In "Level Pink," *ITL* looks at how the tradition of framing queerness as a threat to our national security continues, 50 years after McCarthyism.

• And in *Out Takes*, Harvey Fierstein challenges the socialization within his own community in "Bringing Up Babies."

Scheduled to air on Sunday, June 20, at midnight on Channel 8 PBS (www.pbs.org).

THE AMASONG CHORUS: SINGING OUT



Cheadle, on Tuesday, June 15, at 10:30 p.m. More info: www.pbs.org. —SL

By the early 1990s, lesbian and gay choirs began to spring up in major cities around the U.S. But could one ever exist in central Illinois, an area best known for growing corn, soybeans, and conservative Republicans? As Jay Rosenstein's *The Amasong Chorus: Singing Out* recounts, the answer was a resounding yes. An inspiring story of commitment, community, and triumph, *AMASONG* airs on the PBS series *Independent Lens*, hosted by Don

THE GRAHAM NORTON EFFECT

Graham Norton is coming to America and his destination is Comedy Central. The British TV sensation, star of Channel Four's hit series *So Graham Norton*, will be very busy at the all-comedy network for the next two years with an American version of the award-winning variety/talk show, his own stand-up special, and hosting duties of Comedy Central's *Reel Comedy*. • Describing the new series, openly gay Norton says, "It's going to be like a great big American pie—hot and tasty... and I know what you Americans like to do to pie." • *The Graham Norton Effect*, the first hour-long series in Comedy Central's history, will be reminiscent of the outrageous Norton's previous British efforts, combining celebrity and audience interviews with pre-taped segments. Premieres Thursday, June 24. At press time, the time had not been determined. More info: www.comedycentral.com. —TC



RENO 911

The officers are on patrol again as *Reno 911!* returns for a second season. *Reno 911!* gives you a chance to witness the men and women of the Washoe County Sheriff's department at work and at play, offering a hilarious and unexpected spoof of the traditional cop reality program. Premieres Wednesday, June 9, at 9:30 p.m. on Comedy Central (www.comedycentral.com). • Pictured (l-r): Kerri Kinney, Cedric Yarbrough, Wendi McLendon-Covey, Thomas Lennon (yes, he really is wearing short shorts, and his character is far from straight), Niecy Nash, Carlos Alazraqui, Robert Ben Garant. —TC



Family plot: Brothers Nate (Peter Krause, c) and David (Michael C. Hall, r) are joined by their new partner Rico (Freddy Rodriguez).

SIX FEET UNDER

One marriage has come to a tragic end, another is beginning, and a third is on the rocks. At Fisher & Diaz, lives are in flux as Nate (Peter Krause), David (Michael C. Hall), Ruth (Frances Conroy), Claire (Lauren Ambrose), and Rico (Freddy Rodriguez) struggle to find their way. Guest stars appearing in the new season's 12 episodes include Ellen DeGeneres, Mena Suvari, Veronica Cartwright, and Michelle Trachtenberg, as well as returning guest stars Kathy Bates, Joanna Cassidy, Patricia Clarkson, Ben Foster, Richard Jenkins, and Justin Theroux. Openly gay Alan Ball, who created the show, returns as a director this season. • In the season opener, David (Hall) and Keith (Matthew St. Patrick) look for "genuinely new" ways to start over; in the next episode, Claire (Ambrose) reawakens her artistic muse after meeting Edie (Suvari), a free spirit. • Premieres on HBO on Sunday, June 13, at 8 p.m., with repeat airings on the 15th at 10 p.m., the 16th at 8 p.m., and the 19th at 11 p.m. Keep in mind: The first three episodes will air back-to-back on Sunday, July 4, beginning at 7 p.m. —TC

ALSO ON HBO

Celibacy examines the struggle of sexual abstinence within major eastern religions and the Roman Catholic Church. Buddhists, Hindus, and Jainists revere and often urge celibacy, but the practice is not enforced. It is the Roman Catholic Church where the centuries-old tradition of no sexual activity whatsoever among its priests and nuns has taken an extreme form. In today's sex-abuse-riddled climate, the requirement for absolute celibacy begs the question: Is sexual denial healthy? Crisscrossing the globe, *Celibacy* explores the socio-religious roots that have fostered the practice within numerous religions and cultures. Aired Monday, June 28, at 9 p.m. on HBO's *America Undercover* series. —TC

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Out in the Arts

by D.L. Groover

OUT OF THE STREETS INTO THE THEATERS.

For June's Pride Month celebrations, Houston is chock full of all things singin' and dancin'. There are musicals, ballets, and the final performances of a pop opera. Some productions are all-out gay, some gay-inspired, and some so *frou frou* that they might as well be gay. So march down to a local theater and rejuvenate. Fill yourself with pride and a smattering of culture at the same time.

BOYGROOVE

What else can you do with a boy band but make fun of it? **Aaron Macris** musical spoof, with book by **Chris Craddock**, will answer all your questions about drugs, sex, and rock and roll. **Jason Blagoc, Quincy Starnes, Aaron Stryk, and Doug Thompson** play the famous spoiled boys in the band and everyone else in this parody from Canada at Theatre LaB Houston through June 27. The show contains "adult material not appropriate for more sensitive playgoers," which is all the more reason to see it. Through June 27
Wortham Theater Center

LA FILLE MAL GARDEE

In one of those great ironies that Art is so famous for, this comedy ballet about the simple folk premiered in France at the exact time of the Revolution. There are no mythical creatures, no royals, no combo of both in this gentle, humorous tale. *Fille* (whose English title should be "The Girl Without a Guardian") is a tribute to lusty country life, as fatherless Lise bucks the system and her social-striving mom to marry the man she loves, not the rich nitwit who lives down the road. This classic has been re-staged so many times with all sorts of music (Bordeaux folk songs, Rossini tunes, Hertle and Herold scores) that the only thing left from the original is the charming story. Houston Ballet's production is the justly classic 1960 version, choreographed by the English master **Sir Frederick Ashton**, using an arrangement of the Herold score from the 1828 St. Petersburg retelling. Look for a maypole, sheaves of wheat, Mom in drag, and the very fey "Butterfly Boy" Alain, who's more content catching insects than paying attention to the abundant feminine charms of ballerina Lise. Through June 20
Wortham Theater Center



Psychos: (back row, l-r) Scott Kilgore, Chris Patton, Jess Williams; (middle row, l-r) Julie Williams, Ananka Kohnitz, O'dell Hutchison, Stacie Williams; (front row) Erin Simpson.

PSYCHO BEACH PARTY

The great writer/actor/female impersonator extraordinaire **Charles Busch** always likes to take our most cherished icons and read their beads. He does it with what could be called loving campy bitchiness. Whatever you call it, though, his parodies always end up screamingly funny. Here, he takes those insipid and wonderful Frankie and Annette beach movies and puts them through his distinctively alternative personal food processor: Mom's in drag, Chicklet's psychotic, and her two beach bum macho buddies want to hang-ten with each other. It's so far over the rainbow, you can't get there from here. But once you've gone on a road trip with Mr. Busch, nothing ever quite looks normal again. And for that, we thank him. Through June 19
Country Playhouse

SEUSSICAL

Slammed by those nasty big-city critics, this family musical based on the Dr. Seuss books nonetheless had a respectable run on Broadway and then considerable life in the hinterlands. All your favorite characters are here, singing and dancing up a storm, much like the grab bag of Peanuts in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. It's not the Great American Musical, to be sure, but it's got on a big fat smiley-face and makes you feel good when it's over—if you can remember it. June 17–July 18
Main Street Theatre

ALWAYS, PATSY CLINE

Premiered by Stages in 1988, **Ted Swindley's** tribute is a country-fried homage to the late, great Cline. The current remounting has brought a wide Cheshire Cat grin to the company's CFO, for it's in an open run and continuously sold out. Although the book hinges on a Houston Cline groupie (**Susan O. Koozin** as Louise Seger) and her weekend brush with the singer, it's only an excuse upon which to hang the 27 Cline songs. The truly amazing feat of this production belongs to **Julia Kay Laskowski**, who channels the voice, the styling, and the very moves of Cline. She is, in two words, splendidly phenomenal. Even though it's mostly an all-singing role, this is still acting of the highest caliber. If you have the smallest soft spot for the unique sound of this most popular of country/western superstars, this show is not to be missed.

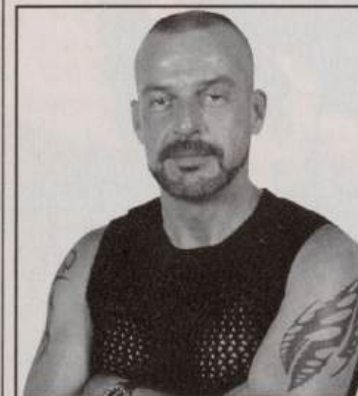
Extended run
Stages Repertory Theatre

CONVENIENCE

If you hurry, you can catch the last performances of **Greg Coffin's** pop opera, a coming-out story in one of its first regional productions. Vince (**Scott Sowinski**, so memorable a few months ago in Stages' *Bat Boy*) has second thoughts about moving in with his lover Ethan (**Jonathan McVay**, pretty memorable in just about anything he does). He's scared to tell his mom (**Susan Shofner**), from whom he's been estranged ever since Dad walked out when Ethan was 6. Mom has her own problems. Abe (**Thomas Prior**), a successful contractor, wants to marry her and move to his dream job in California, but she is unduly cautious because of her unfinished and strained relationship with Ethan. The wailing ballads and patter rhythms remind us of such disparate influences such as **Elton John** and **Stephen Sondheim**, which isn't a bad thing, but there's no great distinction to the score and even less to the shopworn lyrics. The performances and physical production, though, are above reproach, and the overly padded musical moves swiftly under **Rob Bundy's** lovingly detailed direction. Through June 6
Stages Repertory Theatre

D.L. Groover writes monthly on the arts for OutSmart.

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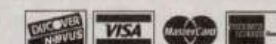
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STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

Tune in to these queer bands and groups for Pride month

Never Getting Married," a song on *Big City Sin and Small Town Redemption* (Fueled By Ramen) by **Roy** is such a potent dose of current events that it deserves to be blasted from car radios on highways, city streets, and gravel roads across the country. In the track, Roy lead singer and openly gay member Brian Cook sings "our day is coming/just wish it would hurry up/because we're never getting married/unless half of the population comes around"—a sentiment that rings true for every gay man and lesbian who has been voting in the recent spate of *USA Today* and CNN gay-marriage polls. Cook continues with "the city seems ready/so let's move on to the suburbs and small towns/we'll do it on front porches/shamelessly for everyone to see/because I don't need their paper/and you only want a diamond ring/and the blessings of our families." What's even more remarkable, the song is performed in a simple acoustic guitar, piano, and vocal arrangement, heightening the effectiveness. The remaining songs, a collection of thumping and twanging alternative country rockers, are also well worth the time and attention.



Never getting married: Is the band Roy gonna do it on front porches?

It was only a matter of time before a queer artist covered Liz Phair's "H.W.C." ("hot white cum"), a song from her most recent album. I'm glad that it was **The Bootlickers**, an accessible and tasty quartet

from Philadelphia, whose enticing 2001 full-length disc, *Huge*, is a sizable achievement. While I'm not a fan of the short form, The Bootlickers' new six-song EP *Automatic Ball Cleaner* (CoLinGa) is a wonderful and

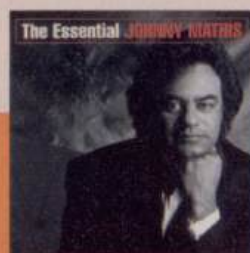
Various Artists
Women & Songs

Women & Songs is an array of vocal talent and star power from artists who together have sold more than 150 million albums. The 19 tracks include a plethora of chart-busters, such as Christina Aguilera's "Beautiful," Alicia Keys' "A Woman's Worth," Cher's "Believe," Bonnie Raitt's "I Can't Make You Love Me," and Kelly Clarkson's "Low." Other artists include Faith Hill, Nelly Furtado, Dido, Michelle Branch, Sarah McLachlan, Jewel, and many more. From Warner Strategic Marketing (www.wmg.com) and BMG Strategic Marketing Group (www.bmgsmg.com). —TC

Carly Simon

Reflections: Carly Simon's Greatest Hits

It's not as if you can say Carly did it again. That is, when an artist releases a "greatest hits" record, they don't actually "do" anything, but Carly Simon has one of those voices that strikes up a certain familiarity every time you

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Chances are you've heard of Johnny Mathis. One of the most enduring and charismatic singers of all time, *The Essential Johnny Mathis* is a celebration of his career in music history. Mathis, who is openly gay, has been entertaining fans for over 50 years and to this day performs to sold-out audiences. This two-CD set includes his #1 smash hits, wonderful duets, and Broadway favorites. From Legacy (www.legacyrecordings.com/essentials). For more info: www.johnnymathis.com or www.sonymusic.com.

—Andrea Rodricks

worthy effort. In addition to the fabulous Phair cover, The Bootlickers do a mean Pansy Division impression on their rendition of PD's "Homo-Xmas," which makes it feel like Christmas all year long. The four originals, including the sticky and sexy "I Just Did Your Boyfriend," the queer twang of "Pretty," and the toe-tapper "Boy," only made me long for more spit-shined and polished songs by The Bootlickers.

Just south of Philadelphia, the Washington D.C.-based lesbian duo **Commonbond** celebrated 10 years together on its live CD, *Ten* (www.commonbondweb.com). For some artists, their true essence comes through best in live performance, and such is the case with Mary Beth de Pompa and Ashland Miller of Commonbond. After being less



than impressed with the duo's *Naked Soul Dance* and *Chasing Solace* studio discs, I changed my opinion after listening to *Ten*, which includes live renditions of "Fly" and "Old River" from *Naked Soul Dance*, as well as particularly powerful numbers such as

"I Don't Know" ("written for Matthew Shepard and his family"), the acoustic blues of "History of Rock & Roll," and the fierce and forthright "Ainnoobodybiniss."

Women's voices, even in multi-member units, continue to dominate the queer music landscape. In existence for 10 years, the →



hear it, to where you really always want to say "Carly, you did it again." But more importantly, Carly isn't just a singer—she's a songwriter, and that makes a collection like this seem that much more prolific. "Let the River Run" makes you wonder why she didn't write hymns. From BMG Strategic Marketing Group (www.bmgsmg.com). More info: www.carlysimon.com. —Lance Walker

Laura Nyro

Spread Your Wings and Fly:
Live at the Fillmore East 5/30/71

On May 30, 1971, eloquent singer-songwriter Laura Nyro took the stage at New York's Fillmore East and, solo on grand piano, serenaded a capacity crowd. A native New Yorker, Nyro's ardent lyrical poetry and almost impossibly diverse compositions →

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GrooveOut continued from previous page

Indianapolis Women's Chorus released its debut CD, *To Sing Is to Fly* (Softsound), in autumn 2003. The beautifully blended voices of the chorus are heard on 20 songs, including the title track, with lyrics by Joan Baez and music by Gwyneth Walker.

Also hailing from the Midwest, Detroit to be exact, is **Sista Otis and the Wholly Rollers**. With the feverish fervor of a faith healer, Sista Otis and company rolls through a series of songs on its CD, *Worldwide Release* (Wholly Roller), that sound as if they were baptized in hip-hop ("Beat on the Road"), funk ("Love Is Spiritual"), modern rock ("Rollin' Stone," "Mama Look at Me"), and the blues ("Letter to Denine"), and bring the listener to the brink of testifying.



On their fourth album, the colorful **Make Yr Life** (Yep Roc), the **Butchies** have moved into, dare I say it, a more commercially accessible realm. That's not to say that they have lost the queercore edge that pushed them to the head of the class. But if the same music-buying public that embraced the questionable queerness of T.A.T.U. is ready to have their world rocked by the genuine article, then they ought to listen to a propulsive sexy same-sex tune such as "Send Me You," with the lines "She says I'm crazy I said oh really/I'm gonna jump you on the bed/make me a monkey make me fall over/make me a cradle and hold me instead." Hip-shaking heat also emanates from the title track, "She's So Lovely," "17," and "Lydia." The Butchies' cover of The Outfield's "Your Love" reveals

GrooveOut Shorts continued from previous page

very often sang to the city she so loved. On that inspired night, while celebrating—and bidding goodbye to—one of its most magical spaces, she is spellbinding, an extraordinary artist at her most soulful and passionate best. Available June 15 from Legacy (www.legacyrecordings.com). For more info: www.sonymusic.com.

—Suzie Lynde

Original Cast Recording A Year with Frog and Toad



A charming musical confection for all ages, *A Year with Frog and Toad* features a jazzy, infectious score starring the easygoing Frog and worrywart Toad. Nominated for a Tony Award for Best Musical, *Frog and Toad* stars Mark Linn-Baker and Jay Goede. The album was previously available in select stores, but has been outfitted for its worldwide release with an all-new 32-page booklet with lyrics, essays, photos, and illustrations. From PS Classics (www.psclassics.com). —TC

Lucille Bogan Shave 'em Dry

Oh man. This woman *screamed* the blues—the promiscuous, attitude-ridden blues. With a lyrical catalog rivaling the bawdiest of the bawdy and a husky,



Carl Sandin The self esteem destruction machine

Despite the proclamation in his album title, openly gay Houston singer/songwriter Carl Sandin is a bit more positive than he infers. Unless he's trying to destroy *your* self-esteem, that is. Even then, his songs seem to be more focused on his own personal plight in life, good or bad, rather than anyone else's. In producing this album, which he did locally, the smartest thing he did was to recruit former Japanese rhythm section in Rob Smith and Josh Barry, who did a superb job of bringing songs to life that Sandin had been working on for some three years running. The result is a collection of kind of goofy mid-tempo rock songs with thin guitars and keyboards, showcasing Sandin's deep, hovering voice rather than overzealous musicianship. In what is a definite sore spot, though, four of the album's 12 tracks are cover songs, dropping off a bit of enthusiasm in the fact that the work took three years. But in the end it is *his* arena, and in the way he talks about his influences, you can't see him having done it any other way. From Bronze Beagle (www.bronzebeagle.com). —LW

an unexpected side to the trio.

The queer Bay Area trio **The Quails** continues to build their nest on the twigs and branches of vintage punk and present-day riot grrrl inspiration on its third disc, *The Song Is Love* (Mr. Lady). Mission of Burma meets Sleater-Kinney time and again, and songs such as "Move Forward," "Cold War," "More Gender, More of the Time," "Pitch Memory," "We'll Take It," and "He Likes to Lift Heavy Things," hammer home that point. Swooping and soaring, The Quails' flight patterns even include protest folk as you can hear on "The War Will Be Over When We Want It."

Originally composed for the Merce Cunningham Dance Company production *Split Sides*, the **Sigur Ros** EP *Ba Ba Ti Ki Di Do* (Geffen/Fat Cat) contains the three sections that the Icelandic group created for the event. Sigur Ros, fronted by openly gay lead singer Jonsi (a.k.a. Jon Thor Birgisson), continues to create otherworldly music that defies categorization, and when you hear these three tracks—"Ba Ba," "Ti Ki," and "Di Do" (all of which are "designed to be played in any order")—that crackle and bubble like a music box in a fireplace, you can imagine them being incorporated into a program of dance performance. Heck, it might inspire you to choreograph one of your own. →



confident voice, Lucille Bogan was set to be the premier diva of the 1930s. Oddly enough, these songs were made famous not under Lucille's name, but instead under the name Bessie Jackson, a moniker invented for her by ACR in the interest of recirculating her material. Their marketing plan worked, but Sony has chosen to reissue these songs under the original name of the writer and singer, offering due tribute to a woman whose brilliance, sincerity and frankness deserve at least as much. From Legacy (www.legacyrecordings.com). More info: www.sonymusic.com. —LW

Bebel Gilberto Bebel Gilberto



While she exhibits nowhere near the concentrated songwriting strength of her parents Joao and Miucha, Bebel Gilberto has nevertheless come more into her own on this, her second album. Her smartest move was to team up (and co-write) with a brilliant cross-section of songwriters, both from her homeland of Brazil and beyond, the most effective of whom is Caetano Veloso, whose song "Baby" starts off the record with classic bossa nova sound, for which her father will be known for eternity. The entire record →

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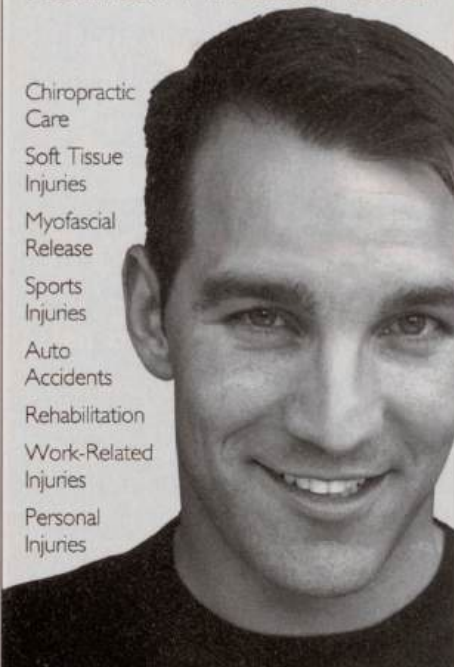
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GrooveOut continued from previous page

Not a musical group, the Fab Five (the quintet from *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*) have nevertheless generated the kind of excitement usually reserved for rock stars. The five gay men (Ted Allen, Kyan Douglas, Thom Filicia, Carson Kressley, and Jai Rodriguez) are as much a commodity as they are cult figures. Naturally, a soundtrack for the Bravo TV series had to surface, and on the various artists' *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy Soundtrack* (Capitol) compilation, there are members of the community (Junior Senior, DJ and remixer Barry Harris, and Elton John, who unearthed a long-hidden gem for the disc), friends of the com-

GrooveOut Shorts continued from previous page

is a vast improvement on 2000's *Tanto Tempo*, which left a lot of us wondering how far the apple fell from the tree. Bebel now makes it apparent that it wasn't quite so far at all. From Six Degrees Records (www.sixdegreesrecords.com). —LW

A.R. Rahman *Between Heaven and Earth*



"A melodic genius" and "the Asian Mozart" are a few of the titles earned by A.R. Rahman. He is one of India's most popular music directors and has been hailed as a genius by artists all over the world. *Between Heaven and Earth* draws on the sounds of ethnic music from China, India, and Turkey in combination with the sound of traditional Western symphony orchestra. From Sony Classical (www.sonyclassical.com). More info: www.arrahman.com. —AR

Jim Brickman *Greatest Hits*



Jim Brickman's *Greatest Hits* gathers 11 Brickman classics on one CD and features two new tracks recorded especially for this collection. Highlights include "Valentine," "The Gift," and "Simple Things," and no Jim Brickman retrospective would be complete without the signature instrumentals "Rocket to the Moon," "If You Believe," and his first instrumental hit "Angel Eyes." From RCA Victor Group. For more info: www.jimbrickman.com. —TC

Scottinho *Batizado*



In Brazil, Scottinho (his Brazilian name; in the U.S., it's Scott Anderson) performed and recorded with some of the country's best players. Traveling through the country, he discovered the subtle nuance of the acoustic guitar, the harmonic complexity

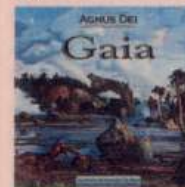
community (Kylie Minogue, Liz Phair), and an array of superstars (Sting, Duran Duran, Basement Jaxx), all angling for a slice of the queer pie. While I'm not entirely sure what *things* are being referred to in Wideline's *Queer Eye* theme song "All Things (Just Keep Getting Better)," it's hard to deny the well-meaning sentiment of such a catchy number.

In July: Gregg Shapiro looks to new releases by gay male artists.

At the 2003 OutMusic Awards in June, Gregg Shapiro received the annual honor for *Outstanding Support*, which recognizes involvement by non-musicians in furthering the work of GLBT performers.

of jazz blended with a rhythm that is seductive, complex, and playful. From Homen de Ouro Records (www.scottsguitar.com). —TC

Agnus Dei *Gala*



An instrumental love song to the Earth, Agnus Dei's new recording pairs the meditative soundscapes of Gerald Krampl with a booklet featuring the posthumously published verse of his wife, acclaimed poet Hilde. Krampl's tunes feature delicate, uplifting, classical-influenced piano music with ambient textures and sonic embellishments. From Sandrose Records (www.inidgomusic.at). —SL



L.P. *Suburban Sprawl and Alcohol*

With a headful of Marc Bolanesque curls and a red Telecaster slung around her neck, L.P. rocks like a bitch and sings like a bastard. Backed by a hard-rocking band, this 25-year-old is armed with pipes capable of alternating between the reckless stance of Chrissie Hynde and the vulnerable poise of Stevie Nicks. With a nod and a wink to Run-aways-era Joan Jett, L.P. would fit right in doing a raucous midnight set at Max's Kansas City in '78. This daughter of an opera singer mother and a drunk dad belts, croons, and dreams her way through a very personal set of songs. And what about the name "L.P."? Though her real name is not given, those are her real initials, so we like to think they stand for "Lesbian Performer." From Light Switch Records. For more info: www.lprock.com. —SL

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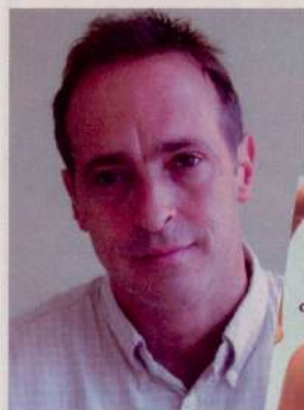
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HE WRITE PRETTY

Humorist David Sedaris talks about his latest book and funny sister Amy

David Sedaris, the acerbic, sardonic, and self-deprecating openly gay humorist/writer, is at his best when life seems worst. His foibles with an eccentric family, employ as a Christmas elf, a homophobic midget guitar tutor, insane neighbors, and tricky French culture/language after moving to Paris with boyfriend Hugh Hamrick have made for riotous reading in best-selling books (*Naked, Me Talk Pretty One Day*), and the highly anticipated *Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim* (Little, Brown & Company). In this new collection, published this month, Sedaris recounts equally outrageous, painfully funny, and sometimes deeply affecting experiences with a Bad Seed little girl neighbor and her equally monstrous mother ("The Girl Next Door") and paranoia in the wake of the Catholic Church pedophilia scandal ("Chicken in the Henhouse").

Sedaris is also a widely published essayist and an acclaimed (albeit self-conscious over his tinny, youthful voice) radio presence on public radio's *This American Life*. He's also one half of The Talent Family with sister



David Sedaris has written a new book (inset)



Amy, best known for her starring role on the Comedy Central series *Strangers With Candy*. They have collaborated on seven plays including the Obie-winning 1995 production *One Woman Shoe* and *The Book of Liz*.

These days Sedaris divides his time between home bases in France and England, although he's hitting the states for an extensive summer/fall reading/signing tour. To discuss his book, getting into trouble by himself, with Amy, and with small-town

child molesters, I spoke by phone with Sedaris, at the moment at his London home.

Do you ever actively try to get into trouble or horrible situations for a good story?

Not to get in trouble. I'm not that adventurous. Usually I wait for things to come to me, but if you're at home writing all day, not that much is going to come. So I have been trying for six weeks to get a volunteer job in London because it would give me something to do. But God, they're making it hard for me [by requiring training courses and red tape hurdles]. I don't need a training course! I love hearing people complain. I love it. Especially when it's nothing I can do anything about. Back pain or the health system—great, I'm all for it. I want to hear people complain and do little tasks for them, like I'll go to someone's house who's old and clean their oven. Happy to do it.

How many stories never make it to a completed published state?

About 80 percent. I have a whole, big file of stories that are three pages long.

you create the journey, and Peck will stimulate your memories for an interesting ride along the way.

—Alexys Coleman

Inferno
Trish Fields
Baycrest Books



Maybe it's just me, but any lesbian novel entitled *Inferno* is sure to get more than a second look from me. And this one doesn't disappoint! Dray, as she's affectionately known to her friends and co-workers, is one of Chicago's finest firefighters and a goddess among women—tall, tan, strapping, and smoldering with a past that won't let her go. She meets her match in Abby, a petite blond bombshell who has a few dark secrets of her own. Together, they fall ardently and passionately into a deep and timeless soulful connection, physically and emotionally taking each other to places they never would have dreamed they could go. The heated story climaxes with the two lovers at a crossroads, Dray struggling to survive while Abby fights to remain at her side. Perfect reading for lazy days at the beach, pool, or even as a sexy little addition to your night table. By all means, read this little gem and feel the burn.

—Colleen Logan →

Blues might leave readers confused. Characters are sometimes introduced without full development, as though Herren assumes that his audience is already intimately acquainted with his earlier work. That aside, *Jazz* is an entertaining read. Herren has created a protagonist that may not always be likeable, but is decidedly real and certainly worth the readers' affection.

—Thomas Blanton

Fat Girls and Lawn Chairs
Cheryl Peck
Warner Books



The title makes you smile and grimace at its boldness, yet pulls you along as you create your own reading experience. I can remember falling through a couple of worn lawn chairs and watching the adults around me sit very gingerly into one, waiting for the bottom to give out. That metaphor plays out in many other areas of our lives, and we are able to share a few others with Peck in our journey through *Fat Girls and Lawn Chairs*. Her poem called *Star Bright* is an amazing experience of the "bottom" falling out from underneath Peck as she takes a journey along side her mother as her mother dies of cancer. The anger, love, and sincere loss are captured with great skill. This book can be read in a day or picked up and put down over weeks—either way,

Can you give me an example of one?

My boyfriend owns a house in a very small village of only 12 houses in Normandy, and one of our neighbors was taken to prison for sexually molesting his granddaughter. He got out of prison last summer, and everyone assumed he would move, but he couldn't afford to. The man was always nice to me, and I walked by his house a lot, and he was very lonely, so he started talking to me and inviting me into his house. In this small village when you're an outsider to begin with, and everybody sees you leaving a child molester's house, it doesn't look good. That's a story I never finished [writing], and I don't know if I just wasn't approaching it the right way or being honest when I needed to or it just didn't have an ending.

Do you and Amy ever try to take the other aback?

Amy does that to me more than I do to her. We were in Paris, and I was pointing out that you always see American couples fighting in the street. They're on vacation together and just snap. Generally they don't spend much time together, and often they feel threatened, don't speak the language, and only have one another to depend on, and they snap. I hear fights all the time on the street outside my apartment. I pointed this out to Amy. Then Amy and I were in a crowded place, and she turned to me and yelled "This is my vacation too! Can we please just try to have a good time?" I thought, *Damn, that's what I get for pointing things out to her.*

Have any of your stories gotten you into trouble with your family or others?

I always let members of my family read a story before its published.

Are you afraid at of that psychotic neighbor child from "The Girl Next Door" discovering your story about her?

I don't worry about her because I don't think she grew up to be much of a reader [laughs]. I was somewhere in New York State a few years ago signing books, and a woman came up and said, "Remember me?" Which is my nightmare.

How is Hugh? There's a lot of him in this book—far more than in *Talk Pretty*.

He's fine. Yeah, I guess you're right. He is in this book more than the last one. I just exploited my family to death, so now I'm moving onto his family.

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Lawrence Ferber interviewed Courtney Love for our April issue.



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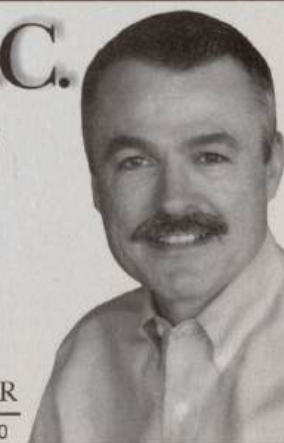
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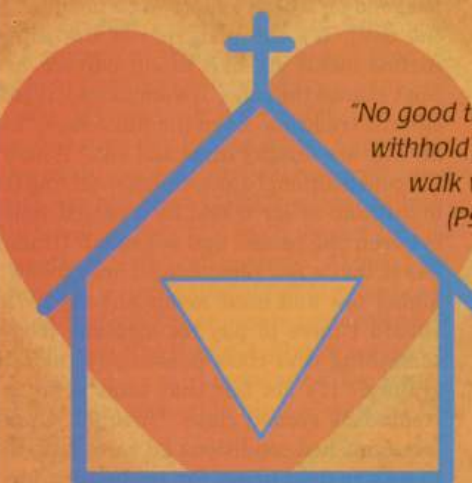
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Saturday Noon - Midnight
Sunday Noon - 10pmReadOut Shorts continued from page 94Gay Cinematherapy: The Queer Guy's Guide
to Finding Your Rainbow One Movie at a Time
Jason Bergund and Beverly West
Rizzoli International Publications, Inc.

The only social redeeming value to be found in this utterly pedestrian video guide for the queer guy is the satisfying thought that all the un-sold copies—and there'll be plenty of them immediately after the June Pride Week publication—eventually will be mulched back into pulp. • This latest installment in Beverly West's disposable "Cinematherapy" series is from the gay prescriptive. Other titles include *Cinematherapy for the Soul: The Girl's Guide to Finding Happiness One Movie at a Time* and *Cinematherapy for Lovers: The Girl's Guide to Finding True Love One Movie at a Time*. This book is subtitled *The Queer Guy's Guide to Finding Your Rainbow*. • I did not find my rainbow. • Second-rate, tired, and un-illuminating in any manner, this is a gimmick masquerading as a book. If the authors think they can snatch away our community's hard-earned dollars just because they put "gay" in their title, I'm here to warn them—and you. • Abetted by her "best friend and roommate" Jason Bergund, West and her co-writer stagger haphazardly through movie categories such as coming-out, drama queen, finding yourself, or a boy's best friend is his mother. Ostensibly a guide to help gay men find comfort, humor, and inspiration at the corner video store, this is, basically, a book of lists, pumped-up by campy plot synopses. Mercifully, these are brief. There's little insight, less critical evaluation, no history. There's not even any juicy Hollywood gossip. • *Mrs. Doubtfire* and *The Birdcage* are covered in the drag chapter; *Beaches* and *Miss Congeniality* in the fag-hag chapter, and almost Madonna's entire movie oeuvre placed somewhere (the authors have an awed, unapologetic respect for Ms. Ciccone). There's nothing new here. • Scattered among the unsurprising film examples is extraneous padding like facial recipes and hangover cures, character quotes, and forced acronyms like *TSLET* (That Sexy Little-Guy Thang) to describe Tom Cruise in their "Sugar Shack: The Man-Candy Counter." • Worse, it's all written without style and in an annoying twinkie tone that could only be described as Nellie Lite. Cute and fuzzy-wuzzy, their writing wears an oatmeal mask and pink bunny slippers and assumes we do, too. • When it's been "that time of the month, all month long, and you're ready to shed a little of that excess irrigation, watch one of these PMS movies, and weep away the bloat" (Introduction to Male PMS Movies). • "If you're in the mood for a little overkill, paint the town blue with this cinematic triple scoop of rocky road, featuring three world class drama queens, all with a whopping case of the icks." (The Hours) • "As every queen knows, the sour apple 'tini is the way to go when you want a drink that's potent but tasty. Serve up this concoction in an extra big glass and pucker up, buttercup!" (Jason's Barmacy) • If you love movies, this useless little book will only make you mad: at yourself for not mindlessly dictating your own, and at the publishing industry for foisting this trifle upon us, and at the sickening waste of trees. —D.L. Groover

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FRIENDLY SKIES

In the air and hungry, Sally connects with a member of the tribe

Ever notice how hard it is to find the LGBTQ people in airports? Air travel sure throws my gaydar all out of whack. Homo-looking guys turn out to be het men who've been Queer-Eyed. Sauntering women with dykey haircuts are just Canadian.

The moving walkway carries me past unidentified strangers to my connecting flight. At least I see my people on TV. In all the waiting areas, every newscast blares some same-sex marriage-related story. Go team.

I haven't eaten since dinner last night and am looking forward to some good old airplane food. Flying across time zones, they usually manage to have you in the air between meals. But this flight takes four hours, and no matter how you slice it, includes lunchtime.

I've still got an hour's wait. An airport gift shop/newsstand is selling single pieces

of fruit—the only living food on site—for \$1.75. The apples are so shiny even Snow White would be suspicious. I pass, but salivate a little anyway.

Eventually I board, find my aisle seat, and buckle in. Our flight attendant is very faggy. The straight men who work in this swishy profession always act extra macho to defy the stereotype, but this guy is a total queen. If feather boas were part of the allowable flight attendant uniform, he'd be flouncing one across his shoulder while he reminds you to stow that bag completely under the seat in front of you, Mary. Thank God(dess) another member of my tribe is onboard. If I can make contact, he might slip me a packet of snack mix before takeoff. That would hold me until lunch.

Then we get the bad news—no food. Airlines no longer offer in-flight meals. Who knew? On this 1,700-mile flight they don't even serve pretzels. My belly gurgles disap-

pointment. We're told we can purchase a restaurant-quality sandwich or salad for \$10. The nerve. I do not have an extra \$10 to spend on what's supposed to be included in the deal. It's the principle of the thing. Airline meals are part of our culture. You can't change the rules. It's unnatural. It goes against tradition. Even the Bible says, "Let all who are hungry come and eat." Where's the constitutional amendment codifying the institution of air travel as a sacred union between one person and one meal? (Rumor has it that a few renegade airlines follow a higher law and issue meals anyway.) Why should I have to pay for airplane food—something first-class passengers take for granted? It's not fair that some of us are treated as second class. Unequal. Under less-famished conditions I'd raise hell, but there's no fight in me. I'm too hungry. I will have to tough it out.

The crew closes the hatch, and we are

sealed into the oxygen deprivation chamber, a.k.a. the cabin. Nice word choice, but this cabin has no burbling brook nearby. No fireplace. Not even a moose head, although some of us passengers could pass for dead animals, we're so lifeless from breathing recirculated jet fuel fumes. The flight attendant sashays down the aisle checking seatbelts. I try to send him homo vibes.

After takeoff, I open my tray table and set out my travel journal, my wedding photo on the cover. Miss Thang rolls by with his beverage cart. I make a point of glancing at the portrait of Wifey and me, and then up at him, flashing my best "We Are Fam-i-ly" smile. My stomach growls, but you can't hear it over the engine noise. Apparently I've made contact. "Are you hungry?" I nod with my sincerest LGBTQ-solidarity look. He leans in close. "I'll see if we can get you something. Don't tell anybody." At last, I get to cash in on those special rights we've heard so much about. Other passengers don't know I didn't pay like they did. Flyboy serves my food with a conspiratorial wink. I'm happy, in a carbon monoxide kind of way, all the way home.

Sally Sheklow and her wife live in Eugene, Oregon, and now include snacks in their travel bags.

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Calendar of Events

Deadline for OutSmart's July issue is 5 p.m., Friday, June 11.

JUNE

Daily (Mon.-Fri.)

HIV Testing. HCHD Thomas Street Clinic is offering HIV testing free to the public, 9 am-1 pm. There is no need to establish eligibility ("gold-card"), no donation will be asked of the person seeking testing, and the test is free. Thomas Street Clinic, 2015 Thomas, 713/873-4157 or 713/873-4026.

Daily (Mon.-Sat.)

HIV Testing. The Montrose Clinic offers free confidential HIV testing at these locations. **Monday:** Bricks, 617 Fairview, 4-8 pm; Q, 710 Pacific, 9 pm-1 am. **Tuesday:** The 611, 611 Hyde Park, 4-8 pm; Club Houston, 2205 Fannin, 8 pm-midnight. **Wednesday:** Mary's, 1100 Westheimer, 4-8 pm; Ripcord, 715 Fairview, 9 pm-1 am; E's, 2517 Ralph, 10 pm-1 am; Midtowne Spa, 3100 Fannin, 10 pm-1 am. **Thursday:** All-Star News, 3415 Katy Frwy, 4-8 pm; BRB, 2400 Brazos, 8 pm-midnight; Cousins, 817 Fairview, 8 pm-midnight. **Friday:** E's, 2517 Ralph, 10 pm-1 am; Midtowne Spa, 3100 Fannin, 10 pm-1 am; The Meatrack, 2915 San Jacinto, 10 pm-2 am; Rich's, 2401 San Jacinto, 10 pm-1 am. The clinic offers classes for those newly diagnosed with HIV or Hepatitis C. For more info: 713/830-3000.

10 (Thurs.)

The 2004 MTV Movie Awards features musical performances by the Beastie Boys, Yeah Yeah Yeahs, and D12 with Eminem. The aforementioned acerbic blonde rapper, as Rabbit in the movie *8 Mile*, defends a gay co-worker in a free-style rap in a move to score

Eminem a gay-friendly reputation. One nominee, X2: X-Men United, contains a scene in which the teen character Iceman comes out to his parents as a mutant, reminiscent of any GLBT kid faced with the same difficult experience. 9 pm on MTV.

13 (Sun.)

Gwenyth as a Guy? Our beloved Ms. Paltrow spends a good portion of the Academy Award-winning film, *Shakespeare in Love*, in drag. This '98 romantic comedy looks at a hypothetical young Billie Shakes who is low on funds and ideas but finds inspiration in the enchantment of his ideal woman. With speaker Lucy Puryear. \$6. 6 pm at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1001 Bissonnet. Info: 713/639-7540 or www.mfah.org.

13, 15, & 18 (Sun., Tues., & Fri.)

Platinum Pride. The Gay Men's Chorus of Houston usher in their 25th Anniversary with their most popular songs ever sung and a new specially commissioned choral work to toast their Silver Jubilee. More than singing, this show adds dancers and an extra-special band. Sunday at 3 pm, Tuesday at 8 pm, and Friday at 8 pm at the Wortham Center's Cullen Theatre. For tickets: 713/521-7464 or www.gmch.org/tickets.

17 (Thurs.)

"Hold Me" is one of the many hits you'll hear from Rock and Roll Hall of Famers Fleetwood Mac tonight at Cynthia Woods. If you're lucky, you'll also hear those same words whispered softly in your ear. If you're even luckier, those words will be whispered by someone you love, not some random concert

junkie wiggled-out on ecstasy. And don't be cute and order a Fleetwood Mac-n-fries at the burger stand. Please don't be that guy. \$45-\$125. 8 pm at Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion. For tickets: 713/629-3700 or www.ticketmaster.com.

17-19 (Thurs.-Sun.)

Democracy Now. The Texas Democratic convention (themed "Fighting for Democracy") kicks off in town with an evening reception at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Thursday at 7 pm. The LGBT Caucus hosted by Texas Stonewall Democrats meets Friday. Free and open to the public. At the George R. Brown Convention Center, 1001 Avenida de las Americas. For information: 512/478-9800 or www.txdemocrats.org.

PLANNING AHEAD

July 9-11 (Fri.-Sun.)

Getting the Love You Want. Patrick Vachon, licensed master social worker and advanced clinical practitioner, teaches couples how to reignite the fire that once burned brighter between them. Using Imago Relationship Therapy techniques developed by Harville Hendrix, Ph.D., author of the best-selling books *Getting the Love You Want* and *Keeping the Love You Want*, Vachon takes couples on an intensive weekend journey into each other's hearts. \$550/couple. Friday 7-10 pm, Saturday 8:30 am-8 pm, Sunday 8:30 am-7 pm at the offices of Patrick Vachon, 1712 Fairview. Info: 713/524-1771, www.imagohealing.com, or vachonpj@aol.com.

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—FRI., JUNE 11.**

PERFORMING ARTS

♦ **'s: A Tale of Possession** *a day of it.*

Houston-based dancer/choreographer Jane Weiner and her organization Hope Stone Dance premieres two works made specifically for DiverseWorks's 20th Anniversary. *a day of it*, created in collaboration with Bessie Award-winning performer David Neumann, centers on partner communication. *'s* looks at lost autonomy, safekeeping, and ownership. Every Houstonian fan of dance should have at least one Weiner ticket stub laying about. \$15. June 17-26, 8 pm, at DiverseWorks, 1117 East Fwy (off N. Main at Naylor). For info: 713/223-8346 or www.diverseworks.org.

♦ **Black Coffee.** Belgian detective Hercule Poirot returns to The Alley in Agatha Christie's murder mystery classic. Who killed the eccentric weapons specialist Sir Claude Amory? Only Poirot can figure out the missing clues from a colorful cast of characters. \$17. July

2-18 at The Alley, 615 Texas Ave. For tickets: 713/228-8421 or www.alleytheatre.org.

♦ **Boy Groove.** Sick of boy bands? So is Chris Craddock, who wrote this *Spinal Tap*-esque spoof of a boy group's rise to fame, with tunes like "You Make My Hips Buck," and their eventual plummet to public disdain. A certain "park incident" brings about their comic demise. \$23 Fridays & Sundays, \$25 on Saturdays. Through July 10 at 8 pm, Sundays at 6:30 pm, at Theater LaB, 1706 Alamo (off 2100 Houston Ave.) For tickets/more info: 713/868-7516 or www.theaterlabhouston.com.

♦ **The Complete Works of William Shakespeare [Abridged].** Adam Long, Daniel Singer, and Jess Wingfield adapted all 37 of Billy Shakes' plays into a hilarious 90-minute performance. How? Watch and find out. \$20-\$35. Through June 27 at the Ensemble Theatre, 3535 Main St. For info: 713/520-0055, ext. 306.

♦ **Life Beyond the Loop.** Precious Trees, Houston's most guarded planned community, is under attack, by indecency. When an adult business opens nearby, a popular televangelist declares war, transmogrifying the peaceful neighborhood into a war-torn First Amendment battleground. Three actors portray an endless list of characters—including George and Barbara Bush—each with distinction and clarity. \$18. Through August 28 at Radio Music Theatre, 2623 Colquitt (near Richmond and Kirby). Thursday and Friday at 8:30 pm, Saturday at 8 and 10:30 pm. For reservations: 713/522-7722.

♦ **Oliver!** Lionel Bart's adaptation of the Dickens classic features such famous songs as "Food, Glorious Food," "Consider Yourself," and "Where Is Love?" \$25-\$68. June 1-20, Tuesday-Friday at 8 pm, Saturday at 2 and 8 pm, Sunday at 2 and 7:30 pm, at the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, 800 Bagby at Walker. For tickets: 713/558-8887, 888/558-3882, or www.tuts.com.

♦ **Texas Folklife** presents *Accordion Kings and Queens*, when masters of the accordion make some mad melodies June 10 and 11 at 7:30 pm; and *Bayou City Blues*, a look at Houston's great African-American blues and zydeco heritage on June 12 with a curtain talk at 6:30 and performance at 7 pm. Dress lightly. These are outdoor events and Houston night air can get as hot as the music. Free. Both shows: Miller Outdoor Theatre.

♦ **The Unexpected Guest.** Set on a foggy estate in Wales, a lost traveler enters a home and finds a woman, smoking gun in hand, standing over her dead husband. But no mystery's ever solved that easily in Dame Agatha's world. The ending will surprise you. \$14. Through July 3 at the Company OnStage, 536 Westbury Square, 713/726-1219, www.companyonstage.org.

PERFORMING ARTS

For Young People

♦ **Beauty and the Beast.** We all know this endearing fairy tale. Love can see through any surface, no matter how rough-hewn. We know it because we've seen it since childhood. Here's a chance for your wee-ones to see it for the first time, and introduce them to the theater. \$7. Through June 26, Sundays at 11 am & 1:30 pm, at the Company OnStage, 536 Westbury Square. Tickets/info: 713/726-1219, www.companyonstage.org.

RADIO

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

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

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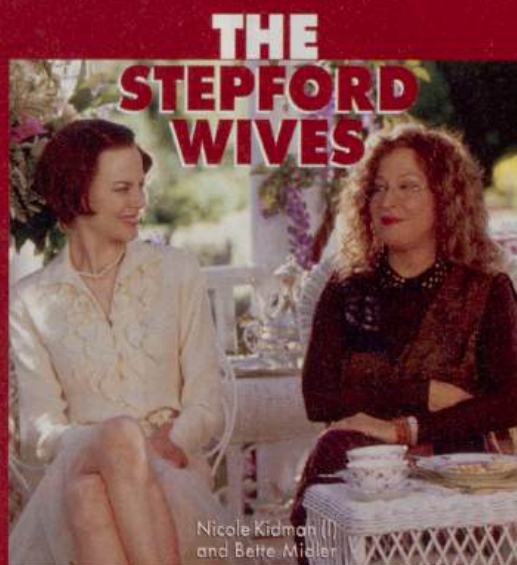
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Think about that moment when you're sitting on the couch channel-surfing, offers *In & Out* scribe Paul Rudnick, "and your partner is next to you and they're nagging or doing whatever most irritates you. Haven't we all had that urge to turn towards them with the remote and press the mute button?" If you answered yes to that question, then you might want to consider relocating you and your beloved to Stepford, Connecticut.

But first, go see this summer's re-imagining of the 1975 classic *The Stepford Wives*, featuring an all-star ensemble cast led by Nicole Kidman, Glenn Close, Bette Midler, Matthew Broderick and Faith Hill.

Rudnick is certain that gay viewers will be thrilled to discover that this round of Stepford couples includes a same-sex twosome (played by David Marshall Grant and Roger Bart).

Was introducing a gay couple into the Stepford dynamic tricky for Rudnick? "Oh, it was necessary!" he firmly states.



Nicole Kidman
and Glenn Close

What: *The Stepford Wives*
When: Opens nationwide June 11

"Especially with this increasing urge towards gay assimilation, and the sense that we deserve equality, marriage, children—and plus we are rampant consumers... And, now I think a lot of gay people who came from the suburbs want to go back, but with far more square footage—and in a gated community. So, yes, a gay couple felt right at home in Stepford." And like their straight counterparts, Stepford's gay pair faces a menace of their own. "I didn't want the gay character's transformation to be about turning him straight," says Rudnick. "That's too easy. So we took to the idea of a gay conservative, being Republican—which makes it more complicated. Then it becomes interesting to see what gay people have started to emulate."

The 21st century *Stepford* seemingly has it all...Elements of high comedy, queer-tongued humor and eerie chills. And it's got the alluring buzz of a sure-fire summer movie hit. —John Polly

IT'S ABOUT TIME

In celebration of Gay Pride, *Real Time* looks at gay life through the eyes of photographers Kelli Connell (Ohio), David Hilliard (Connecticut) and Joe Schmelzer (California). The artists use a variety of approaches to capture the autobiographical and metaphorical essence of gay identity and the workings of relationships. The results are both intimate and grandiose. —ED

What: *Real Time*
When: Through June 26
Where: DiverseWorks, 1117 East Fwy.
How much? Free
Tickets/info: 713/223-8346,
www.diverseworks.com



ART/PHOTOGRAPHY

◆ **Bugs and Butterflies: A Rainforest Adventure.** The movie *A Bug's Life* is a big dirty lie. Bugs don't sing and dance. They fight. They kill. They rip your heart outta your chest and show it to ya before ya die. Wait, that was Bruce Lee. This particular IMAX picture features a cast of real insects, starring Papilio the butterfly and Hierodula the praying mantis. The film follows the two from their birth to their inevitable encounter in a rainforest of Southeast Asia. Predator meets prey. This ain't Pixar, baby. This ain't pretty. At the Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Drive. Tickets/info: 713/639-4629 or www.hmns.org.

◆ **Collectors in the Burbs II.** It's field trip time. Join the gang at The Orange Show for a junket to Bernard and Wanda Williamson's U.S. Folk Art and Mexican/Latino Art collection. Sunday, June 13, 12:30 pm at The Orange Show, 2402 Munger St. For information: 713/926-6368 or www.orangeshow.org.

◆ **Fade in: New Film and Video.** What's new in fine art motion pictures? Artist Robert Pruitt gives a Steel Lounge Talk at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 5216 Montrose. Friday, June 25 at 6:30 pm.

For information: 713/284-8265 or www.camh.org.

◆ **Machu Picchu: Unveiling the Mysteries of the Incas.** What was Machu Picchu? For years, archaeologists believed it to be the birthplace of the Incan culture. More recent discoveries suggest it was a 15th-century resort getaway built for Pachacuti, the first ruler of the Inca Empire. Artifacts, photographs, and computer displays reveal the mystery of the Incas. \$9.50 for adults, \$7 for children/seniors. June 11–September 6 at the Houston Museum of Natural Science, 1 Hermann Circle Dr. Info: 713/639-4629 or www.hmns.org.

◆ **Our Country: The History of Country Music.** The history of America and the history of country music are both documented and paralleled in this visually stunning IMAX film. Historical footage is edited with images of the mountains of Appalachia, the Grand Ole Opry, and the deserts of California. Featured artists include Dolly Parton, Loretta Lynn, and Houston's own Lyle Lovett. Through June 7 at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. Info: 713/639-4629 or www.hmns.org.

◆ **Passport to the Universe.** This is not the dinky star show you went to as a kid. Academy Award-winner Tom Hanks narrates this full-dome, high-definition video at the Burke Baker Planetarium. *Passport to the Universe* brings you close-up views of star fields and planets

through a virtual re-creation of our universe. Take the kids, bring the visiting relatives, or treat yourself to something just as entertaining as it is educational. \$5 (\$3.50 kids 3–11 & seniors 62+). At the Houston Museum of Natural Science. Info: 713/639-4629 or www.hmns.org.
 ◆ **Persepectives 141: Aaron Parazette.** Michael Auping, chief curator of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, discusses Parazette's stunning exhibit. Friday, June 17 at 6:30 pm at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 5216 Montrose. For information: 713/284-8265 or www.camh.org.

◆ **Perspectives 142: Boys Behaving Badly.** Machismo and vulnerability, violence and fear. Painting, photography, and video works of a number of artists explore the sundry facets of maleness. June 25–September 12 at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 5216 Montrose. For information: 713/284-8265 or www.camh.org.

◆ **The Shape of Space by Alyson Shotz.** Though the Rice U gallery is closed for the summer, Brooklyn-based artist Alyson Shotz's window installation can be viewed through the gallery's front glass wall. An eye-catching "curtain" suspended from the gallery's ceiling, the installation consists of thousands of different sized ovals hand cut from Fresnel magnifying plastic. Reflec-

tion is an ongoing subject of Shotz's work, often using mirrors to explore how we perceive nature. Free. June 1–August 29 at Rice University, Sewall Hall, ground floor. Access thru Campus Entrance 1 at Main St. and Sunset Blvd. Free parking available at Entrance 10 off Greenbriar. Info: 713/348-6069 or www.ricegallery.org.

◆ **Summer Print Sale.** Emerging and mid-career artists showcase their black & white, color, and digital photography in this one-day-only sale. A portion of the proceeds benefit the Houston Center for Photography educational and outreach programs. But what is a mid-career artist? That means they're not dead yet, so their prices are affordable. Saturday, June 19, 10 am–6 pm, at the Houston Center for Photography, 1441 W. Alabama. Info: 713/529-4755 or www.hcponline.org.

◆ **Video Art Now** looks at video as a recently accepted artistic medium. Some of the most captivating video art from around the globe examines what we watch on video and how we watch it, experimenting with projection spaces. Through July 4 at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 5216 Montrose Blvd. For information: 713/284-8250 or www.camh.org.

◆ **Watercolor Summer Art Classes for Kids.** Build your child's creativity and appreciation for the arts with hands-on watercolor classes. Six weeks of three-day sessions focus on a different subject each week (including nature, nautical, and portraits). Classes begin June 14 at the Watercolor Art Society Houston, 1601 W. Alabama. For information: 713/942-9966 or www.watercolorhouston.org.

◆ **Watercolor Summer Showcase.** In the summer heat, nothing cools you off more than a tall drink of water. Make the Watercolor Art Society's summer show your artwork oasis. Styles range from abstract to realistic. June 12–July 2, 10 am–3 pm, at the Watercolor Art Society Houston, 1601 W. Alabama. For information: 713/942-9966 or www.watercolorhouston.org.

◆ **Yale Street Arts & Flower Market** is a Heights market created for local artists to display and sell their original works of art. Fresh-cut flowers are also available. Entertainment is provided by local musicians and is a highlight throughout the day. The market is free & open to the public from 9 am–5 pm and continues the first Saturday of each month, coinciding with the Heights 1st Saturday events. The market is located behind Kaplan's Ben-Hur at 210 West 21st Street just off Yale. Free parking is available in the Kaplan's parking lot. Info or booth rental: Mitch Cohen at 713/802-1213 or visit www.YaleStreetMarket.com. ■

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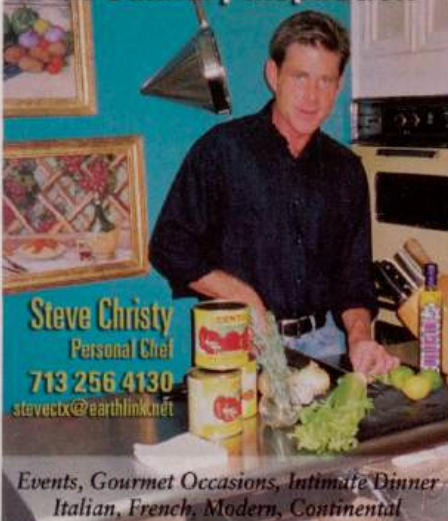
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Business News

At the Rainbow Room on the north side, bartender **Tanna Vasicek** (l) recently took a break with dj **Kenny Jatzlu**. The club (527 Barren Springs, 281/872-0215) has a dj on Friday and Saturday nights.



Kathleen and Ricky Connaughton, the owners of **Hollywood Frame Gallery**, shared a moment at the April 24 "April in Paris" event at their store (2431 Bissonnet, 713/942-8885). During the evening, guests viewed photographs by New Orleans- and Paris-based photographer **Robert Borne**.



On April 25, **JPMorgan Chase** received the 2003-2004 Outstanding Volunteer Award from **Bering Omega Community Services**. **Raul Diaz** of Chase accepted the award at the event at Kilworth Manor.

Career and Recovery Resources, Inc., the nonprofit United Way agency that helps people identify and overcome barriers to employment, will honor **Marc J. Shapiro**, chairman of Chase Bank of Texas, for his community service at the eighth annual Barrier Breaker Award luncheon on June 29 at the Westin Oaks.

Steve Lubbers recently opened **Great White Pools**. Lubbers has more than 23 years of experience with building new pools and renovating existing pools in Houston. He provides pre-construction computer drawings with proposals for pools and spas. Great White Pools can be reached at 281/213-3130 or 713/498-7749.

To mark its sixth anniversary, **Tila's Restaurant & Bar** will donate 30 percent of proceeds from every dessert sold through June 21 to The Rose, the nonprofit health-care group that provides breast-cancer screening, diagnosis, and support to women regardless of their ability to pay. **Tila Hidalgo Leach** opened her restaurant in 1998. Tila's is located at 1111 South Shepherd. The phone number is 713/522-7654.

Gingiss Formalwear in Galleria III (5015 Westheimer, 713/626-3318) is offering a \$59.95 tuxedo rental special to any individual—youth or adult, male or female—who needs a tux for the 11th annual H.A.T.C.H. Alternative Prom on June 4. Customers should mention that they will attend the prom, which will take place at the Magnolia Ballroom downtown.

In the early hours of June 27, following the Pride parade, actor **Robert Gant** (pictured) will host the *Queer as Folk* Future Babylon Tour at **South Beach**. The event is the Houston stop of an 18-city U.S. tour, presented by **Midori**, which presents a simulation of what Babylon, the nightclub on the popular Showtime series, will look like in the year 2050. Gant is a cast member on the show. •



DJ Tracy Young from Miami, whose music has been featured on episodes of *Queer as Folk*, is the special guest. The night will feature dance performances, decor and design by Miami's "Future Boys."

Rubio and Kidd Madonny, of RKM Design and Production. • **South Beach** is located at 810 Pacific. The phone number is 713/529-SOBE, and the website is www.SouthBeachTheNightclub.com.

Send your business news to OutSmart, 3406 Audubon Place, Houston, TX 77006, or e-mail to tim@outsmartmagazine.com.

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BAR & CLUB GUIDE

HOUSTON

BOCADOS

On Wednesday nights, women pack this Mexican restaurant for dancing and socializing. Sunday brunch starts at 11 a.m. and lasts till 3 in the afternoon. 1312 West Alabama • 713/523-5230.

BRAZOS RIVER BOTTOM

The BRB, Houston's leading country-western bar, is located in Midtown, just outside Montrose. Expect to see some fast and fancy two-stepping. Great benefit shows often take place on Sunday night. 2400 Brazos • 713/528-9192.

BRIAR PATCH

One of the oldest gay nightspots in Houston, the venerable Briar Patch recently moved to a new Montrose location. Show tunes at the piano bar are the main attraction. 2312 Crocker • 713/665-9678.

BRICKS II

This neighborhood joint boasts a jukebox with country music, pool tables, cold draft, and the occasional cowboy hat. Regu-lars rule at this low-key spot. 617 Fairview • 713/528-8102.

CABO MONTROSE

This restaurant near the Westheimer-Montrose epicenter now has a weekly GLBT Night on Tuesdays directed at diners in the community, featuring drink specials. 1111 Westheimer • 713/942-2226.

CHANCES/THE NEW BARN/G-SPOT

This three-in-one women's bar provides a place to two-step, rock, or chat. Check out the 9 p.m.-1 a.m. open mic night on Thursdays. Women-fronted bands perform every Saturday night. 1100 Westheimer • 713/523-7217 • www.chancesbar.com.

CLUB BIG YO

With the motto "This is an all girls production, our male friends are welcome," this Southwest club offers special evenings including Thursday talent night. Dancers strut on Sunday. 6305 Skyline • 713/953-0268, 281/322-0394 • www.clubbigyo.com.

CLUB KALIPSO

This Spring Branch club offers hot Latin music, including cumbia, merengue, ranchera, and salsa as well as Latin and English pop. Male dancers work their stuff every Sunday night. 6806 Long Point #F • 713/688-6562.

CLUB INERGY

A nightlife institution for 12 years, this Southwest club offers an eclectic mix of Latin rhythms, mainstream dance, and hip hop. Sunday is the special show night. 5750 Chimney Rock • 713/666-7310 • www.clubinergy.com.

CLUB RAINBOW

Welcoming a mixed lesbian crowd, this bar is located on the Westheimer curve in Montrose. The Glow Girl dancers perform on Sunday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday nights. 1417-B Westheimer • 713/622-5166.

CLUB TOYZ

Latin house, hip hop, salsa, and merengue flavor this Southwest Houston nightclub. On Friday, Cookie LaCook hosts Ladies Night catering to the over-25 African American lesbian crowd. 5322 Glenmont • 713/668-4892.

CLUB XCAPE

Located in South Houston, Club Xcape offers special nights including Monday Madness with MC Jenny Craig. Ghetto Fabulous Friday,

BEHIND THE BAR

WHO: Todd Warren

WHERE: Guava

Lamp (2159

Portsmouth,

713/524-3359)

WHAT'S UP: Order

a beverage from

Warren on Sunday

during Karaoke

Night at Guava

Lamp.

featuring rap, hip-hop, and bootie music, marks the end of the week. 2612 South Richey • 713/944-7663.

COUSIN'S

Drag fans pack this club in the heart of Montrose for its campy shows on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. 817 Fairview • 713/528-9204.

DECADES

Celebrating its fourth year in business, this casual neighborhood bar packs lots of local color. Decades regularly hosts pool tournaments and benefit events. 1205 Richmond • 713/521-2224.

EJ's

Located on the western front of Montrose, EJ's retains the charm of a local colorful hangout. Nightly shows, including community benefits, pack the stage. The upstairs martini bar offers a quiet retreat. 2517 Ralph • 713/527-9071.

GUAVA LAMP

Every Thursday is Cabaret Night at this stylish Shepherd Plaza video club. Karaoke fans tune up for the Wednesday and Sunday night

confest. 2159 Portsmouth • 713/524-3359 • www.guavalamp.com.

JR's/S ANTA FE

This Montrose standard offers features from pool tables, table dancers, to karaoke. Look for Carol Gilford and George Konor, named best bartenders in the 2002 Gayest & Greatest OutSmart reader poll. 808 Pacific • 713/521-2519.

KEYS WEST

Selected best piano bar in the Gayest & Greatest poll, this nightspot features regular performers and guest entertainers. The two-level deck provides a knockout skyline view. 817 West Dallas • 713/571-7870 • www.keyswest.com.

MANGO VIDEO LOUNGE

Located next to Club Inergy, this new Wednesday-Saturday spot has a 15-foot video screen, dance floor, and pool tables. DJ Kenny Jammz hosts karaoke night on Wednesday. 5742 Chimney Rock • 713/666-7472.

MARY'S

One of the oldest clubs in Houston, Mary's shuttered briefly last January but reopened once purchased by Michael's Outpost owner Michael Goltz. Inside and outside bars stay busy at this legendary nightspot. 1022 Westheimer • 713/527-9669.

MELA'S

The crowd at this neighborhood spot drops by for the Tejano and country-western music, the women, and the pool tables. Owner Mela Contreras was a Pride parade grand marshal in 2002. 302 Tuam • 713/523-0747.

METEOR

The chic atmosphere at this Montrose video bar includes overstuffed couches, marble-topped bars, and stylish glassware. Attractive men and women gather here any night of the week for drinks and conversation. 2306 Genesee • 713/521-0123 • www.meteorhouston.com.

MICHAEL'S OUTPOST

Minutes from Montrose, this relaxed neighborhood bar hosts frequent pool and dart tournaments. On Wednesday, stop by for Rick's chili con queso and chips. 1419 Richmond • 713/520-8446.

MO MONG

Every Wednesday night, the guys and gals show up at this Vietnamese restaurant in droves to enjoy the martini specials. 1201 Westheimer #B • 713/524-5664.

MONTROSE MINING COMPANY

Great-looking male dancers bump and grind every night at this leather/denim spot. The two-tier back patio bar provides a perch for viewing the Pacific Street scenery. 805 Pacific • 713/529-7488.

O

Two outdoor balconies allow patrons to watch the passing parade on Pacific. A sleek interior and multiple plasma screens distinguish this spot, which stays open after hours on weekends. 710 Pacific • 713/523-0213.

PEARL

Promoter Eduardo Elizondo now hosts a Thursday gay night at this swanky new club in the downtown club district. Hop on the Metro

train and head north. 310 Main • 713/528-5736 • www.pearl-houston.com.

PRIVÉ

The patio at this second-floor spot overlooks the lively Westheimer/Montrose intersection. The mixed crowd includes smartly dressed gays as well as non-gays. 910 Westheimer • 713/522-2542.

RAINBOW ROOM

This gathering spot north of Houston has a casual neighborhood atmosphere. The pool tables stay busy. 527 Barren Springs off Ella Boulevard • 281/872-0215.

RICH'S HOUSTON

Even after more than 20 years, the iconic two-story danceteria still draws an energetic crowd. Techno light and laser shows enhance the pumped-up music. 2401 San Jacinto • 713-759-9606 • www.richs-houston.com.

RIPCORN

OutSmart readers named this spot the best place to show off your leather in the Gayest & Greatest poll. Inside the bar, the Black Hawk Leather Shop sells treasures for the leather/levis/uniform crowd. 715 Fairview • 713/521-2792 • www.ripcordanjournal.com.

611 CLUB

On Friday and Saturday nights, this neighborhood spot offers great buffet dinners. Features include a beautiful garden-style patio. 611 Hyde Park • 713/526-7070.

SOUTH BEACH

The techno-chic sound system keeps shirtless boys pumped up late into the night. In the Gayest & Greatest poll, OutSmart readers named this spot the best club after 2 a.m. 810 Pacific • 713/529-SCBE (7623) • www.SouthBeachTheNightclub.com.

VIVIANA'S

This club near downtown appeals to fans of Latino music and drag alike. 5219 Washington • 713/862-0203.

NOTE Buchanan's, the club on Park Place, has closed.

Conroe

RANCH HILL SALOON

Located 30 miles north of Houston, this spot features daily drink specials, live entertainment, and karaoke night on Wednesday. 2111 Airport Rd. • 936/441-6426.

Galveston

GARZA'S KON TIKI

Located downtown, the Kon Tiki is steps from the Strand. This spot was named favorite Island club and best place to see male dancers in the Gayest & Greatest poll. 315 Tremont • 409/765-5805 • www.thekontiki.com.

ROBERT'S LAFITTE

A real neighborhood bar, this Island institution attracts a colorful crowd of regulars and travelers. The club, only two blocks from the Gulf, features a private patio. 2501 Ave Q (at 25th) • 409/765-9092.

THIRD COAST

This new club has opened in the former Jimmy's on the Beach location. The wall of windows still offers a great view of the Gulf. 904 Avenue M • 409/765-6911.

UNDERCURRENT

Keith Curry and Marvin Grenier, long-time Blvd Saloon bartenders, have assumed ownership of the Gulf-view bar and rechristened it. The second-floor deck still has a great view of the water. 3102 Seawall Blvd. • 409/750-8571.

NOTE: Myra's Cantina has closed.

Beaumont

THE COPA

The hangout for Lamar University students, this two-story dance club has pool tables, a spacious stage, and a staircase that would make Norma Desmond green with envy. 304 Orleans • 409/832-4206.

CROCKETT STREET

Formerly known as Mary's Place, this club recently changed hands and name. Miss Olivia Gardener hosts Talent Night on Tuesday. On Sunday, Latino Night includes Latin music and an all-Latino illusionist show. 485 Crockett • 409/832-4944.

HOOLIGAN'S

Though primarily a women's bar, this just-opened club is open to all. Features include karaoke night on Wed. & frequent live music, especially on Fridays & Saturdays. 6025 Martin Luther King • 409/832-0808.

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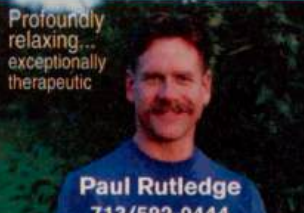
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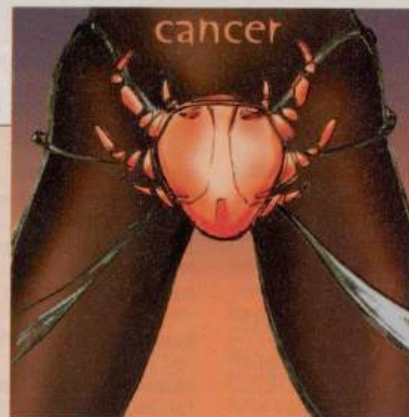
This month continues with Venus retrograding and going direct on June 29. So we are still confronting relationship issues, internal and external. Peace and harmony seem in the distance. However, the overall month is a less stressful one than last month. Uranus does go retrograde on the 10th. This causes us to seek our sense of uniqueness more inwardly. The full Moon on the 1st in Sagittarius pushes us to seek respite from our routines. And the new Moon in Gemini activates our emotional inner voices. • The Sun enters Cancer on the first day of summer (Summer Solstice) on June 20, 3:57 p.m. Mercury is rushing along, beginning the month in Taurus and quickly entering Gemini on the 5th and Cancer on the 19th. Venus is holding in Gemini. Mars stirs up the water in Cancer and shines in Leo on the 23rd. The rest of the planets are happy and stay in the signs they are in. • Good days to stay in bed are June 2, 8th, 11th, 26th, and 29th. Good days to be at the beach are the 5th, 12th, 18th, 19th, 22nd, 25th, and 27th.

ARIES (March 21–April 19). You are very talkative this month. And you are happy to chat about most anything as long as it is not about home, mom, and family. There is a lot of tension there. You are feeling very judged by either your family or your inner judge. This could show up as conflict within your immediate family. It has its roots in your not feeling appreciated enough. This is a good month to reorganize your daily activities. And don't be surprised if you want to redecorate your living space or maybe even move.

TAURUS (April 20–May 20). You stay with your plan from last month to continue to get your finances in shape. You are taking care of old debts and looking inward to consider what your resources are. You are certainly taking life a lot more seriously this month. Everyday decisions seem to have more impact, and you are more thoughtful about each determination. This may make some of you fearful about making an error. And you may find that you are "stuck" waiting for a signal to know when it is safe to move or act. You will feel better about all of this toward the end of the month.

GEMINI (May 21–June 21). In your birthday time (*solar return* in astro-babble), you are ending the cycle from last year, reviewing the choices and outcomes. And soon you will be making new decisions about what to do with yourself for the upcoming year. This year will be about freedom versus commitment. You certainly need something to entertain your brain. And old habits and routines are taking their toll. June 15 will be when all of this comes to a head. Keep your options open until then. The only way you can make a commitment this year is that the commitment must enhance your sense of personal freedom and expression.

LEO (July 23–August 22). Old friends from your past still continue to re-enter your life. You are very



CANCER (June 22–July 22). You begin the month wanting to retreat into your crab shell. The last two months have been very busy, and you have been very active and visible. But the retreat will be short-lived. There seems to be a lot of responsibility and demands being placed on your time. Don't forget to nurture the person who nurtures others. You are not the most patient person, and your crabby temperament will be right there for all to see. Be sure you get some exercise to work out your anger. And confront those who need confronting. You come out of this toward the end of the month.

ILLUSTRATION: DAVID EDUARDO FLORES PEREZ

socially inclined this month. And if you want to combine business and pleasure, this can be an extremely fruitful month. Your time with some organizations may be coming to an end. You are really considering how important these groups are to your spiritual purpose. As we get near the end of the month, you are in a time of retreat. It is best to spend time with yourself. You will be more energized but very selective about how you use that vitality.

VIRGO (August 23–September 22). You are your career this month. And those two images had better be in accord with one another, or you are going to be one unhappy wheat reaper. You continue to assess your future and where you are headed. There is a lot of opportunity ahead, but part of that requires you to leave behind a part of your secure beliefs of the past. Even though you know you have outgrown them, you still hold on to them. Use all your energies of freedom to draw you away from your past and into your new adventure. By the end of the month, you will know the right choice to make.

LIBRA (September 23–October 23). Freedom and travel are playing a big role in your life this month. You know there are a lot of things in your life that need reorganizing. But you would embrace any reason to avoid doing any part of that. It may help to make the projects smaller and more manageable. I know there is a part of you that wants to just start and get it done, no matter how many hours it will take. This is where the conflict lies. Take smaller bites. You continue to be looking at the long-term choices that you are making. This gets even stronger by the end of the month.

SCORPIO (October 24–November 21). You are being faced with making a deeper commitment with

those around you, and at the same time, having to be more upfront about what you really feel and think. This is putting you in a vulnerable situation, because you like to know what others want and respond to rather than be open about what your needs are. Don't miss this chance to voice those deeper desires. Trust that you have made good choices with the people around you. And share your deep-rooted feelings with them. You will need their help toward the end of the month when you are called to action.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22–December 21). Isn't it about time you found that relationship partner and stopped being alone? Even if you are in a committed partnership, you hold back a piece of yourself. Now the loneliness is having a detrimental effect on you. You can still be in control and be in a relationship. You don't have to give up anything to be in one. Work is very busy, and you could easily hide there. But there will be a part of you that is still empty no matter how full your bank account is.

CAPRICORN (December 22–January 19). This month is about getting prepared for a very busy September. You have the time to get your office and home in shape. Take care of all those small tasks that you have to step over to get into your house. Relationship commitment is just on the horizon. Even if you are already committed, you are about to re-commit or look for a new mate. You are entering this time of your life with your eyes wide open. Get these things done, so you have the time to focus on your career in September.

AQUARIUS (January 20–February 18). June is your month of rest. Take some time to play and just lounge about. You can work at those projects that you have waiting for you. But you will not find the motivation for them until the end of the month. You have just come to a completion time in your life, and you need some time for reflection before you have to move forward. Spend some time with children or in childlike activities. By the 23rd, you are activated and ready for business. Watch your temper. It will be shorter than usual.

PISCES (February 19–March 20). Continue to work on your foundation, the theme from last month. You are looking for a place to be safe and protected. You have been separating from your family and the self-image that you brought with you from your home. You are lightening your load and getting rid of things that you don't need. Some of this will show up at your work. You are not as committed as you used to be. And your dreams take you far away from your current local. Travel is especially favored. Book your flights now.

A professional astrologer for 20 years, Lilly Roddy counsels individuals and teaches classes. Her website is www.lillyroddy.com.

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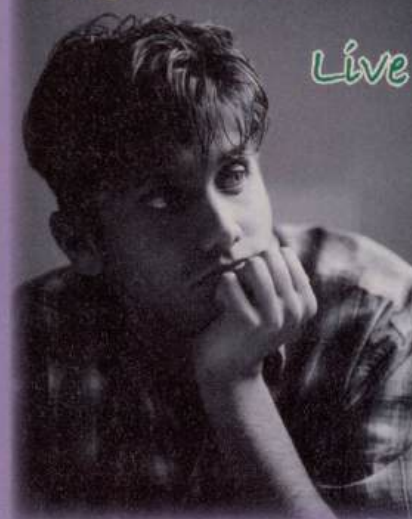


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OUT IN HOUSTON



1 Shane McShane, Houston GLBT Community Center president, threw out the first pitch for Montrose Softball League opening day on March 28.



2 City controller Annise Parker helped out at the Neartown Little League opening day on March 28.



3 Aiden Smith-Perez (c) brought dads Shawn Smith (l) and Daniel Perez to the March 13 Oodles of Noodles Pasta Buffet benefit for Bering Support Network at KeyStar Event Complex.



4 Faithful fundraiser Jack Jackson (l) was designated "resident leprechaun" at the March 12 Bringin' in the Green benefit for Montrose Counseling Center.



5 On the morning of March 20, Human Rights Campaign executive director Cheryl Jacques (c) met with a group of community leaders, including transgender activists (l-r) Wendy Russell, Sara Rook, Brenda Thomas, and Vanessa Edwards Foster.



6 The Houston Symphony, in conjunction with Bering Omega Community Services, hosted a special concert engagement and reception for musical icon k.d. lang on May 1. Joining lang (3rd from right) at the post-concert reception at The Magnolia Hotel were (l-r) Houston Symphony executive director Ann Kennedy, Bering Omega board president Judie Cross, Houston Symphony event co-chair E.W. Long, Vance Nesbitt, and Bering Omega co-chair Marion Coleman.



7 The Feb. 15 Purple Haze fundraiser at Rich's Houston benefited Bering Omega Community Services. The hosts were (l-r) Lionel Vargas, Mike Alberts, Marco Roberts, Andrew Fletcher, Elester Stewart, Jeff Havard, and Vance Nesbitt.



8 On April 5, Luis Trevino (l-r), Todd Dubois, and Lauren Fayle from the cast of *Urinetown*—in Houston on its national Broadway Across America tour—stopped by the premiere Musical Theater Night at Meteor.



9 On March 20, Chris Arasin (l-r), Sid Servin, and Dominic Barcigalupia of the Houston Big Men's Club greeted visitors to the East Coast Conference of the Affiliated Big Men's Clubs, hosted by the local group, at the Houston Renaissance.



10 Tom Downing (l-r), Sheri Heyen, and Steven Wagner chaired the March 20 Human Rights Campaign dinner at the InterContinental Houston.



11 Houston Gay Men's Chorus pianist Beth McConnell (c) and Giancarlo Carrarena welcomed Huey Long, crooner with the legendary Ink Spots, at the March 20 Hobby Center concert. Long lives in the Heights.

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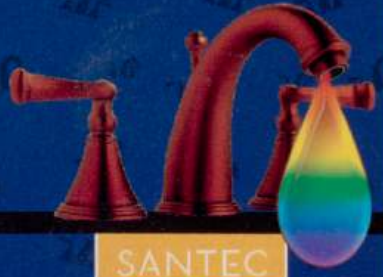
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