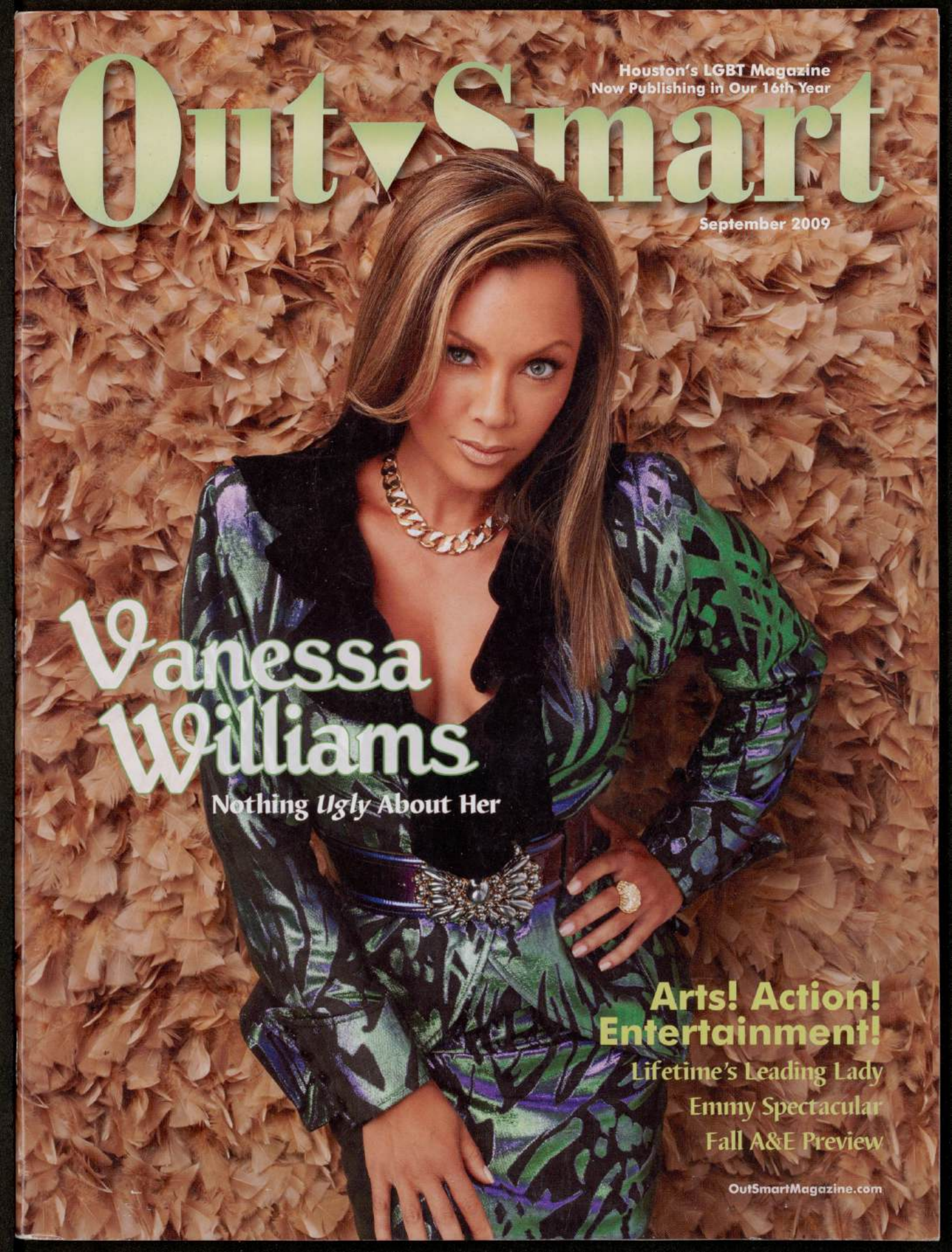


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September 2009

A full-page photograph of Vanessa Williams lying on a bed of dry, brown leaves. She is wearing a dark, long-sleeved dress with a vibrant green and purple pattern. She has long, light brown hair and is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. She is wearing a chunky gold chain necklace and a large, ornate ring on her left hand. A wide, dark belt with a large, decorative buckle cinches her waist.

Vanessa
Williams

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CONTENTS

Vol. 16 • No. 8 • September 2009

News & Comment

- 8 Letters
- 10 News Briefs
- 20 **What a World** Dancing with DeLay.
- 22 **InsideOut** Emergency and other numbers.
- 24 **AIDS Watch** Guarding against infection.
- 26 **PastOut** Basic Brothers played softball, Kelly Lauren played Mae West, and more.
- 28 **TimeOut** Our readers and recommendations.

Features

- 30 **COVER STORY** **Inside and Out** Vanessa Williams sets the mode for beauty.
- 40 **Curtain Call** *OutSmart's* annual guide to the local stage.
- 57 **A Different 'Rapture'** Full frontal theater at Stages.
- 61 **Singing and Swinging** Bayou City Concert Musicals' *On the Town*, in our town.
- 65 **Conduct Becoming** Artistic director Linus Lerner discusses Bayou City Performing Arts' new season.
- 68 **Big Storm, Big Screen** Filmmaker David Purdie's *Galvest-Gone!*
- 72 **Bear Art** And we're not talking *National Geographic*.
- 77 **Better Television for Women** Lifetime gets a makeover by JoAnn Alfano.
- 83 **Emmy Fever** The best of television, gay and otherwise.

Arts & Entertainment

- 86 **Queer Quotes** Wise words from Carrie Fisher, Brūno, Brad Pitt, and others.
- 88 **DVDs** A flashback to 1968, plus Judy Garland's TV show, Asian shorts, and more.
- 90 **Television** GLAAD tidings for TV viewing, plus Alton LaDay's debut.
- 92 **GrooveOut** Cool classics, plus new tunes from Sarah Bettens, Cazwell, Colton Ford, Sugarland, and others.
- 96 **ReadOut** All about Merv, plus new titles from Freeman Hall, Barbara Bonfigli, Kathy Griffin, Blake Bailey, and others.

Out & About

- 101 DineOut
- 102 Calendar
- 103 Galveston Spotlight
- 104 LookOut
- 108 Out There
- 119 Bar/Club Guide
- 120 SignOut
- 122 SceneOut

Advertisers Index

- 112 Business News
- 114 Classified
- 116 OutSmart Advertisers

ON THE WEB

Reviews of *The Supremes: A Saga of Motown Dreams, Success, and Betrayal* by Mark Ribowsky and *Dreamboy: My Life as a QVC Host & Other Greatest Hits* by Dale Guy Madison



About the cover:

Vanessa Williams (see page 30)
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Letters

PRIDE QUESTION

In the August 2009 issue of *OutSmart* magazine's News Briefs, the parade injuries were addressed ["Injuries Mark Houston GLBT Pride Parade" by Nancy Ford]. Pride president Brad Odom was quoted as saying "he saw no instances of spectators along the designated parade route coming into the street to obtain beads and trinkets."

Is this a misquote or is Mr. Odom blind? Was he at the parade?

Tony Vega
Houston, Texas

OutSmart replies: In paraphrasing his quote, *OutSmart* may have portrayed Pride Houston president Brad Odom's observation of the parade spectators as less ambiguous than it was.

In the July telephone interview reporting for the article in question, *OutSmart* asked Odom: "You didn't see anybody swarming floats along the parade route, even where the fences were up and the barricades were up?" Mr. Odom replied: "No, I didn't see and I kept checking on things like that. And because of the solid nature of the fence, if people were on the wrong side of it, we had cops directing them back on the right side. In years past, where the crowds came out into the street—I had never seen that before. People said that happened all the time, and I said, 'No, that's not acceptable.' And we fenced the entire route."

ISLAND SPIRIT

Congratulations on your very impressive articles on Galveston [July 2009]. You have captured the very essence of Galveston's spirit, attractions, and you certainly included our wonderful gay community here on the Island. What a treat to get to read and enjoy such a well-written story. Thank you. . . .

Eldrege Langlinais
Galveston, Texas

MAJA WORSHIP

I just read the article/interview with Maja Ivarsson and I found it to be helpful in a way ["Sounds Good" by Gregg Shapiro, July 2009]. Maja is my hero. I love the fact that you guys mentioned same-sex marriages and compared it to "Underground." I love the article/interview. Thanks so much for posting it!

Olivia Hoffman
Pocatello, Idaho

TRANS ATTENTION

I don't know if you have seen all of the attention that Houston's Transgender Foundation has been getting, even on the national level. Recently, Matt Kailey included us in an article on *examiner.com* ("Houston Mayor Bill White proclaims 'Transgender Center Day'"). Advocate.com did as well ("Houston Mayor Proclaims Trans Day"). . . .

Thanks for running your story ["The Houston Transgender Archive" by Brandon Wolf, June 2009]. We are proud to be the face of Houston's transgender community.

Lou Weaver
Houston, Texas ■

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Local and National Plans Continue for October March for Equality

This year, National Coming Out Day promises to hold even more significance for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans than it normally does.

October 11 has been observed as "National Coming Out Day" since 1988, a day when LGBT individuals are encouraged to be forthright about their sexuality. The day also commemorates the 30th anniversary of the first March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights.

In 2009, advocates of equality intend to pour into Washington, DC, for the National Equality March, scheduled October 10 and 11.

"We're marching this October to demand action from the federal government to protect our rights in all 50 states," said Kip Williams, one of the march's organizers in an August statement to the press. "Real equality can only come from the president, the Congress and the Supreme Court."

Major national LGBT organizations including the Gay Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation and the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches have endorsed the march.

On August 12, Human Rights Campaign (HRC), which sponsored national marches in 1993 and 2000, released a statement supporting the march.

"The Human Rights Campaign considers October 11 in Washington, DC, to be a starting point—not a destination," stated Human Rights Campaign president Joe Solmonese. "Those who join us in the nation's capital have more work ahead of them after the crowds clear. They need to become citizen lobbyists, ready and able to tell their senators and members of Congress what this community needs to see: an ENDA that protects every single one of us. Repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell. Repeal of DOMA. Protections for our families."

HRC said it will train march participants to initiate and carry out successful in-district lobby visits, whether they come to DC in person or take their activism on line.

"HRC's work with the October 11 event will focus on mobilizing face-to-face meetings be-

tween community members and their lawmakers," Solmonese continued. "With thousands of LGBT people and allies coming to Washington to make a difference, it's our mission to help them become the citizen lobbyists that they want and need to be."

Bryan Hlavinka, one of the organizers of a burgeoning local march delegation, hopes to bring Houstonian marchers together at the Equality March under the banner of the Texas flag with other Texas delegations "so we can be out and proud Texans."

Hlavinka is no stranger to civil action on the nation's capital.

"I went to the 1993 March on Washington, and it pretty much changed my life, to be there with all the masses of gays," he said. "I think now is the time. Another march is needed,

especially with the progress that we've made, but also with the progress that's yet to come. Especially with the Obama administration—there have been a lot of promises made, but not a lot of follow through. Now is the time to go and say, 'What's up?'"

Hlavinka further hopes LGBT Texans take the opportunity to be part of the country coming together at the march. "Even though we're from a 'red state,' we can make our presence known that we're here and we want equality as well, although it's not in the cards for us yet."

According to domawatch.org, Texas is one of 30 states that has adopted a constitutional amendment limiting marriage to opposite-sex couples.

"As states begin to adopt equality policies, eventually Texas will follow suit, I think as well," Hlavinka concluded. "The more people we get [to join the march], the stronger our presence will be."

"It's a great time to make our voice known across the country."

Hlavinka said the best way to stay informed about local involvement in the event is to join the "Equality March Houston" Facebook page. —Nancy Ford

MORE NEWS →

WE will be there.



What about YOU?!

THE WORK AT HOME

Equality Texas refrains from endorsing National Equality March

Equality Texas, the Lone Star faction of the LGBT advocacy group Equality Federation, has chosen to not endorse the Equality March. "We feel like we need to energize people to work on things that will accomplish some things, specifically," said Paul Scott, Equality Texas' executive director.

"One, we have Annise Parker running for mayor [in Houston]," Scott said. "We need to make sure if people are going to be spending their resources and working, we would like for them to actually travel to Houston to work on her campaign and get the first and only lesbian mayor elected to one of the top five cities in the United States."

During the week of the Equality March, Scott said, Equality Texas is

poised to connect Texans with their elected officials to educate them regarding LGBT issues, addressing safe schools as well as a state nondiscrimination law that protects LGBTs in the workplace, public accommodations, and housing.

"Great things are happening across the country that have immediate results," Scott reiterated. "At the same time we acknowledge the need to galvanize people to create this energy and to respect the fact that people are angry and want to do something. And I think the march is representative of that desire, but at the same time we want to make people understand that if they do go, come back into their communities and find opportunities to make a difference." —N.F.



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THE STONEWALL OF ISRAEL

by David Goldberg

On Saturday night, August 1, a masked gunman entered Cafe Noir, a known gay and lesbian hangout in Tel Aviv, and began a vicious shooting spree. He killed three innocents and wounded 11. The night was supposed to involve a LGBT youth counseling meeting, nothing more. The victims were mainly teenagers and many were in the closet to their families.

While Israel may be in the nexus of the torrid Middle East drama, a hate crime like this is completely unheard of. It's the first of its kind. Some are even labeling it "the Stonewall of Israel." On the first day of August, Tel Aviv is usually as spectacular a gay destination as Mykonos or Amsterdam. Sadly, this grotesque attack will bruise the city's rising credibility.

I spent the last academic year in Israel, studying and volunteering throughout the country. I worked the final three months in the new Tel Aviv GLBT Municipality Center, until the saga came to its fantastic culmination at the Tel Aviv Pride Parade. While I will always be faithful to the beads and bedlam of the Houston Pride parade, Tel Aviv's 10th Pride celebration was utterly unforgettable. Tens of thousands of tan Israelis marched through the center of

the city onto the beach, where, as the house music played, they cleansed themselves in the awesomeness of the Mediterranean Sea. It was beautiful.

The LGBT community of Tel Aviv treated me like family, from the gregarious drag queens to the parade planners who

invited me into their homes. The nightlife is one of a kind: on any night, in any packed club, a glitzy party awaits. Unfortunately, this city of shimmering momentum is now obscured by darkness.

But if there is one skill that the Israeli people share, it is the ability to cope.

Rallies have taken place in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, and Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu condemned the hate crime. The LGBT community of Tel Aviv has united to face this tragedy head on. One volunteer writes, "I've slept for two hours in the last two days. I've been in the [GLBT] center all day, volunteering. It's really difficult; many people are sad and shocked. Most kids who were present during the attack were in the closet, and now they had to be outed to their parents, some of which responded terribly." In time, Tel Aviv will be back and more fabulous than ever.

Now, my memories of two sensational

continued on page 14

While Israel may be in the nexus of the torrid Middle East drama, a hate crime like this is completely unheard of. It's the first of its kind.

News

continued from page 10

HOUSTON GLBT CAUCUS MAKES ENDORSEMENTS, PARKER GAINS MORE SUPPORTERS

THE HOUSTON GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER Political Caucus met August 5 to endorse candidates in the 2009 Houston municipal elections as well as Houston Independent School District board of trustee elections.

Candidates were screened by the caucus for their support of LGBT equality and were then endorsed by majority vote of the membership. Endorsed candidates include: Ronald Green for Houston City Controller, Lane Lewis for Houston City Council District A, Anne Clutterbuck for Houston City Council District C, Wanda Adams for Houston City Council District D, Michael Laster for Houston City Council District F, Ed Gonzales for Houston City Council District H, James Rodriguez for Houston City Council District I, Herman Litt for Council At Large Position 1, Sue Lovell for Council At Large Position 2, Melissa Noriega for Council At Large Position 3, Noel Freeman for Council At Large Position 4, Jolanda Jones for Council At Large Position 5, and Alma L. Lara for HISD Trustee District I. No endorsements were made for Districts B, E, or G.

The caucus previously endorsed Houston city controller Annise D. Parker for the office of Houston's mayor. In August, Parker, currently in her third and term-limited final term as Houston's city controller, added Service Employees International Union, the Houston Organization of Public Employees and Harris County Democrats, and the Unite Here hospitality workers group to her growing list of endorsing organizations.

REAUTHORIZATION SOUGHT FOR RYAN WHITE HIV/AIDS TREATMENT MODERNIZATION ACT

ON SEPTEMBER 30, THE RYAN WHITE HIV/AIDS Treatment Modernization Act is set to expire. Sounding the alarm for public support, local HIV/AIDS service providers say millions of Americans living with HIV/AIDS are dependent for their medical care on the Ryan White programs, making it vital that the act is reauthorized by Congress.

"The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Modernization Act is a critical part of our health care safety net," said Randall Ellis, director of government relations for Legacy Community Health Services. "Timely extension of this legislation is essential to ensure that uninsured and underinsured people living with HIV/AIDS do not experience a gap in the delivery of life-saving medical and sup-

continued on page 14

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Stonewall of Israel

continued from page 12

Pride parades are tinged with blood. On June 28, the Houston community came together for a perfect night, only to find out later that at the same time an outrageous police attack took place in the Rainbow Lounge in Fort Worth. And the Israelis who marched with bliss on June 12 now must face each night with fear and shame. I suppose the question of whether Pride parades are needed has just been answered. ■

Photos from the 2009 Tel Aviv Pride Parade, courtesy of David Goldberg (pictured top right).



News

continued from page 12

portive services as our nation transitions into a new health care environment. An unprecedented consensus among those on the front-lines of the epidemic, nearly 300 HIV/AIDS organizations in 45 states across the country, have endorsed a plan that would amend and reauthorize this legislation for three years. Congress must act swiftly when they return to Washington, DC, in September."

Enacted in 1990, the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Modernization Act was named after a teenager infected with HIV who became a national spokesman for the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS in the 1980s. The largest federal program for helping people with HIV/AIDS, the act makes care available to those patients who cannot afford treatments by any other means. Starting with \$220 million in 1990, funding of the Ryan White programs in 2005 increased to \$2.1 billion with roughly one-third of the funding going to AIDS Drug Assistance Programs, providing HIV-treatment drugs to low-income patients in all 50 states.

According to an August 26 news release from Centerlink (formerly the National Association of LGBT Community Centers), Ryan White HIV/AIDS programs are the "payer of last resort," helping people living with HIV/AIDS who have no other way of paying for their medication and treatments. Without the programs funded by the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Modernization Act, these people would literally be unable to afford their medical care, the news release said.

Activists recommend that the Ryan White Program be extended for three more years with the recommended changes, such as the inclusion of Such Sums Necessary language, the updating of the Requirement of Name-Based Reporting language, and the extension of TGA eligibility, which has been endorsed by over 270 organizations across the U.S.

EDITOR'S NOTE: OutSmart urges readers to contact their legislators to recommend extension of the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Modernization Act to avoid service disruptions to persons with HIV/AIDS.

HIV SCREENING PROGRAM PROVES SUCCESSFUL, CONTINUES

MORE THAN 25,800 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN TESTED FOR HIV as a result of a routine screening program for Ben Taub General Hospital's emergency patients. Last year, Harris County Hospital District (HCHD) began testing all patients, ages 18-64, who arrive in Ben Taub's emergency center and require blood lab work. The screenings have detected 178 newly diagnosed HIV-positive cases, representing a .65 positive rate since the program was implemented in August 2008. The testing program also reconfirmed the HIV status of 323 people who had not sought care for the virus.

continued on page 16



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LUTHERANS TAKE STEPS TOWARD GAY AND LESBIAN CLERGY

by Neil Ellis Orts

On Friday, August 21, the voting members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), meeting in Minneapolis for Churchwide Assembly, passed resolutions that will make way for people in "publicly accountable life-long, monogamous, same gender relationships" to serve as pastors and other professional leadership positions. The 4.6-million-member church becomes the largest denomination in the U.S. to take this step.

This is not an objective report. This is a personally engaged statement from a stakeholder in these events. I am a theologically trained, gay, life-long Lutheran. I have not cried this much out of joy since, well, ever.

There will be a process to this. I do not feel it will happen overnight. Also part of the resolutions was a call for respect for the "bound conscience" of other members. This means a congregation is not required to call

a gay pastor, neither is a current pastor required to officiate at a same-gender commitment ceremony. The door is now open, however. A gay or lesbian Lutheran now has more options on how to live out his or her faith in the ELCA.

Special mention must be made of the ELCA's presiding bishop, Mark Hanson. He presided over the assembly with grace, wit, and pastoral concern for all the people under his care.

As I write this on Sunday, August 23, I am monitoring comments made on Facebook. Some are full of anger, some of gratitude. We will no doubt lose some members, but perhaps gain some, too. As for me, I've never been so glad to be a member of the ELCA. ■

Neil Ellis Orts is frequent contributor to OutSmart magazine.

News

continued from page 14

The success of the program, Routine Universal Screening for HIV, places the Harris County Hospital District at the forefront of a nationwide effort to make the screening for HIV a routine test for all patients.

"A key feature of HCHD's program is its



Staff from the emergency center at Ben Taub General Hospital celebrates the first-year anniversary of a trendsetting program to make HIV testing a routine procedure in ERs. The group shows off a commemorative cake for the Aug. 4 occasion.

ability to refer newly diagnosed HIV-positive patients and reconfirmed patients to primary care and other supportive services at Thomas Street Health Center, its free-standing HIV/AIDS facility," stated Michael C. Ruggerio,

continued on page 18

A Vote for Karen is a Vote for Responsible Government!



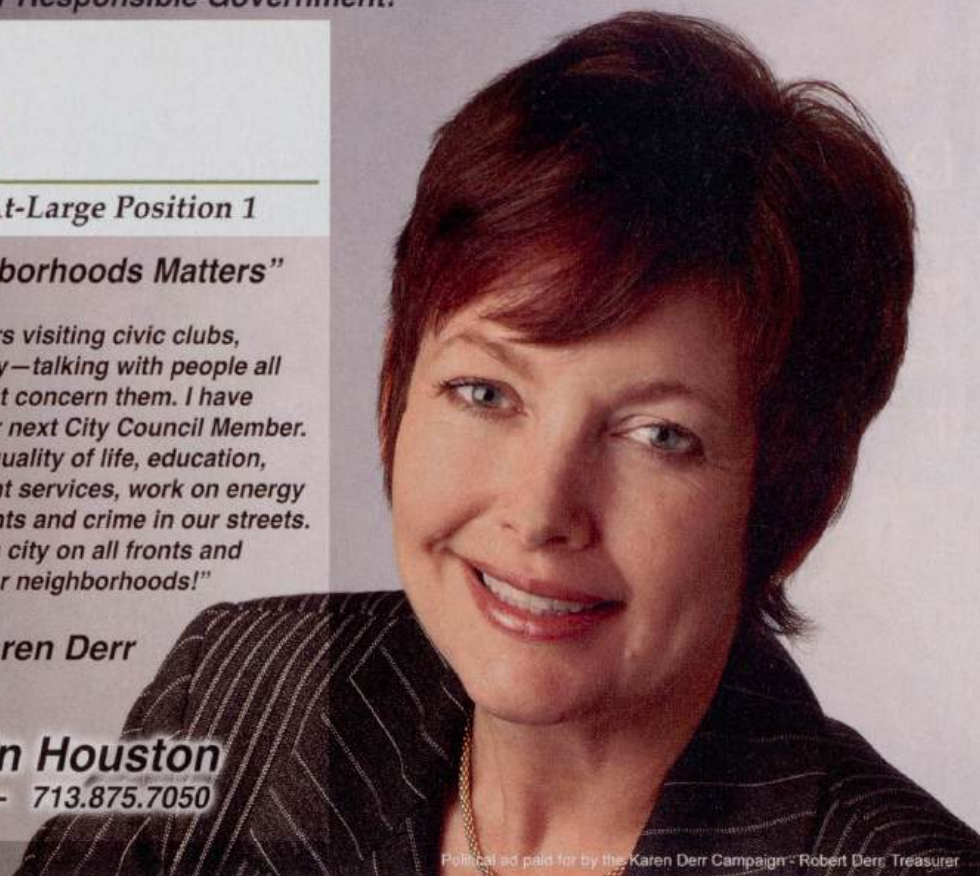
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A VERY BUSY BRUSH

With two recent high-profile projects, John Palmer continues painting a name for himself

Seems painter John Palmer's work is showing up everywhere these days. The limited edition lithograph, "Our Relief" (pictured), is a collaboration between the white-hot painter and sculptor David Adickes. Proceeds from the work go to the American Red Cross, helping victims of Hurricane Ike—fitting since Houston and the nation prepare for another round of storms that seems to be getting off to a rip-roaring start with Bill. Another joint effort, this time with psychotherapist Christopher Brown, may not have the size of a painting, but it has all the physical heft of a coffee-table art book and the meta-inspiration behind today's emotional fixer-upper bestsellers, albeit this one features prettier pictures. The 128-page *The Art of Meaningful Living* is available for about \$22 on Amazon. For collectors, there are a few numbered, signed, and sealed copies at the John Palmer Gallery for \$300,



Local State Farm agent Pam Ellis has one of the 250 limited edition lithographs, which benefit the American Red Cross, in her Memorial Drive office. Artist John Palmer recently was at Ellis's office to hang the vibrant piece. The donation for each lithograph is \$200.

each with an original painting in the back of the book. 1218 Heights Blvd. 713/861-6726. JohnPalmerArt.com

NOT LETTING THE SUN GO DOWN ON HIM

Houston photographer David Lewis one of top 10 finalists

Pharmaceutical giant Bristol-Myers Squibb announced the short list for their annual "Fight HIV Your Way" photography contest, and local lensman David Lewis is one of 10 finalists. In addition to the panel of judges, public voting is also allowed this year. But even if you don't cast a vote for Lewis' subtle, tranquil shot of a Texas sunset, check out the site anyway. If the entries are half the caliber of last year's, art fans are in for a photographic feast. Stunning scenery,

meditative portraiture, trippy symbolic shots, and vivid visual poems make this contest one of the best on-line galleries around. Every picture here tells some kind of story, and these photographs are no different. Whether you're living with HIV, you know someone who has the disease, or, worse, you've lost someone to the illness, these images will still have an emotional resonance. Lewis understands this, and that's what makes a photograph that could be looked at as a rather static, unoriginal image, wholly unique.

The 10 finalists will be featured at the contest website at FightHIVyourWay.com, where you can cast a vote for Lewis in their Public Voting Round.



David Lewis and Scooter

HIP TO BE SQUARE

Will Brooks's art cubes may be numbered, but their impact is infinite

In any art gallery or museum, you're constantly made aware through small plaques or shadowy docent that you are not to touch the artwork. Will Brooks's art isn't meant to be just touched, but to touch others. Brooks created, constructed, and painted 12 vivid cubes. Each four-inch cube is numbered, and each panel is painted with a similar, yet unique color scheme, pattern, or texture. And because it's a cube, the work doesn't just hang flat like a painting, you can reposition or redirect it, making it a different piece of art every day. But the very cool bit? If you receive or find one of these cubes, it's yours to keep. There's just one catch. In return, you are to sacrifice, say, one green tea chai a week and give those twenty-something bucks to charity. It's urban art meets Obama pass-it-on social responsibility. Very meaningful living indeed. If you need some suggestions, visit cubes.willbrookart.com for a listing of local organizations in need. ■



Artist Will Brooks

urge them to get this legislation to President Obama, and we appeal to him to sign it into law without delay. It is long past due, but this can be the moment for a ringing pronouncement of our democracy's intolerance of hate and the crime it foment.

The National Center for Lesbian Rights, however, says the death penalty amendment that was added undermines the purpose of the Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Prevention Act, "which is to reduce bias and discrimination, by supporting a punishment that has been applied in a notoriously biased and discriminatory way."

"There are few facets of our criminal justice system more deeply flawed than the death penalty," according to the statement at nclr.org. "It has been repeatedly demonstrated that rather than deterring violence or curbing crime, the death penalty has been used to perpetuate race and class bias."

"This provision (now on the Senate Defense Department spending bill, which is where the hate crimes provisions have been added) can and must be removed in conference committee where differences between House and Senate versions will be worked out."

MILK AND KING RECEIVE AMERICA'S HIGHEST HONOR

NOTED GAY AND LESBIAN LEADERS Harvey Milk and Billie Jean King were among the 16 recipients of the 2009 Presidential Medal of Freedom. America's highest civilian honor, the Medal of Freedom is awarded to individuals who make an especially meritorious contribution to the security or national interests of the United States, world peace, cultural or other significant public or private endeavors.

Harvey Milk became the first openly gay elected official from a major city in the United States when he was elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1977. Milk, who was murdered in 1978, is revered nationally and globally as a pioneer of the LGBT civil rights movement for his exceptional leadership and dedication to equal rights.

Billie Jean King was an acclaimed professional tennis player in the 1960s and 1970s, and has helped champion gender equality issues not only in sports, but also in all areas of public life. She became one of the first openly lesbian major sports figures in America when she came out in 1981.

President Obama praised all 16 recipients for breaking down barriers and lifting up their fellow citizens, saying, "These outstanding men and women represent an incredible diversity of backgrounds. Their tremendous accomplishments span fields from science to sports, from fine arts to foreign affairs. Yet they share one overarching trait: each has been an agent of change. Each saw an imperfect world and set about improving it, often overcoming great obstacles along the way."

The awards were presented at a White House ceremony on Wednesday, August 12. ■

News

continued from page 16

HCHD operations manager for emergency center screening and outreach.

Because of the success of Ben Taub's program, HCHD has expanded its routine HIV testing program to Lyndon B. Johnson General Hospital, with plans to expand to its other 12 community health centers.

PASSAGE OF HATE CRIMES LEGISLATION IN SENATE ELICITS MIXED REACTIONS

ON JULY 23, 2009, THE DEPARTMENT of Defense authorization bill, which contains the Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Prevention Act (bill number S.909), passed in the U.S. Senate.

But while one national organization applauded the passage, another noted the legislation is being used to expand the death penalty.

"Hate is neither a religious nor an American value, and that is why Interfaith Alliance praises the Senate for passing this hate crimes prevention bill," stated Interfaith Alliance president Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy. "Even as we applaud the Senate, we



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DANCING IN THE DARK

Vote early and vote often for Tom DeLay

Forget health care. Forget the economy. Forget John and Kate plus the eight overexposed product of their loins. The biggest story to hit the headlines this month is Texas conservative Tom DeLay being chosen as a contestant on ABC's *Dancing With the Stars*.

Let the side-step jokes begin!

I'm not a regular viewer of the wildly popular show pitting accomplished performers against each other while saddled with far less-accomplished partners.

Sounds a little too much like the McCain/Palin ticket for my taste. But apparently I'm pretty much alone in my lack of enthusiasm for the show: *DWTS* won People's Choice awards in 2008 and 2009 for best competition/reality show which, each year since 2005, has at least momentarily reignited stars who once sparkled brightly in the cultural heavens.

The show has its moments, admittedly. I loved the supreme yet somewhat brittle Cloris Leachman giving the judges a taste of the moves a feisty 85-year-old woman still has in her. And the episode where Marie Osmond dropped to the floor like a sack of Mormon potatoes had its drama. Thank goodness she wasn't pregnant at the time.

But . . . Tom DeLay? If *DWTS* producers were looking for an out-of-work Texas politician to include in their cast, they could have aimed higher. Isn't George W. Bush available?

On September 21, DeLay joins fellow *DWTS* contestants Donny Osmond, Kelly Osborne, Michael Irvin, and others intent on trying to recapture their public's imagination one shin splint at a time. How long will it be until The Hammer, as he was not so gently nicknamed during his 25-year career as a Texas then-U.S. Representative, becomes The Hammertoe?

Americans already know DeLay is

light on his feet. It's hard to forget the grace he displayed in his Two-Step around the Constitution while leading the effort to impeach President Bill Clinton for lying about going to war a blowjob.

His Hustle was effective in orchestrating vociferous and borderline violent protests to stop the vote recount during the Bush-Gore showdown in Florida following the 2000 presidential election.

Maybe the former Majority Leader can add the Hammer Time to that dance

culinity. Perhaps DeLay's choreographic calling may touch something deep inside himself that's never been touched before. Maybe viewers will vote to extend his turn on *DWTS* just long enough to get him hooked on the adrenaline of live performance—it's even better than a filibuster. Soon, answering his terpsichorean muse, ol' Tom begins studying with Paula Abdul for a spot with a 21st-century update of the Fly Girls dancers. Soon he's spotted, rail thin and smoking cigarettes, applying for an internship with Houston Ballet, wearing nothing but a dance belt and a halo of cigarette smoke.

It's even feasible that *DTWS* could open up a whole new career for DeLay besides being an unelected spokesperson for conservatism. He could become the Andy Dick of reality television, popping up at a moment's notice on

talk shows and game shows when a real star has to cancel. After he is voted off *DWTS* (because Sara Evans' texting muscles collapsed), DeLay could move on to:

—*Real Housewives of Sugar Land*. We know the homes in Fort Bend County are in frequent need of an exterminator. Full circle.

—*Survivor: Queertown*. Drop him in the middle of Houston's Montrose or Dallas' Cedar Springs and see how long he can can-can.

—*Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* After all, was that not the underlying theme to most of DeLay's political career?

In any case, charge your cell phone: there may be an advantage to keeping DeLay on *DWTS* as long as possible. After all, if he's busy rehearsing the proper execution of the Paso Doble, maybe he's too busy to talk to the media about the threat of same-sex marriage on polite society.

And that's something to dance about. ■

How long will it be until The Hammer, as he was not so gently nicknamed during his 25-year career as a Texas then-U.S. Representative, becomes The Hammertoe?

litany, a double-time shifty side-step he performed in 2006 when he resigned from Congress following charges of corruption.

But whatever you do, don't confuse DeLay's being light on his feet with being light in the loafers. When it was announced that he would be joining the *DWTS* cast for its ninth season, DeLay held a dance shoe and scoffed on MSN-BC's *Hardball with Chris Matthews*:

"Look at this shoe. A Texan doesn't wear a shoe like this. This is what they're makin' me wear. It's a little pump with high heels."

Asked about his costuming, he also said to Chris Cuomo on ABC's *Good Morning America*:

"I don't know about sequins. Sequins and pink."

Because we all know that sequins and pink and a little pump with high heels can drain the testosterone right out of a cowboy.

But perhaps DeLay has good reason to fear for his heretofore well-guarded mas-

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by Annise D. Parker

WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

The complete 411 on phoning for city services

Help can be only a phone call away if you know the right numbers. Unfortunately, many people don't know about helplines or are confused about the 211, 311, and 911 helplines.

211 HELPLINE

The United Way of Greater Houston's 211 helpline handled 575,509 calls in 2008. The 24-hour 211 service (211.org) provides free, confidential information and referral for help with food, housing, employment, health-care, counseling, children's and veterans' services, and more.

It also serves as a primary information source during disasters. Disaster services include the Special Transportation Registry, which gathers critical information from people who have special needs and require assistance during an evacuation. Call to register at least 48 hours before a

storm strikes. Help is available in about 150 languages.

311 CITY HELPLINE

Need to report a broken traffic light, pothole, or low water pressure? Call 311 with these and other city service-related issues. City of Houston service representatives will handle your complaint, give it a tracking number, and forward your request to the appropriate department. Using the tracking number, you can call back to check the progress of your request.

A service request form is available online at houstontx.gov/311/311form.html. Phones are answered seven days a week, 6 a.m. to midnight. After midnight, lines are transferred to Utility Maintenance (PWE) for response.

The 311 number, which is used nationally, was created to alleviate the flood of

non-emergency service calls coming into 911 systems.

911 EMERGENCY CALLS

The regional emergency number, 911, should only be used in emergencies. An emergency is any situation that requires immediate assistance from the police/sheriff, fire department, or an ambulance. If you're ever in doubt about whether a situation is an emergency, you should call 911. It's better to be safe and let the 911 call-taker determine if you need emergency assistance.

Call 911 in emergencies, including:

- heart attack or stroke
- house fire
- domestic violence
- burglary, theft, or assault in progress
- car accidents with injuries.

Do not call 911:

- when the power goes out (call

- CenterPoint at 713/207-2222)
- to report a broken fire hydrant (call 311)
- when your water pipes burst (call 311)
- to get a ride to the hospital in a non-emergency situation
- for your pet (go to your vet or 24-hour animal emergency clinics)
- as a prank. (It's against the law.)

The police non-emergency number, 713/884-3131, can be used to request information, contact officers, request an officer to come to your home to take information about a burglary, or for other non-emergency matters.

COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES: 713/696-7900

Harris County offers a wide range of assistance for low-income Houstonians, mostly through its Social Services Division at 9418 Jensen Dr. You must call for an appointment. For more information and preliminary application, see csd.hctx.net/ss_specialassuranceservices.aspx.

Services include:

- county cemetery and indigent burials
- rental and utility assistance
- case management services for low-income and the disabled
- veterans' services (or call the city Office of Veterans, 832/393-0992).

713/368-RIDE (7433)

Harris County's Transit Services Division offers several services for low-income residents, including non-emergency transportation, both shared ride and taxi service. RIDES is a curb-to-curb subsidized program that allows eligible customers and participating agencies to purchase tickets for \$3, half the regular price.

• Taxi service: the cost of this metered same-day service is based on the rate of the meter fare box. Customers may use a maximum of eight tickets on a one-way trip. Same-day trips can be booked 90 minutes in advance.

• The cost of shared ride service is based on the distance from the point of pickup to the destination (one to seven tickets for a one-way trip). Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.

A candidate for Houston's mayor in the November 3 election, Annise D. Parker is Houston's third-term city controller and one of the highest-ranking openly LGBT-elected municipal officials in the U.S. Her webpage is AnniseParker.com. To receive the controller's newsletter, send an e-mail to annise.parker@cityofhouston.net.

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Shotgun Start: 8:00 a.m.
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AIDS Watch

by Kelly A. McCann

WHEN ANIMALS ATTACK!

New viruses require humans with HIV to take new safeguards

Swine flu, more properly called the H1N1 virus, is a hot topic these days. It is a new never-before-seen-in-humans, strain of the influenza A virus, subtype H1N1. This new "bug" is actually a novel combination of four strains of flu, two of which are endemic in pigs, one is prevalent in birds, and the last is common in humans. So you can see calling it "swine flu" is not quite accurate, but it rolls off the tongue easier than its official name.

The H1N1 virus was first identified in humans in the United States and Mexico in April of this year, but it quickly spread around the globe. On June 11, Dr. Margaret Chan, director-general of the World Health Organization, declared H1N1 influenza a Phase 6 (the highest) pandemic, the first time an illness had been elevated to that level since the Hong Kong flu outbreak of 1968.

Locally, last spring we got a small taste of the effect this viral illness can have on a community. We saw multiple school closings in response to the flu, resulting in hundreds of Houston children having to miss vital classroom instruction days. In addition, many people altered travel plans and limited their attendance at crowded public events or social engagements. As we approach the start of another flu season, we should ready ourselves for the likelihood of similar restrictions as well as other limitations which may have an even more significant impact on our daily lives.

While no vaccine is currently available for H1N1, the CDC reports that 120 million doses of swine flu vaccine will be ready for Americans in late October. The problem is that 160 million of our citizens have been identified as priority recipients. The priority list includes pregnant women, caregivers of small children, persons six months to 24 years of age (because swine flu has been hitting hardest among those age groups), and adults over the age of 24 who have a chronic illness, like say, HIV/AIDS.

Federal medical officials are recommending that persons with HIV get a seasonal flu shot and a swine flu vaccine when they become available. Such a double-barreled approach will hopefully keep healthy those with compromised immune systems who are thus more susceptible to H1N1. So if you are infected with HIV, please consult your doctor right away and discuss getting yourself immunized against this year's potentially serious influenza.

Now, onto another new disease-y topic:

the discovery and documentation of the first human infected with a new strain of HIV that comes from gorillas. Most Americans living with HIV are infected with a strain of the virus that originated in chimps. The conventional wisdom is that Simian Immunodeficiency Virus (SIV), which infects chimps, mutated into a form that could infect humans sometime between 1884 and 1924. It is believed the first transmission occurred as a result of a person eating bush-meat (insert your own lesbian joke here), as chimp, monkey, and gorilla flesh are called in Africa.

The human in question is a 62-year-old woman from Cameroon who is currently living in Paris. Doctors have determined her HIV closely resembles SIVgor, a form of SIV recently discovered in wild gorillas that inhabit western Africa. The infected woman claims she had no contact with apes, or their meat, so scientists do not believe this is a case of direct gorilla-to-human transmission. Rather, researchers have concluded she most likely contracted the virus via sexual transmission from another infected human.

The origins of SIVgor are not yet known. It could be that it is a form of SIV that developed independently of the strain that infects chimps, or it could be that chimp SIV was transmitted to both gorillas and humans and resulting mutations occurred.

Regardless of the origin of this new strain, there is good news. For starters, the infected woman is not symptomatic, nor does she show any signs of an impaired immune system despite being HIV-positive for more than five years. More good news is that scientists believe this new strain of HIV replicates in much the same way as the more common strain of HIV. Thus, they are hopeful the new strain will be similarly susceptible to current antiretroviral therapies.

Both swine flu and gorilla HIV are illustrations of how viral mutation happens, how viruses may jump from one species to another, and how such new strains can impact humans. Moreover, these two illnesses should serve to remind us of why it is so important to track infectious diseases and be watchful for emerging variants. Our health and our future may depend upon it.

Kelly A. McCann is the chief executive officer of AIDS Foundation Houston. To learn more about swine flu symptoms, prevention, and treatment recommendations for persons living with HIV/AIDS, please visit the CDC's website at www.CDC.gov or contact AFH at 713/623-6796.



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PastOut

by Donalevan Maines

11 YEARS AGO IN 'OUTSMART'

SEPTEMBER 1998

Miss America Kate Shindle, in town to accept Woman of the Year honors at the Huff Fund Awards for helping fight the war on AIDS, helped stock shelves at Stone Soup pantry.

Miss Camp America celebrated its 30th anniversary with comedian **Danny Williams**, direct from San Francisco, emceeing the "Spice Up Your Life" pageant at the University of Houston.

Former Miss Burbank Debbie Reynolds followed her role as the mother of Kevin Kline's gay schoolteacher in *In & Out* by selling out her show at The Grand 1895 Opera House in Galveston months in advance.

One-time Miss Gay Houston, Miss Gay Texas USofA, and Miss Gay Continental **Kelly Lauren** starred in *Sex*, the 1920s comedy by Mae West, at The Little Room Downstairs Theater.

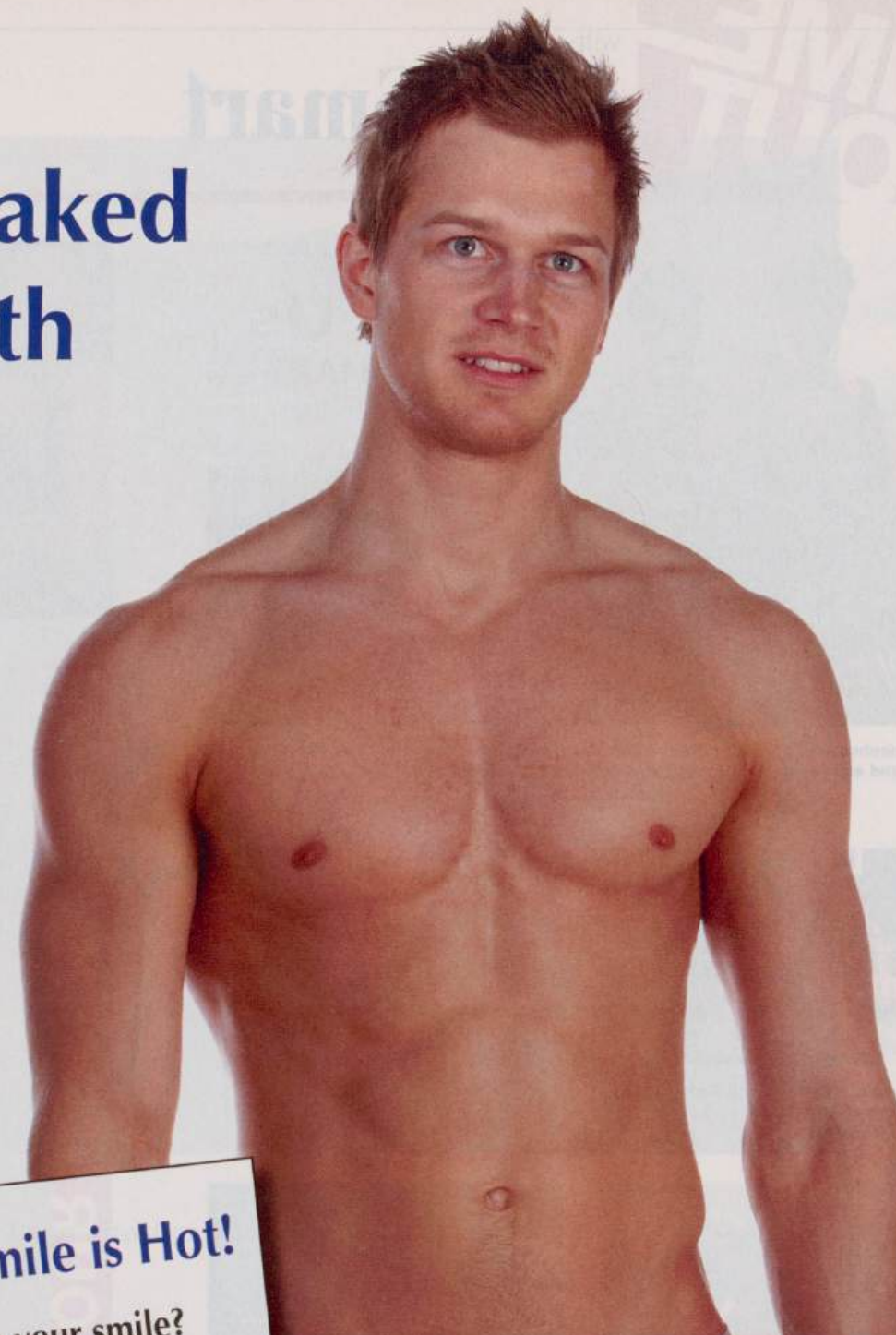
Ray Hill portrayed—who else? Ray Hill!—in the one-man show *The Prison Years* at Actors Workshop of Houston. **Steven Foster** advised, "Ray Hill brings a gentle, often wisdom-laden wit to a life that includes, but is not limited to, coming out as a gay man in a Galena Park high school in 1958, making a detour into a Lone Star slammer in 1970, and eventually becoming one of the city's most colorful activists."

As the Fall Fun League began, the Basic Brothers team returned from the Gay Softball World Series in Atlanta ranked eighth out of 28 teams. **Tina Burgos**, the only female player on the team, was honored as Most Valuable Player of the league. Her teammates included **Greg Adams**, **Bill Bland**, **Gino Chelakis**, **Mike Flanigan**, **Mark Friden**, **Richard Gay**, catcher **Lloyd Haddad** (Most Improved Player), **Stephen Haddock**, **Rick Hall**, shortstop **Bob James** (aggressive despite a plaguing knee injury), **Bruce Metsker**, **Leo Serrata**, and **Alfred Trevino**.

Also in September 1998, bicyclists pedaled to prepare for Texas' first-ever AIDS ride in October, 575 miles from Austin through Houston to Dallas over seven grueling days, to raise at least \$3 million from individual donors for more than 40 AIDS organizations throughout the state.

Donalevan Maines also writes about the Emmys in this issue of OutSmart.

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Hugh Shannonhouse (l) and Mark Carter while on a mountain bike vacation. "We rode the train to Arizona and enjoyed riding the mountains in Sedona . . . a great trip . . . and never without OUTSMART."



Kim Mares, Kyle, Stephanie, and Rachel took OUTSMART on vacation in April. "We rock in Tahoe !!!"



Greg Whitton took OUTSMART to Geiranger, Norway. "What a beautiful trip! . . . The white dot above my right shoulder in the lake is our cruise ship! We are 1,500 meters above sea level."

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Nu-Cuts Hair Salon owner Celina Arzola put her scissors down long enough to join husband Orlando on a family vacation this summer to Hawaii.



Blase DiStefano, OUTSMART entertainment editor, hobnobbed with legendary comedian Joan Rivers at a post-show reception on August 7. Rivers appeared at Hobby Center for the Performing Arts in conjunction with the Brilliant Lecture Series, "a nonprofit committed to inspiring the greater Houston community, especially youth, with uplifting stories of perseverance."

Photo by Dalton DeHart

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

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Check out these fabulous events co-sponsored by OUTSMART and our marketing partners.

Sept 10: OUT@TUTS Night with Grease. After the performance mingle with the cast and listen to fabulous cabaret music with your LGBT friends at Artista. INFO: TUTS.com/out

Sept 19: Sing For Hope, An Evening of Art Songs & Arias. The Wortham Center, Cullen Hall. Concert at 8 p.m. Benefitting Bering Omega. INFO: BeringOmega.org

Sept 26: Lazarus House 2nd Annual Golf Scramble. Herman Park Golf Course. INFO: Danielle Sampey-713/526-5071 or email: questions@TheLazarusHouse.org

Sept 30: Legacy Annual Luncheon Benefitting Legacy Community Health Services. The Wortham Theatre Grand Foyer. INFO: Michael Mandola-713/574-9736 or email: mmandola@LegacyCommunityHealth.org

SAVE THE DATE

Oct 1: OUT@TUTS Night with Meet Me In St. Louis. INFO: TUTS.com/out

Oct 11: Decadent Dessert and More. INFO: Assisthers.org

Oct 24: Houston Pride Band pOpera Concert. INFO: Houstonprideband.org



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Miss America . . .

All Over Again



Far from ugly: Vanessa Williams is the epitome of glamour—and deviousness—as Wilhelmina Slater on ABC's *Ugly Betty*, which moves to Fridays this season.

With—or without—an Emmy, VANESSA WILLIAMS is a champion

by Blase DiStefano

Photo by Andrew Eccles/ABC

Vanessa Williams made history 26 years ago this month when she became the first black woman to win the title of Miss America. Toward the end of her reign, some scandalous photos surfaced, and she resigned. The photos were offered to *Playboy*, but Hugh Hefner declined to publish them, saying, “Vanessa Williams is a beautiful woman. There was never any question of our interest in the photos. But they clearly weren’t authorized, and because they would be the source of considerable embarrassment to her, we decided not to publish them. We were also mindful that she was the first black Miss America.” However, Bob Guccione, publisher of *Penthouse*, had no such qualms and published the photos. Rather than pursue a lawsuit, Williams chose to go forward with her life, which was apparently a wise decision.

Within a few years, she released her debut album, *The Right Stuff*, and received three Grammy nominations. She would go on to receive 13 more nominations and sell millions of albums. Of her most recent album, *The Real Thing*, Williams says, “After playing a power-hungry character like Wilhelmina Slater on *Ugly Betty* on a soundstage for three seasons, it was a pleasure to step back into the recording studio and be myself behind the microphone.”

In 1994 Williams debuted on Broadway in *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, and in 2002 she was nominated for Tony and Drama Desk awards

for her performance in Stephen Sondheim’s *Into the Woods*.

During this period, she appeared in numerous feature films, including *Harley Davidson and the Marlboro Man*, *Eraser*, *Soul Food* (for which she won an NAACP Image Award), *Shaft*, and the recent *Hannah Montana: The Movie*.

Since 1984, Williams has appeared in numerous television shows and television movies and miniseries. Her Ebenezer Scrooge character in 2001’s *A Diva’s Christmas Carol* apparently paved the way for her Scrooge-like character, Wilhelmina Slater, in *Ugly Betty*. Her role in the gay-tinged TV series has brought her three Emmy nominations, the third one being this year; one nomination and two Image Award wins; a Screen Actors Guild nomination; and others too numerous to mention.

In 2008, the gay-friendly star received the “Ally for Equality” award from the Human Rights Campaign. Accepting the award, she said, “This award from the Human Rights Campaign makes me feel like Miss America all over again, because I have championed what I sought out to for the past 25 years. . . . I will always be by your side, because the world you’re creating is the kind of world I want to raise my children in.”

Which brings us to the present. Williams is now working on the fourth season of *Ugly Betty* and is again nominated for an Emmy Award for her role as the cunning, can’t-take-your-eyes-off-of Wilhelmina Slater. →



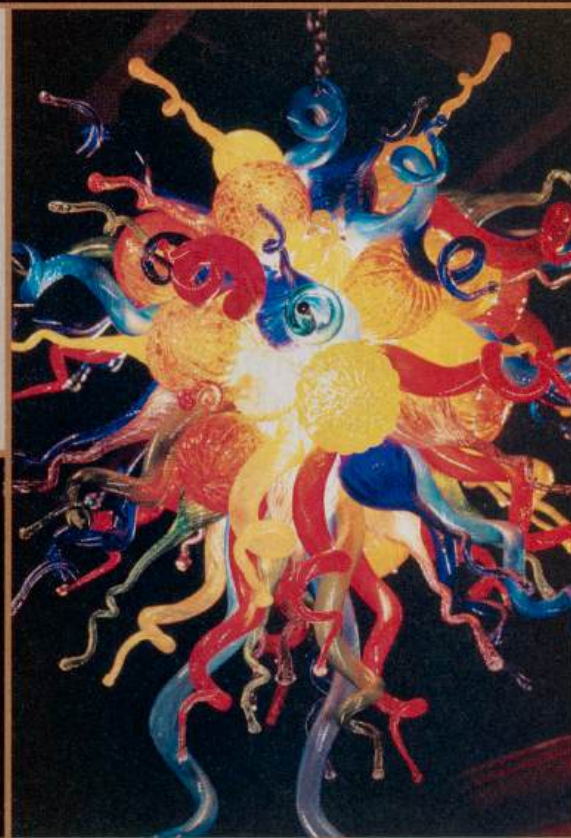
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Miss America...All Over Again continued from page 31

Blase DiStefano: First of all, congratulations on your Emmy nomination. They say the third time is the charm, so let's hope...

Vanessa Williams: Yes, let's hope. Thank you.

Are you in New York?

Yes, we went back to work last week [this interview took place in mid-July].

You're not on the set right now, are you?

No, I have today off.

So, you're having to do this on your day off. Sorry about that.

[Laughs] That's okay.

Are your kids with you?

No. Actually one's in L.A., one's in France, one's in Philadelphia, and one's in the city.

What about Enzo and Willa [her dogs]?

Enzo and Willa are right at my feet. They're my constants.

I don't guess Willa was named after Wilhelmina?

No, my oldest daughter actually named her. She's certainly not a Wilhelmina at all, but she's gorgeous and statuesque and a cutie.

This interview is for our arts and entertainment issue, so you're obviously an appropriate celebrity for the cover, being a singer and an actress who has appeared in movies, on television, and on Broadway. If you had to choose one, which would it be?

I would say Broadway is probably the culmination of all my talents together—singing, acting, dancing, and being in front of a live audience. The whole shebang.

What was it like working with Stephen Sondheim [in *Into the Woods*]?

It was fantastic. It wasn't a day-to-day thing, but he definitely was there for our run-throughs and opening night, and he was always a phone call away. I ended up singing for him before we started production. And since then I sang for his 75th birthday party out in L.A. at the Hollywood Bowl. He's a phenomenal talent, and I'm so lucky to have had the opportunity to work with him.

And to top it off you were nominated for a Tony Award. You've been nominated for a variety of awards.

Yes, it's great. I've always wanted to do it all, to be able to do theater and movies and television and music. It all comes from the same source, which is my stage background, so it's great that the acknowledgement has come.

I guess while working on *Ugly Betty*, you don't really have much time to do Broadway.

We only get two months off. Our last day of season three was May 1, and we went back last week. I had my first fitting maybe July 9, and we started shooting July 13. We do 24 shows, and it takes about 10 days per episode to shoot, so it's quite extensive. →



Maybe this time: Vanessa Williams poses on the red carpet at last year's Emmy Awards ceremony. She is nominated for best supporting actress in a comedy (*Ugly Betty*) again this year for the third time in a row. The Emmys air September 20 on CBS.



The heart-throber: she smiles in your face, but watch your back. Wilhelmina Slater (Vanessa Williams) and Marc St. James (Michael Urie) in what looks like a rare moment of camaraderie on *Ugly Betty*. But looks are deceiving. The new season starts Friday, October 9.

Miss America...All Over Again continued from previous page

It shows, because it's one of the most beautiful shows on TV.

Yes, it's like a mini movie. That's why it takes a while.

So your work on the upcoming season will go on until May?

Yep. We shoot for the last week in April, and we always end up going, Oh well. April 26... oh well. April 29... oh well. April 30... oh well. And our last night was May 1... oh well. [Both laugh]

I read that you attended *The Temptations*, starring Michael Urie [her costar in *Ugly Betty*].

Yes, yes. It was fantastic. I hope that it gets a chance to have a life in a bigger theater, but I think it would be perfect for film. A small intimate film version would be amazing. I had no idea about the nature of the story, and, of course, Michael is brilliant in it, and the entire cast is really talented. It's definitely a must see. He's only going to be in it through August, so there's only... I guess this interview comes out in September, but they're talking about filming it as a movie, so your readers could see it then. [The play takes its title from the 1950s code word for homosexual, and tells the story of communist Harry Hay and young Viennese refugee and

designer Rudi Gernreich, founders of the pre-Stonewall gay rights organization, The Mattachine Society.]

If he's working with you all day on *Ugly Betty*, does he do this at night?

Yes. Obviously he's got a stand-in if he can't make it, but he doesn't want to have that happen, and it's been crazy. When we were shooting toward the end of season three, we were shooting some horrible hours, and he would run and do a show and come back in the next day. He was running on fumes toward the end there. But he's an amazing guy, and theater is really his forte. He can do anything.

Like you. So what are the hours like? Are they that extensive?

Yes, it depends on what we're shooting. For instance, if we block-shoot three of my scenes in an office, that's all day in the office, and it's a lot of coverage, but it's pretty easy. But if you are doing a walk-and-talk, and we've got to go from my office all the way to the elevator, and then we've got a big scene with everybody on the *Mode* staff in the conference room, it could go 14 hours sometime. The worst day I had was when I had a 5:30 call and I finished at 1 a.m. That was the worst that it ever got.

Well, at least you would be dressed up in those gorgeous clothes. Would you like to take a few of those home?

I've taken a couple of pretty, simple dresses and bought them in a different color to wear for a press event or something. But a lot of Wilhelmina's suits are vintage Thierry Mugler, so they have been tailor-made or custom-altered to fit me. Some of them have original shoulder pads, as you can tell, which gives it the entire power-suit look. But it definitely gives Wilhelmina a memorable and notable silhouette.

Pat Field and her whole design team are fantastic. She's really incredible, a creative genius. Even though it's the same team, our characters don't look like *Sex and the City*. And they don't look like anything else that she does. She's fantastic.

You were the first guest on *The Wendy Williams Show* a few weeks ago, and your mother was in the audience. Are you pretty close with your family?

Oh yes. My mom lives about four miles from me, and I live in my hometown [Millwood, New York]. →



Williams & Williams: pals Vanessa Williams and Wendy Williams yuck it up on *The Wendy Williams Show*. Williams (Vanessa) was the first guest on the July 13 premiere of Williams' (Wendy) syndicated talk show.

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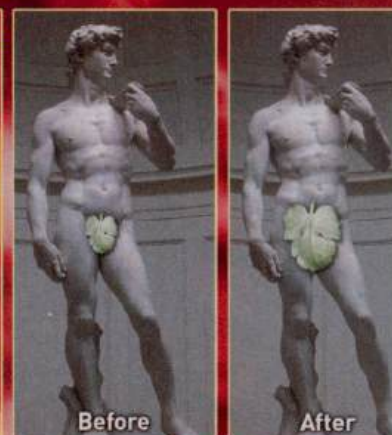
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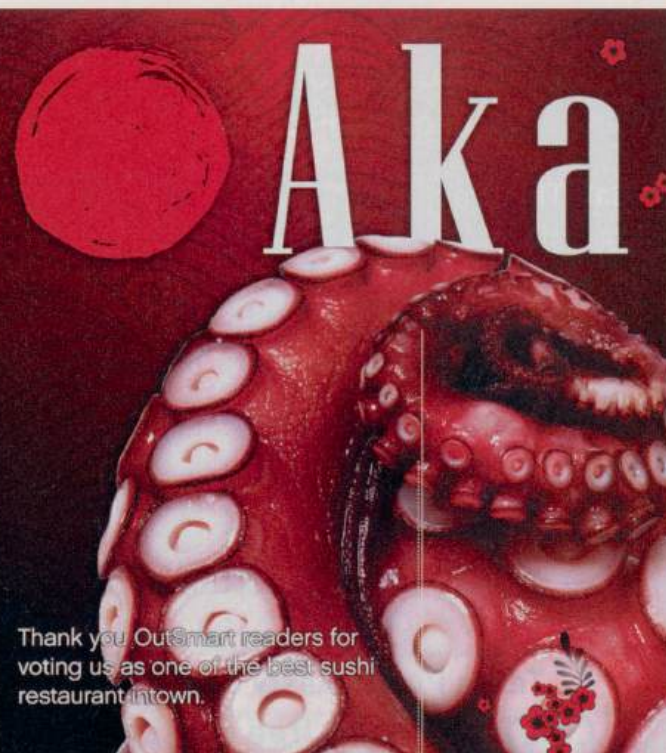
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Miss America...All Over Again

continued from page 34

But you had moved to California . . .

I lived in L.A. from 1985 to 1992 and then moved back here. At that time I only had two girls. Since I've been back here, I had my son and Sasha, who's nine. Definitely part of the move was to come back to the East Coast, so my parents could be part of raising my kids, since my career was active and I wanted to make sure that they had a great home base. Also I knew the schools here since I've gone to them, so there was no guessing game. They are great public schools. I think it was the right choice.

You attended Logo's New Now Next Awards this year and the GLAAD Awards last year and this year, and I know you're a supporter of gay rights. What was your first memory of meeting some-one gay?

I think my mom knew a couple that were—one was a teacher . . . both my parents are teachers—one was a teacher and his partner was a hairdresser. I would say that was the first memory. Also we had a great family friend who was a lawyer who was always single and had fabulous apartments and bought a Porsche—didn't know how to drive it but loved the way it looked [both laugh]—and my dad taught him how to drive a stick shift. He was just a lovely, lovely guy. My parents would co-host a pig roast yearly with him. He bought me my first bottle of Opium perfume . . . always fabulous grown-up gifts that made me feel like a mature woman, when I was only in high school.

Apparently your parents were pretty open.

Oh absolutely. Gay men love my mother. She's witty and way more biting than I am—she's Wilhelmina without any stress. Watch out for her and her quips. She's way more hardcore than I am. My dad was one of those great open, loving men that accepted people for who they were. He was the greatest example of being secure and honest and completely open and accepting.

Sounds like a great family.

Yes, I was lucky. Also, growing up as a dancer and in the theater, I don't remember a time that I didn't have gay friends. Even when they're not out—you look back [to] the male friends that would hang around the group of girls, and they were all doing



We're glad: Vanessa Williams was a presenter at the 20th Annual GLAAD Media Awards in March. BELOW: Vanessa Williams and Wendy Williams pose on the red carpet at Logo's 2009 New Now Next Awards.



fabulously well, and nobody was out, but you just knew that they were cool and got along with us.

So I guess gay marriage to you is like, Oh, bring it on.

One of my dear friends—I wear his clothing all the time—Carmen Marc Valvo [see his photo in SceneOut on page 122] and his partner Christian have been together for 32 years now. I've got another couple that's raising two sons outside of Syracuse that I went to Syracuse University with, and Dave and Al have been together for 26 years already. These are people that are in successful, committed relationships and did a hell of a lot better than I did in both of my marriages. [Both laugh] Hats off!

How did it feel to be the first black Miss America? Did it even matter to you?

It mattered once I realized what an impact it was going to make. I didn't set out to make history, but when you see that it had an incredible effect on people that never thought they'd see it in their lifetime, that's when you say, "Wow, this is major." →

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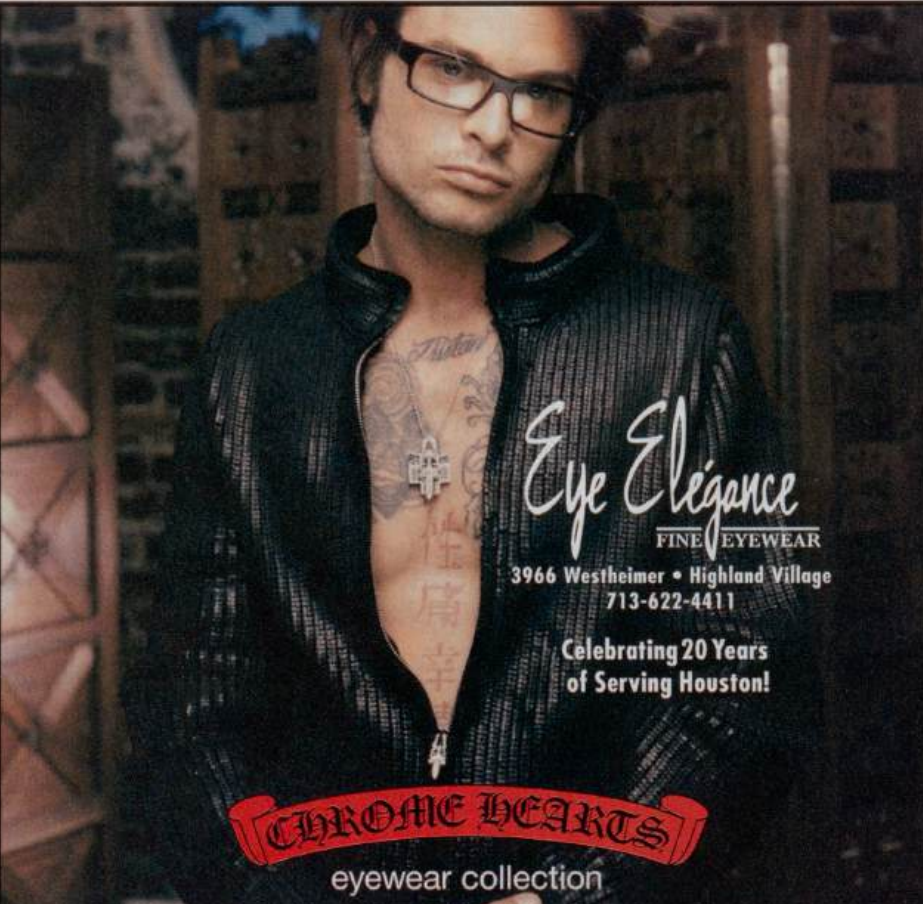
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Miss America...All Over Again

continued from page 37

I know that you received hate mail and death threats. What was that like for the family?

My parents were fantastic. My mom's a rock. They made me aware but sheltered me as much as they could. This was back in 1983, so a lot has changed, thank God, but then again you look at the news and you say, "Wow, nothing has changed either." It is what it is, and you just live your life and do the best that you can.

I know that our time is running out, so I decided to save the best for last.

[Giggles]

Tell me about your recent CD.

It's the first on Concord Jazz, which is



a great label. They allowed me to basically do what I wanted to and not have to worry about, "Oh, do you have a single for the radio?" It's kind of

a Latin jazz sensual take on some classics. There's one song that's an old Lena Horne song called "Come on Strong" that just reminded me of what Wilhelmina would be singing at this point in her life. [Both laugh] And then the others are kind of reflective. It's a mature-sounding record—I'm 46 years old—for where I am at this point in my life.

Do you have time for one more question? Sure.

Do you have any idea who you are sandwiched between on the Hollywood Walk of Fame?

Ooh, gosh, I don't know.

Then who would you like to be sandwiched between?

[Laughs] I know I'm in a prime position in front of the door of the Roosevelt Hotel, so I get a lot of traffic. I don't know whether Lena Horne has a star. Eartha Kitt, Diahann Carroll—those are all women that have paved the way for me, that are beautiful, talented, and strong and have persevered, and those are the women that I love and admire.

The fourth season of *Ugly Betty* starts with a two-hour premiere at 7 p.m. on Friday, October 9, on ABC. See more on the Emmys on page 83.

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OUTSMART'S 2009 Fall Arts Preview

by D.L. Groover



Collage
by Caleb Smith

Last year's fall arts season became, as the season cooled, one of the hottest in years. We can't predict the weather for fall '09, but from what's on the schedule, we think Houston's on another roll. It can't miss with these hotties: an incestuous Jackie-O, an Amazon fertility rite, sexed-up high school greasers, randy sailors on shore leave, two French whores, Victorian rough trade, a psychopathic clown, a man-eating plant, a Judy Garland clone, one chaste super-clean English-speaking nanny, a gay priest, dead people sitting in folding chairs, singing nuns, and a big blond German who turns into a swan. Do yourself a favor, get out to a theater or gallery. It just might make *you* hot.

House of Yes

THROUGH SEPTEMBER 12

There's a perfectly good reason why fiancées don't like to meet potential in-laws—and you'll learn even more reasons in Wendy MacLeod's deep dark comedy about a deep dark all-American family with their black secrets. Madness and sexual perversity go hand-in-hand in this Freudian Gothic when innocent Lesly meets the Pascals, who have an unhealthy obsession, to say the least, with the Kennedys. Watch out for anyone wearing a pink pillbox hat.

Country Playhouse, 12802 Queensbury Lane. 713/467-4497.

Stiletto "O"s

THROUGH OCTOBER 25

When somebody says wooden shoes, you think Holland, don't you? The land of dikes has nothing on Omar Angel Perez, whose wooden creations would give splinters to Manolo Blahnik. Wicked and stylized, his sky-high pumps deconstruct the fetish and the pain our poor sisters endure with their strap-ons, sling backs, and wedges. Perez

accessorizes his fantasy footwear with feathers, Swarovski crystals, snakeskin, and band saw blades curled seductively up one's calf. Pain and pleasure will have you swooning and begging for Dr. Scholl's. Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, 4848 Main. 713/529-4848.

The Lighter Side of the Recession

SEPTEMBER 3–NOVEMBER 21

A two-parter from the loonies at Radio Music Theatre. The first act is their own brand of patented sketch comedy that deals

with the current economic climate. And the second act is a little gem starring the incomparable Fertles of Dumpster, Texas. All the characters—and there are many—are played by the trio of comic geniuses that comprise RMT: Steve Farrell, his wife Vicki Farrell, and Rich Mills. If you've suffered lost revenue or future earnings, you'll leave RMT richer and laughing like a fool. Radio Music Theatre, 2623 Colquitt. 713/522-7722.

The Wayside Motor Inn

SEPTEMBER 4–26

American writer A.J. Gurney, perhaps in a nod of homage to English playwright Alan Ayckbourne, who likes to mix up time and space (usually at the same time), took up the concept in 1977 and juggles just as deftly. Five pairs of travelers check into a motel: lovers out for a tryst, mom and dad visiting their married daughter, a lonely salesman, overbearing father and son on the way to a college interview, and a doctor wanting a divorce. The set stays the same as the people in the room change—how's that as a comment on American life? Theatre Southwest, 8944-A Clarkcrest. 713/661-9505.

The House of the Spirits

SEPTEMBER 5–OCTOBER 11

Caridad Svich's stage adaptation of Isabel Allende's sprawling, multi-generational novel of love, power, and political horrors in an unnamed South American country opens in its English-language premiere—her Spanish version of *House* recently premiered in New York City. It promises to be a theatrical event. Highly regarded as translator, author, and playwright, Svich has recast Allende's highly powerful work and doesn't use any of the original text. "This is another beast entirely," she said before the New York premiere, as she explained her personal method of adaptation. "It's very much my response." Prepare to be moved. Main Street Theatre, 2540 Times Blvd. 713/524-6706.

Grease

SEPTEMBER 8–20

Although no high school on earth remotely resembles Rydell High, the loveable losers who buck the establishment at every turn—and just want a quick feel at the drive-in—speak to the anarchistic teen in all of us. For all its bad-boy attitude, the show's a hymn to conformity. Creators Jim

Jacobs and Warren Casey made an instant classic and then never did anything of note again. But their one-hit wonder went on to be the longest-running show on Broadway at the time, spawned two films, innumerable touring editions, and countless regional revivals. I guess there are worse things they could have done. Theatre Under the Stars. Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, 800 Bagby. 713/558-TUTS(8887).

On the Town

SEPTEMBER 10–13

Musical queens are positively giddy at the thought of Paul Hope's annual Bayou City Concert Musicals production this year: Betty Comden, Adolph Green, and Leonard Bernstein's classic show from 1944. This is one of the greats (and the only show I know adapted from a ballet, Jerome Robbins's *Fancy Free*, with music by Bernstein that premiered at [American] Ballet Theatre earlier that year). Three sailors on leave have 24 hours to experience NYC—you know, "the Bronx is up, the Battery's down, the people ride in a hole in the ground." They, of course, after meeting three eager gals, experience much more than a subway ride. Energetic, youthful, and ever fresh. →



Ian Cassidy in Stanton Welch's *Elements*. See *Without Boundaries* on page 43.
Photo: Pam Francis

2009 Fall Arts Preview continued from previous page

Heinen Theatre at Houston Community College, 3517 Austin. 713/465-6484.

Manon

SEPTEMBER 10-20

Based on Massenet's 1884 opera, this adult ballet by English choreographer Kenneth MacMillan doesn't use a note of music from that work. Instead it draws upon Massenet's rich Victorian-era catalog that includes oratorios, operas, and orchestral suites, all with swirling, sensuous melodies for which the Frenchman was duly famous. The music works brilliantly, describing not-so-innocent Manon as she free-falls through Parisian society, until degraded and penniless, she dies an outcast in the wilds of Louisiana. Like Sir Kenneth's other full-lengths, it's a ballerina's dream role, requiring as much acting ability as languid toe work. Houston Ballet. Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas. 713/227-2787.

The Trilogy: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

SEPTEMBER 11-12

Most of Mozart's sublime music already dances, but choreographer Dominic Walsh

mixes it up with his signature movement, theatrical flair, and great eye for intriguing stage pictures as his company dances al fresco and free. Sarasota Ballet, the company on whom Walsh created the first part of the trilogy, "Wolfgang for Webb," performs part I, the Dominic Walsh Dance Theatre troupe performs the second part, "Amadeus for Anita." Both companies join forces for the finale, "Mozart." Designer Libbie Masterson created the luminescent icebergs, and company heroic dancer Domenico Luciano designed the period-infused costumes. Miller Outdoor Theatre, 100 Concert Drive. 713/284-8351.

Seven Guitars

SEPTEMBER 19-OCTOBER 18

This is the fifth work in August Wilson's monumental 10-drama series that chronicles the American black experience during the 20th century—one play for each decade. *Guitars* represents the '40s, and it's Wilson at his most Chekovian, full of autumnal regrets for what might have been and wistful hopes for the future. It's also about music and how it plays with and through people, the main character being a flawed musician who is very much dead at the beginning of the drama. This

rich, satisfying work is much more than the solving of a mystery, though, for Wilson delves into his patented brand of magic realism, Belasco-type slice of life, and flights of poetic wordplay that weave these seven people into a complex emotional tapestry. But be careful, once you've been touched by Wilson's brand of theatricality, all other plays seem strangely lacking. Ensemble Theatre, 3535 Main St. 713/524-6706.

Southern Rapture

SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 18

Eric Coble has got to be the only playwright born in Scotland who grew up on a Navajo reservation. That may explain his many works that deal with wacky characters out of their natural element. Remember *The Dead Guy*, his extreme take on reality TV, where the audience votes on how the contestant should die? Well, this comedy from 2008 parodies the not-so-heavenly real-life controversy when North Carolina's Charlotte Repertory Theater put on Tony Kushner's gay fantasia *Angels in America*. All hell broke loose. The city was in an uproar, the actors faced police arrest, and the company fielded real threats and financial ruin. Coble takes the usual suspects and runs wild—and wicked. And,

for shame, Charlotte's known as the Queen City. Stages Repertory Theatre, 3201 Allen Parkway. 713/527-0123.

EDITOR'S NOTE: for more on Southern Rapture, see page 57.

Il Tabarro and Pagliacci

SEPTEMBER 24, 25, 26; OCTOBER 1, 2, 3

Italian ace opera composer Giacomo Puccini (*Madama Butterfly*, *Tosca*) didn't invent *verismo*, but, boy, did he refine it. Kings, gods, and other fancy types in those daffy Bellini waxworks and those highflying Rosinni warblers were banished, and in their place arose "real" people, somewhat like TV soaps of their day. Sex, scandal, violence, and more sex were the Jerry Springer ingredients for this successful genre, and the Italian public lapped it up like gelato. We still do. Of course, it helps if the music's good, which is a no-brainer when it comes to Puccini and his slice-of-life-on-a-Parisian-barge little shocker, *Il Tabarro*. Leoncavallo's *Pag* is a "heavy breather," a late-19th century form of stage realism akin to a Tarantino movie today. It's a backstager about adultery among a troupe of traveling performers. One of opera's most famous tenor arias, "Vesti la giubba" ("Put on the costume") graces this work, as Canio transforms into his clown character while his heart breaks over his wife's infidelity. Short and violent, *Pag* packs a wallop. Opera in the Heights, 1703 Heights Blvd. 713/861-5303.

Without Boundaries

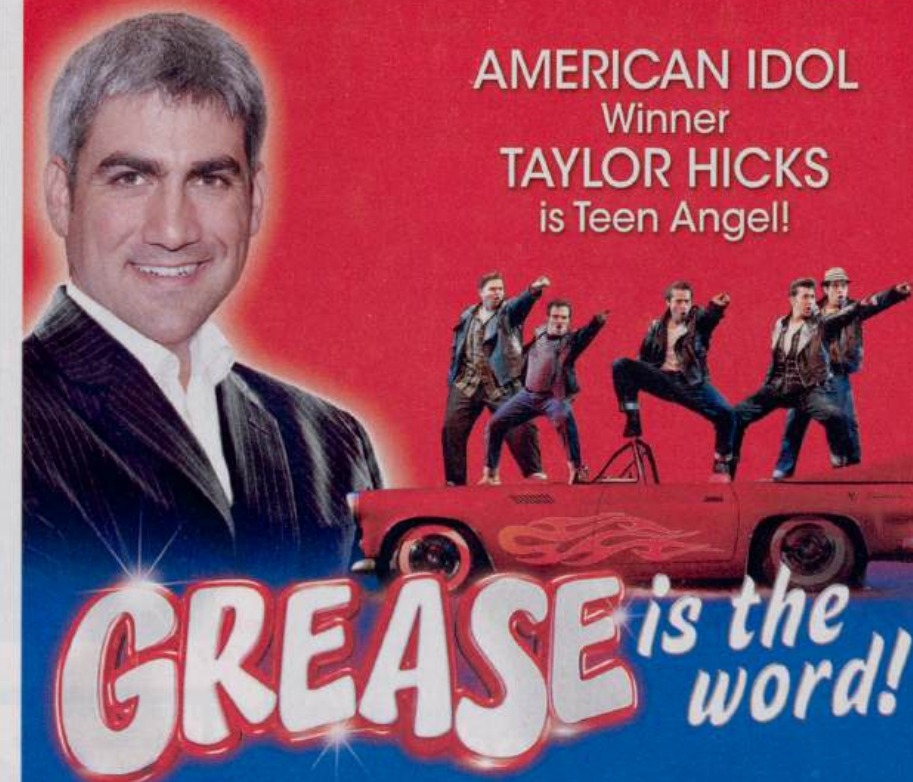
SEPTEMBER 24-OCTOBER 4

Eight women in black sleeveless leotards undulate, twitch, and glide through Czech master choreographer Jiri Kylian's *Falling Angels* (1989). Set to the heartbeat of Steve Reich's hypnotic "Drumming, Part I," the abstract piece with its semaphore movement connotes mystery, romance, and a cryptic feminine beauty. Sly Kylian once said that the piece was about "our profession," whatever that means. Pulsing rhythm of another sort is afoot with Twyla Tharp's sneakers-and-toe shoes propulsive whirlwind *In the Upper Room* (1986), set to an equally energetic Philip Glass score. In this piece of adrenaline, Tharp doesn't use nouns, only verbs—rush, fly, spin, jump! Sharing the program is artistic director Stanton Welch's world premiere *Elements*, using Paul Hindemith's astounding "Four Temperaments" and four of HB's dazzling male dancers to represent earth, wind, air, and fire. As *Chorus Line* so wisely puts it, "Everything is beautiful at the ballet." It's also hot, cool, and shirtless. Houston Ballet. Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas. 713/227-2787. →

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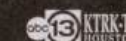
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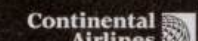
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Morgan Thorson. See *Heaven* on page 47. Photo: Karen Sherman

2009 Fall Arts Preview

continued from previous page

Der Rosenkavalier—Film and Music SEPTEMBER 25, 26, 27

When German filmmaker Robert Wiene (*Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*) adapted Richard Strauss's operatic masterpiece *Der Rosenkavalier* in 1926, the movies weren't talking, let alone singing. But that little impediment never stopped the movies. There was always an orchestra in the big movie palaces, if not a grand organ, or at least a piano and/or violin to play along, even when musicals were made into silent movies. Wiene, the preeminent filmmaker working in Vienna, convinced the maestro and librettist Hugo von Hofmannsthal to collaborate, and both eagerly agreed. Strauss liked the money. Hofmannsthal added characters (the Marchallin's husband), and Strauss slashed his radiant score to a more reasonable length, but added a march not in the opera. Strauss even conducted the Dresden film premiere, although he made a mess of it—apparently the movie ended way before the orchestra did. Once thought lost, the film has been restored by the Filmarchiv Austria and Channel ARTE. At the symphony, the role of Strauss will be played by maestro Hans Graf, but I guarantee the film and music will end at the same time. Houston Symphony. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. 713/224-7575.

15th Annual Weekend of Texas Contemporary Dance

SEPTEMBER 25, 26, 27

This mesmerizing festival that throws the spotlight squarely on our Lone Star State's sterling array of mighty fine contemporary dance takes the light beautifully. Among the numerous companies and choreographers strutting their stuff are gravity-defying Amy Ell, Freneticore and its dance-on-film *Tetjusin*, CORE Performance Company with Polly Motley's *Charmed Romantics*, the Metropolitan Dance Company in Caleb Mitchell's *Stirring Simple Gifts in Shades of Blue*, Urban Souls Dance Company, HIStory Dance Company, Hope Stone, the American Repertory Ensemble, and REDDance. It's more than a toe-tapping weekend—it's soaring. Free admission. Miller Outdoor Theatre, 100 Concert Drive in Hermann Park. 713/224-3386.

Oliver!

SEPTEMBER 25–OCTOBER 4

One of the great idiosyncratic musicals, Lionel Bart's 1960 adaptation of the Charles Dickens immortal tale of Master Twist and his life in the Victorian London slums deserves that exclamation point. The English music hall approach ("Consider Yourself," "Oom Pah Pah," "Food, Glorious Food") coupled with the faithful adaptation literally re-invented the British musical. It was a must-see in London for

three years before it opened on Broadway in 1963, where it again became the show everyone had to see. Sadly, the fame and fortune didn't last for gay Bart, who in his prime had befriended Noël Coward, Judy Garland, and Princess Margaret. After fame enveloped him—Bart was infamous for often being in a drug-induced haze—he inexplicably sold his rights to the biggest show of the '60s and spent his remaining 30 years desperate for a return to the glory days. Sadly, he never made it. But his show remains, triumphant. Masquerade Theatre. Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, 800 Bagby. 713/861-7045.

Meet Me in St. Louis

SEPTEMBER 29–OCTOBER 11

Theatre Under the Stars has been threatening to bring this adaptation of the classic, gay-friendly 1944 MGM Technicolor cakewalk to the stage for years, but finally the wait is over. Judy Garland, Margaret O'Brien, Mary Astor, Leon Ames, Marjorie Main, even Louise Bremer come alive on stage, or at least their reasonable facsimiles. Previous film-to-stage productions have been pretty lame, so our expectations are fairly low, but how can you go wrong with those infectious Hugh Martin/Ralph Blane songs, "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," "The Boy Next Door," and the Oscar-nominated "Trolley Song." For the love of Judy, please, let this be good. Theatre Under the Stars. Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, 800 Bagby. 713/558-TUTS(8887).

Little Shop of Horrors

SEPTEMBER 30–OCTOBER 31

Cheery and cheesy, Alan Menken and Howard Ashman's funky little musical about nebbish Seymour who sells his soul to a man-eating alien plant to get fame, fortune, and the girl of his dreams positively blossomed off-Broadway after its 1982 premiere. Lovingly knocked off from Roger Corman's bargain-basement 1960 B-movie, this low-rent show with high-rent irony soars, thanks to Ashman's tongue-in-cheek book and lyrics and Menken's soft rock-infused score. The success of *Little Shop* propelled the duo into the waiting arms of Disney, for whom they penned *Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Aladdin*, before Ashman's untimely death in 1991. Texas Repertory Theatre Company, 14243 Steubner Airline Road. 281/583-7573.

A Disaster Beginning

OCTOBER 1–3

The Great Storm roared onto Galveston Island during the night of September 8, 1900, and when the sun rose on a calm →

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Dominic Fortuna and Company. See *Grease* on page 41.
Photo: Joan Marcus

2009 Fall Arts Preview

continued from page 44

morning, the largest city in Texas and America's busiest southern port had been flattened. The hurricane was so powerful that the wind speed on Galveston can only be estimated, for the anemometer blew away after topping out at 100 miles per hour. There were so many dead that to bury them the city dumped the bodies into the Gulf, only to watch them float back to the island. Soon, funeral pyres dotted the beach and the scent of burning bodies floated inland to Houston. It was the greatest natural disaster in U.S. history. Writer Ain Gordon (*Will & Grace*) focuses on one woman survivor whose tale of horror speaks for all. Tony Award-nominated Veanne Cox (*Company*, 1996) portrays the plucky woman. A co-production with DiverseWorks and Pick Up Performance Co(S.), DiverseWorks's co-executive director, Sixto Wagan, explains, "The play is not just about the loss and devastation one feels after a hurricane, but also about the great change that was happening at the turn of the century—change that seems awfully similar to this moment in U.S. history." Barnevelder Movement/Arts Complex, 2201 Preston Street. 713/529-1819.

Romantic Spirit

OCTOBER 3

Schumann, Mendelssohn, Chopin—romantics, my ass! These guys were horn dogs. Crazy Schumann died of syphilis while his wife bedded Brahms, frail Mendelssohn carried an unhealthy torch for his sister Fanny, and Chopin screwed his way through the musical salons of Europe. When these composers' hormones weren't sublimated into their rapturous music,

romance was the farthest thing from their minds. However, we'll dim the lights, set out the incense, array the candles, and bask in the ethereal music making of the Julliard String Quartet as they waft the sublime meodies into our brains and make us giddy. DaCamera of Houston. Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas. 713/524-5050.

Our Town

OCTOBER 7–NOVEMBER 1

Is there another American play that can reduce a hardened, skeptical audience to uncontrollable weeping? That breath of genius wafts through Thornton Wilder's 1938 masterpiece, as the mundane routine of everyday life—even its tired dreams—morphs into the universal. The quiet days in Grover's Corner, New Hampshire, circa 1901 through 1913, carry an import and emotional wallop that Shakespeare would envy. Wilder tapped into a reservoir that remains potent and quivering with insight. Poor Wilder, however, never quivered quite so much, for he defined a generation that remained firmly in the closet, although while writing *Our Town* he had a torrid affair with Samuel Steward, who would later become infamous as the S/M aficionado Phil Andros. What a play that would have been. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas. 713/220-5700.

Vanishing Worlds: Art and Ritual in Amazonia

OCTOBER 9–JANUARY 10

If you ever wondered what an Amazonian male fertility rite entails (and that's the operative word), then paddle your dugout to the Museum of Natural History. If you like feathers, you'll be in heaven. Even with deforestation and the constant en-

croachment of non-indigenous people, there are at least 200 extant Indian tribes along the shores of the mighty Amazon, some whose way of life hasn't changed much since the Paleolithic age. Come celebrate rites of passage and prehistoric ceremony, intricate costumes, even furniture. Diversity reigns, and life in the rainforest bursts forth with exuberant color, exciting graphic design, and weird tribal practices—much like the Montrose on a Saturday night. Houston Museum of Natural Sciences, One Hermann Circle Drive. 713/639-4629.

Doubt: A Parable

OCTOBER 9–24

So, who's telling the truth at St. Nicholas Church School in the Bronx? Free-wheeling Father Flynn, basketball coach deluxe and beloved by the boy students? Or pinched head mistress Sister Aloysius, who suspects the good father of being more than a role model to the impressionable boys? There's a whiff or two of molestation on her mind. He does sport those long fingernails, you know. But she has no proof. The boy's mother would rather have her young son continue at school than be busted and sent back to the ghetto. But didn't Flynn leave his last job under mysterious circumstances? John Patrick Shanley's Tony and Pulitzer Prize winner, among a slew of other awards, keeps you guessing. But then again, he has those long, clean fingernails. Playhouse 1960, 6814 Gant. 281/587-8243.

Diaghilev Celebration

OCTOBER 15–17

If anyone in theater history is responsible for the blast of popularity that dance engendered in the pre-WWI era—and for the most part continues to ride high—it was

Russian impresario Serge Diaghilev. He dazzled Paris, the place any self-respecting artist had to dazzle. To rapturous acclaim, he exhibited Russian portraits in 1905 and staged Mussorgsky's opera *Boris Godunov* in 1908, but his crowning glory was his eye-popping presentation of the Ballets Russes with legendary Nijinsky and Pavlova in 1909. Dance was never the same again. Dominic Walsh Dance Theater celebrates the 100th anniversary of Diaghilev's producing genius with its own distinctive and imaginative look at four epoch-changing works: *The Dying Swan*, *The Firebird*, *Afternoon of a Faun*, and *Le Spectre de la Rose*. Dominic Walsh Dance Theater. Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, 800 Bagby. 713/652-3938 or 713/315-2525.

Heaven

OCTOBER 15–17

Ecstasy in dance takes many forms: sometimes it happens with a fleeting image (the soaring couples at the finale of Balanchine's *Four Temperaments*), dramatic story (the "white acts" of any classical ballet by Petipa), radiant score (Poulenc's *Gloria*), or you can spin around until you get sick (Turkey's whirling dervishes). Collaborating with indie rock band LOW and their distinctive minimalist sound, Minneapolis-based lesbian choreographer Morgan Thorsen goes to heaven, or tries to approach the empyrean through movement, lighting, sound, and costume. We call it theater, but if she can find paradise, we'll be grateful. DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway, Naylor at North Main. 713/223-8346.

Matthew Day Jackson: The Immeasurable Distance

OCTOBER 17–JANUARY 17

Named in 2005 by *New York Magazine* as one of "10 artists most likely to succeed"—and you know how hip and knowing that mag is, so it must be true—Matthew Day Lewis gets an impressive solo show right here at the Contemporary Arts Museum. *NY Mag* called him a sculptor, but he's everything and then some—photographer, painter, printer, maker of exotic mobiles. He's had his trial by fire at the extremely prestigious Saatchi Gallery in London, Texas' Chinati Foundation in Marfa, and been part of the Whitney Biennial in NYC. For this exhibition, I'll let the CAMH brochure inform you, since, like writers of menus, these publications know best how to turn the simple into the inscrutable: "Jackson continues his investigations into human consciousness and explores how positive evolutionary developments in human thought and culture occur under physical or mental stress." It all has something →

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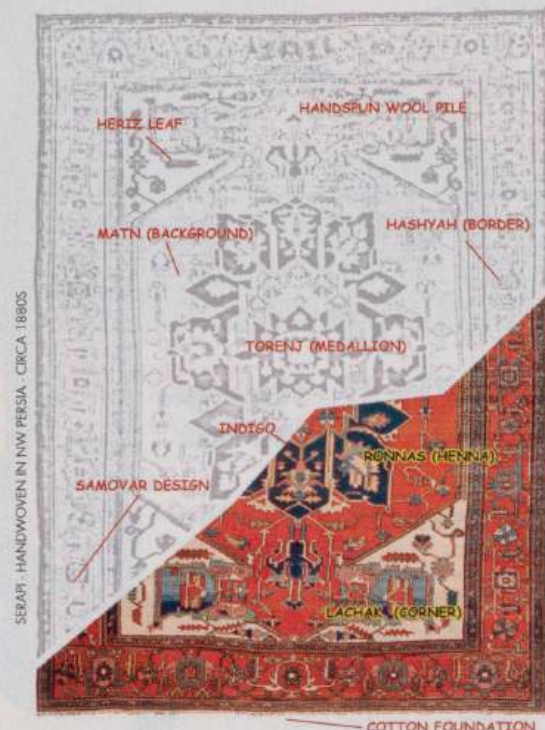


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2009 Fall Arts Preview

continued from previous page

to do with technology taking over, but it's colorful and thought-provoking, whatever it means. Just what art should be. Contemporary Arts Museum, 5216 Montrose Blvd. 713/284-8250.

Gruesome Playground Injuries

OCTOBER 21–NOVEMBER 15

The crisscrossing Klieg lights along Texas Avenue are cause for celebration: the Alley has a world premiere. The first of two this season, Frank Wildhorn's musical, *Wonderland* (as in, "Alice in"), opens in January. This one's penned by young hot playwright Rajiv Joseph, who's already stacked up a tidy little pile of rave notices for *All This Intimacy* and his latest, his "apolitical drama about the Iraqi war" that premiered in LA in May, *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*. If *Injuries*, which examines "why people hurt themselves to gain another's love," warrants half the praise heaped upon *Tiger* by the *LA Times* and other west coast papers, we'll be blessed by a new writer of distinction, vision, and beauty. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas. 713/220-5700.

Mary Poppins

OCTOBER 22–NOVEMBER 8

Really, what can you say except Super-califragilisticexpialidocious? The Disney theatrical juggernaut (*Beauty and the Beast*, *Lion King*, *Little Mermaid*—we'll forget about *Tarzan*) found a kindred spirit in director/choreographer Matthew Bourne (he of the superhit gay ballet version of *Swan Lake*). Bourne seems delighted as a schoolboy to create spirited dances that rush across rooftops or tap upside down across the proscenium. It's quite a production, very much a carbon copy of the classic film, although the penguins are gone. Mary's a bit of a drag—not literally, but wouldn't that be fun—but who could ever really replace Miss Julie's starched charm and irrepressible good manners? Broadway Across America. Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, 800 Bagby, 713/622-7469.

The Elixir of Love

OCTOBER 23–NOVEMBER 7

For all you patrons who go to the opera just to take a long snooze, this comic masterpiece from Gaetano Donizetti should keep you awake. It is charm-filled and never fails to please, as sunny and pleasant as the congenial plot that hopscoches through misplaced jealousy, fake magic potions, and quack doctors. The opera contains one of the most famous of all tenor arias, Nemorino's "Una Furtiva Lagrima" ("A Hidden Tear"), sung when he

realizes that Adina might, in fact, love him. Donizetti sets this "romanza" in a lilting minor key, befitting the sentiment. And if you're keeping score, *Elixir's* one of the few "feminist" operas, wherein soprano Adina owns property, controls her destiny, and buys the contract of the man she loves so he doesn't have to go off to war. Houston Grand Opera. Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas. 713/228-OPERA (6737).

An Evening with Stephen Sondheim

OCTOBER 25

As part of the Notables series at the Society for the Performing Arts, the incomparable theater artist Stephen Sondheim is interviewed by Frank Rich, *New York Times* columnist and its former drama critic. Not exactly a recluse or shrinking violet, Sondheim has been rather stingy about granting interviews, so a chance to hear him live is something rare. In case you've been living under a rock for the past 40 years, Sondheim re-imagined the American musical with such landmark works as *Sweeney Todd*, *A Little Night Music*, *Pacific Overtures*, *Follies*, and *Company*, to say nothing of writing lyrics for the classics *Gypsy* and *West Side Story*. Needless to say, both Sondheim and Rich are gay as fruitcakes. The evening promises to be both educational and entertaining. Society for the Performing Arts. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. 713/227-4SPA. EDITOR'S NOTE: see interview with Frank Rich in the October issue of OutSmart.

Lohengrin

OCTOBER 30–NOVEMBER 15

While the incomparable Richard Wagner composed his medieval romance—which finally convinced conflicted King Ludwig II of Bavaria to bestow imperial munificence upon him—who was he making love to? Wagner was one horny dude and was always busy cheating on or seducing first wife Minna, mistress Jessie Laussot, patroness/mistress Mathilde Wesendonck, second wife Cosima, his maid/mistress Marie, another Mathilde (this time a Mayer), or mistress Judith Gautier. How Wagner ever had time to write anything is a mystery. Fortunately, he didn't let his consuming passion and heavy breathing go to waste, for it's all there, smack in the music. *Lohengrin's* no exception, with its famed "Bridal Chorus" (i.e., "Here Comes the Bride"), though it's more ethereal than usual for the great Teuton—all that "swan" music, don't you know. It's still a great piece of theater, with evil Ortrud, the mezzo role, scurrying around the castle, cursing everything in sight. Houston Grand Opera. Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas. 713/228-OPERA (6737).

Manon

NOVEMBER 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14

You've seen the MacMillan ballet (see September 10), now see what inspired it. Jules Massenet's masterpiece from 1884 sounds very much like the era when it was composed, the filigreed Belle Époque. It's

lacey and swirly, filled with Massenet's patented upswept melodies. The opera's 1884 premiere was a huge success, and ever after the role of dissolute Manon has been a touchstone for reigning divas, such as Sybil Sanderson, Anna Moffo, Beverly Sills, Renee Fleming, and Karita Mattila. You can understand why: you sing ravishing love-fueled arias and duets, wear great clothes and jewels, slut around Paris, and merrily go to hell. Opera in the Heights, 1703 Heights Blvd. 713/861-5303.

Mary Wilson of the Supremes

NOVEMBER 6, 7, 8

If you've ever seen *Dreamgirls*, either the movie or the much better stage version, then you're already familiar with a distillation of our favorite Supreme, Miss Wilson. She's not the snooty Diana-like diva, nor the fat one, but the normal no-nonsense, let's-get-on-with-it mom substitute. When the Supremes finally broke up in 1977, after years without Miss Ross, Wilson went on to a successful life after Motown—recording, touring in musicals, and writing a successful autobiography. Come hear her. She's still a dream. Houston Symphony. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. 713/224-7575.

Cirque Shanghai-Bai Xi

NOVEMBER 7–8

Let's say this once and for all: the best, most pretzel-like, hardest working, biggest smiling contortionists are the Chinese. They come in all shapes and sizes, from →



Adam Gibbs and Tamara Syler.
See *On the Town* on page 41.
PHOTO: Joan Marcus

Stanton Welch
Artistic Director

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Top Image: Amy Fote & Simon Ball in *Manon*
Bottom Image: Ian Casady in *Elements*
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2009 Fall Arts Preview

continued from previous page

the asthenic model to the muscular Mongol, but, boy, can they do things to their bodies that are downright alien, if not out of this world. This super-acrobatic show is modeled upon the phenomenal Canadian franchise Cirque du Soleil, but without its hoity-toidy pretension. You've got your spinning plates, your balance beam, your trampoline pole, your spinning hoops, your teeter totter, all the glitz and color imaginable. How is all this boundless youthful agility going to fit on The Grand's stage? The Grand 1894 Opera House, 2020 Postoffice St. Galveston, TX. 800/821-1894.

Getting Married

NOVEMBER 7–DECEMBER 13

The great 20th-century literary lion George Bernard Shaw delighted in kicking people in the butt. He got his jollies tweaking the complacent, the dull, and the conformist. By dazzling with his wit and flair, he willed them to listen to his rich, cholesterol-laden arguments. This middle-period Shaw from 1908, falling between *Major Barbara* and *Pygmalion*, is one of his plays of ideas, or "disquisitory extravaganzas," as he ceremoniously labeled them. It eschews plot and each act breaks for conversation around one topic—in this case, marriage: the whys and why nots of it. It's a delight just to listen to the plummy phrases, the Oscar Wilde-esque repartee that makes you laugh out loud, and to Shaw's prescient themes of social and gender equality that infuse nearly all his numerous works. The Bridgenorth's youngest daughter is getting married, and the entire family and friends debate, cajole, goad, carp, seduce, and whine about the state of marriage in England. When one of the daughters asks her father, "Then it's a mistake to get married?" He wisely replies, "It is, my dear; but it's a much bigger mistake not to get married." Main Street Theater, 2540 Times Blvd. 713/524-6706.

Trey McIntyre Project

NOVEMBER 13

The magnetic and very tall Trey McIntyre, who danced at the Houston Ballet and was its choreographic associate from 1995 to 2007, launched his own full-time company in 2008 based in Boise, Idaho. His troupe's had a busy year touring all over the place, including a recent engagement in America's dance capital, New York City. As noticed by the sparkling reviews, he hasn't lost the theatrical flair evident in *Second Before the Ground* (1996), *Peter Pan* (2002), or *The Shadow* (2003). Check out his latest work for TMP, (*serious*), set to music by gay musical pioneer Henry Cowell. (Henry Cowell is no doubt the only American musician to serve time at San Quentin Penitentiary. He pleaded guilty to oral copulation of a 17-year-old "friend" in 1936 and served four years of a 15-year sentence. He was fully pardoned in 1942.) Listed as "single and gay," 6' 6" blond McIntyre was selected as one of *People Magazine's* 25 Hottest Bachelors in 2003, and whether McIntyre's still single—or blond—is unknown, but he's still 6' 6". Society for the Performing Arts, Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. 713/227-4SPA.

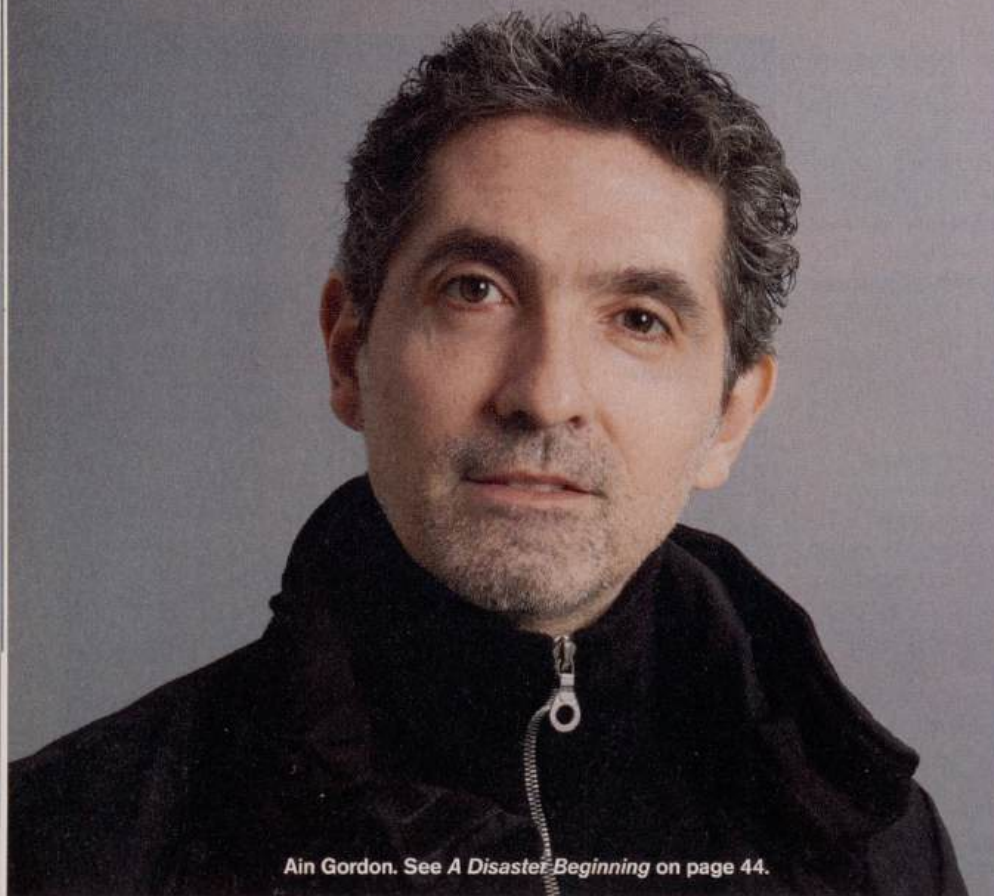
The Nerd

NOVEMBER 13–DECEMBER 19

When life throws you those annoying little curveballs, how do you react? What if it turns out to be a screaming line drive aimed at your head? What if that line drive behaved like Mr. Bean and decided to stick around his new best friend's house for a while? What if he likes to squirt cheese into his mouth, wears an ubiquitous pocket protector for about a hundred leaky pens, and pokes your eyes like one of the Stooges? How long would it take until you decided to kill him? Those questions and others get answered by laughs in →



Created by Omar Angel Perez. See *Stiletto* "O"s on page 40.



Ain Gordon. See *A Disaster Beginning* on page 44.

2009 Fall Arts Preview

continued from previous page

Larry Shue's 1981 frenetic cartoon comedy. Shue's best-known play, *The Foreigner* (1983), was equally manic. He died in a plane crash in 1985. Company OnStage, 536 Westbury Square. 713/726-1219.

Miracle on 34th Street

NOVEMBER 18–DECEMBER 20

Valentine Davies' and George Seaton's wistful Christmas story has been a seasonal classic ever since it originally appeared as a 1947 film, starring Maureen O'Hara, Natalie Wood, and Edmund Gwynn, who won an Oscar for his performance (as did the writers for Best Original Screenplay). Gwynn says he's Santa Claus, young Wood believes him, even though her modern rational mother O'Hara says not to believe in such things. He's tried for being insane, innumerable mailbags are presented as evidence, O'Hara marries her beau, and Wood gets a new house. Merry Christmas, everyone! Texas Repertory Theatre co-founder Craig Miller has adapted the movie for the stage. Could be just what we need this season. Texas Repertory Theatre Company, 14243 Steubner Airline Road. 281/583-7573.

Panto Sleeping Beauty

NOVEMBER 18–JANUARY 3

If this loony English-style "panto" is as

nuts as last year's, then Stages has another holiday full house. With book by Stages Rep artistic director Kenn McLaughlin and music by David Nehls, all we know is that Beauty lives in Houston, her absent father's too busy running his oil conglomerate, her nanny's a former nun who's smitten with the stage, and her boyfriend's left town. No wonder, she sleeps all the time. Everything's over the top, wacky, and camp, just as it should be. Panto rules. Stages Repertory Theatre, 3201 Allen Parkway. 713/527-0123.

A Christmas Carol: The Musical

NOVEMBER 19–21, 27–29

The immortal 1843 "little ghost story of Christmas" by Charles Dickens has been adapted to stage and screen more times than Scrooge says humbug. This 1994 version was an extravaganza put together by Radio City Entertainment to play limited holiday runs on Broadway and featured an all-star, Tony-winning theatrical production team: music by Disney megahit maker Alan Menken (*Beauty and the Beast*), book by Mike Ockrent (*Crazy for You*), lyrics by Lynn Ahrens (*Ragtime*), choreography by Susan Stroman (*The Producers*), sets by Tony Walton (*Pippin*), lighting by Jules Fisher and Peggy Eisenhauer (*Assassins*), and costumes by William Ivey Long (*Grey Gardens*). The seasonal show permanently closed in 2003 and then was filmed for

NBC by Hallmark Entertainment, starring Kelsey Grammer as Scrooge. Since this show is a musical, who better to present it than Masquerade Theatre, Houston's pre-eminent musical theater company, who can reanimate the tired as if by Botox. Hobby Center, 800 Bagby. 713/861-7045.

Rita Rudner

NOVEMBER 21

Like a very fine dry martini, comedian Rudner hits our funny bone with a gradual levity that envelops us before we realize it, until we're flat on the floor and wondering how we got there. She's smart and clever and can cut with a quip that might leave you bleeding if she weren't so nice about it. That's part of her universal appeal. We find her one of the funniest ladies around, along with Dame Edna, of course. The Grand 1894 Opera House, 2020 Postoffice St. Galveston, TX. 800/821-1894.

A Christmas Carol— A Ghost Story of Christmas

NOVEMBER 21–DECEMBER 27

The Alley Theatre's holiday cash cow lifts enough out of Dickens to overcome director/adaptor Michael Wilson's sledgehammer touches—those annoying dancing ghosts have got to go, as well as the drag housekeeper. The principal ghosts who visit old Scrooge are wonderful apparitions, though. Christmas Past is all glittery light and snow, Christmas Present is a holly-encrusted Life force, Christmas Yet To Come rides a bicycle as he's a grave digger employed by Lord Voldemort. Tiny Tim still shouts out his universal Christmas blessing, there's the requisite roiling London fog, and miserly Scrooge redeems himself in time for turkey dinner. The tale works like gangbusters. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas. 713/228-8421.

The Producers

NOVEMBER 27–DECEMBER 20

I know, I know, Mel Brooks's 2001 stage adaptation of his legendary 1968 cult film favorite won an unprecedented 12 Tony awards, which is more than all the awards won by Albee, Williams, Berlin, Sondheim, O'Neill, and Sophocles combined! The low-rent movie, with its handheld moxie and unprofessional sheen, has the cheap, cheesy charm of producer Max Bialystock, but the bloated Broadway show (music by Brooks and Glen Kelly, lyrics by Brooks) is really cheap. (No one pays any attention to the abysmal 2005 film adaptation.) The Broadway show's forgotten its zany progenitor and goes straight for old, old, old Catskills shtick. Brooks takes low-rent down to a new level. The classic movie →

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WHERE: 2300 Ship's Mechanic Row in Galveston at the Mardi Gras Arch in front of the Tremont House historic hotel in downtown Galveston. For more information and to register go to www.galvestonhistory.org or call (409) 765-7834.



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2009 Fall Arts Preview continued from page 52

was kissed by Zero Mostel and a shockingly young Gene Wilder, both of whom no one can replicate, but at least the stage version's an equal-opportunity offender. Roger de Bris, as the Chrysler Building, is stupidly funny no matter how you slice it, and the tap number by the old ladies in walkers is divinely inspired. So you will laugh, even though your brain says stop it. Playhouse 1960, 6814 Gant. 281/587-8243.

The Nutcracker

NOVEMBER 27-DECEMBER 27

Houston Ballet has its own holiday cash cow, as does every other American ballet company—some version of Lev Ivanov's (co-choreographer of *Swan Lake*) 1892 work to Tchaikovsky's most atmospheric score. Former HB artistic director Ben Stevenson gives this classic a Victorian gloss with Desmond Heeley's sumptuous candy-box sets and costumes, and adds comic touches with rodent battlefield nurses and ear-trumpet oldsters during Act I. The Christmas tree grows to prodigious heights, and the Sugar Plum Fairy glistens. Let's not forget those flying cooks in the Kingdom of the Sweets. Houston Ballet. Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas. 713/227-2787.

A Fertile Holiday

NOVEMBER 27-JANUARY 9

Are there any other shows in Houston as consistently funny as those from the loons at Radio Music Theatre? No, and you can bet a little baby owl on it. *Holiday* casts a magic spell all its own for all RMT-heads because it's the show that first introduced the wacky Fertles of Dumpster, TX, 25 years ago. Seems like only yesterday when mom Mildred (Vicki Farrell) baked her first butter pie, when daughter Justicina (Rich Mills) stole everything not nailed down at the Holiday Inn to give as Christmas presents, when Doc Moore (Steve Farrell) spouted his brand of linguistic calligraphy, when slow son Earl (Rich Mills) posed as the TV antenna, when daughter-in-law Bridgett (Vicki Farrell) served up that green-tinged corn casserole. The list goes on—and gets funnier by the year. As you can tell, Farrell, Farrell, and Mills play all the characters, making split-second entrances and exits. With their goofy wit, there is no disappointment within a five-mile radius of RMT. Radio Music Theatre, 2623 Colquitt. 713/522-7722.

The Santaland Diaries

DECEMBER 2-27

Crumpet the Elf (and the poor gay guy who takes the job at Macy's for the holi-

days) is the perfect antidote against all those warm and fuzzy visions of Christmas sugarplums that threaten to rot your teeth. Humbug, indeed. You'll never look at sweet toyland fantasies ever again without a jaundiced eye. Essayist/monologist David Sedaris turned his temp job from hell into a searing, and searingly wicked, look at rampant consumerism, bad parenting, out-of-control spoiled children, and bad costuming—his is a beaut. Alley Theatre veteran Todd Waite is a superb Crumpet, ruffled and spit-out with the best that Macy's can offer. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Avenue. 713/220-5700.

Jubilee of Dance: 40th Anniversary Celebration

DECEMBER 4

For dance lovers, Houston Ballet's one-time performance gala has emerged as one of the hottest ticket in town. It happens just when true balletomanes need their fix the most, during the *Nutcracker* doldrums. The fall rep is but a memory, and HB doesn't reopen until the end of February (for their exotic spectacular *La Bayadere*), so connoisseurs are itching for something without snow and battling mice. The jam-packed Jubilee fills the need in spades, showing off all the company in tantalizing scenes from the rep-to-be and beloved hits from the past. Usually there's a jubilant *piece d'occasion*, created by artistic director Stanton Welch, that ends the fast-paced evening on a high that lasts for days. Houston Ballet. Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas. 713/227-2787.

The Sound of Music

DECEMBER 8-20

Do I even have to tell anyone what this is? Perhaps the most beloved musical in history, Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein's alpine love fest—except for those nasty Nazis—has entered the world's consciousness. If you're one of those *Music*-heads who's only seen the thick and ponderous Robert Wise memorial version starring Julie Andrews and the entire continent of Europe, you'll find the stage production (1959) lighter, sweeter, and rather tame. This was the last work of the fabled, barrier-breaking R&H duo, and although it doesn't live up to *Oklahoma*, *Carousel*, or *The King & I*, it spawned so many hit tunes that you've got to forgive the old-fashioned playmaking. Theatre Under the Stars. Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, 800 Bagby. 713/558-TUTS(8887).

D.L. Groover frequently writes about the arts for OutSmart and the Houston Press.

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Hunger bites 🍏

Throughout September, which is Hunger Action Month, several local "watering holes" will host "Happy Hours for Hunger" events to help raise awareness of the issue of hunger in our community and raise money for the Houston Food Bank.

On any given day, 35,000 children, women, and men of all ages suffer with the torment of hunger. More than 932,000 southeast Texans are food insecure, meaning they are not sure if they will be able to eat tomorrow. In fact, a recent study shows that Texas has the highest rate of childhood food insecurity for children under age 18 (22.1%).

Hunger Action Month was designated across the country to increase public awareness and inspire them to take action to help in the fight against hunger. Here in Houston, the theme for the month is HUNGER BITES, which has a double meaning: one, hunger is a bad thing, and two, it has a painful, biting effect on those who suffer from it.

In any given week, the Houston Food Bank provides assistance to as many as 80,800 different people through its network of partner agencies.

Happy Hours for Hunger Events

South Beach The Night Club, 808 Pacific, 713-529-7623. For the entire month of September, South Beach is offering no cover charge on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays (excluding holidays and special events) when guests bring a can to donate to the Houston Food Bank. Dates are September 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 19, 24, 25 and 26.

Chances, 1102 Westheimer; 713-523-7217. For the month of September, Chances will host a 'Change Against Hunger' drive, where customers are challenged to donate all their loose change (and more!) into specially marked containers to benefit the Houston Food Bank. An additional fundraising event to be held on September 27 - details TBA.

Sunday, Sept 6 - Poison Girl, 1641 Westheimer, 713-527-9929. Poison Girl is celebrating their fifth anniversary celebration on September 6 with live music by JW Americana, who are performing just for the party! Cover is a canned food item for the Houston Food Bank. Donations will also be accepted. 5 p.m. to close.

Friday, Sept 18 - Absinthe, 609 Richmond, 713-528-7575 & **Bowl Cafe**, 607 Richmond, 832-582-7218. Absinthe's happy hour will include a food drive, a special tip jar for the donations to the food bank, and a raffle for gift items, all benefiting the Houston Food Bank! Happy hour will be from 6-9 p.m. Also, Absinthe and neighbor Bowl Cafe will have

official Houston Food Bank nonperishable food donation bins in-house beginning the first week of September through the official happy hour event on the 18th. Please bring a can or two for a neighbor in need!

Tuesday, Sept. 22 - Sawyer Park Sports Bar, 2412 Washington Ave., 713-863-9350. This new Washington Avenue bar has created a special Frozen Green Apple martini in honor of the food bank's green apple logo. Patrons who make a \$5 donation to the food bank will get a complimentary Frozen Apple martini. There will also be a tip jar on the bar to benefit the food bank. Happy hour from 4-9 p.m.

Wednesday, Sept. 23 - Beaver's, 2310 Decatur, 713-864-2328. Beaver's will host a special happy hour in the lounge from 6-8 p.m. A special happy hour menu including one tailored cocktail, one local draft beer and one appetizer will be offered, with 10% of sales from these items going directly to Houston Food Bank!

Tuesday, Sept. 29 - The Harp, 1625 Richmond, 713-528-7827. The Harp is known for its trivia nights, and we are honored to be a part on the 29th. Patrons are asked to bring a donation for the Harp's food drive, Houston Food Bank reps will sell special logo-ed items, and there will even be special Houston Food Bank trivia added to the quiz night, complete with prizes. Trivia is held from 8 to 10 p.m.

A complete list of dates and locations will be available beginning in September at houstonfoodbank.org.



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The Nude Guy in Town

Actor Jon Egging dares to bare in send-up of the 'Angels in America' controversy

by Donalevan Maines

Photo by Mark Hiebert

The actor from New England will introduce himself—all of himself—to Houston audiences with a nude scene in *Southern Rapture*, which this month launches the 31st season of Stages Repertory Theatre. It's not just any nude scene. It caused such an uproar 13 years ago in Charlotte, North Carolina, that a handful of religious-right zealots forced the city council to yank funding for the arts—not the scene itself, but the outrageous overreaction to the idea of a naked man on stage, especially a naked gay man. (Horrors!)

"It took a couple of years, but the theater ended up folding," Jon Egging explains, "and a lot of other local arts funding was lost."

The culture war it sparked was so farcical that, a decade or so later, The Actors Theatre of Charlotte (ATC) commissioned playwright Eric Cobie to write—what else?—a farce about a once-peaceful Southern city split to bits over a man dropping his pants on stage. The resulting play, *Southern Rapture*, premiered at ATC in April.

"All indications are that it went over pretty well," says Egging.

But flashback to 1996 when Charlotte was one of only six cities (including Houston) outside New York to see the entire seven-hour, two-part "gay fantasia" *Angels in America*. Instead of being a feather in its cap for Charlotte Repertory Theatre, the production ignited a controversy that exploded into national ridicule for Charlotte

when leaders of warring camps tore into each other on *Good Morning, America*.

Cobie interviewed many people involved in the infamous affair, but he was careful not to tape-record the conversations so that he would be sure to write a fictionalized account of the brouhaha, rather than a documentary. "Documentary style might work in a film or a TV special, but for a stage production, farce plays into the theatricality of the events," says Egging. "They seem, in 20/20 hindsight vision, at this point, farcical."

Adding to that theatricality, Egging gets to play three different characters, including the actor who disrobes, a preacher who stokes the fire, and the playwright who threatens to shut down the production if his play, titled *Rapture in America*, isn't performed precisely as he wrote it.

"All three say the heart of each argument" in the controversy, Egging explains. "It's an interesting juxtaposition. For an audience to see the same actor in each of those roles, I think, spells out, on a really human level, what each character has to say."

First, the character of Mickey is an "actor's actor," Egging believes, who understands that nudity in the scene "fits into what the script is trying to say."

In contrast, the preacher, his mind in the gutter, hears the play is about homosexuals and immediately imagines two men having anonymous sex in a public park. "He's a preacher in the South, a Baptist kind of guy," says Egging, who adds, "I don't think we want him to →





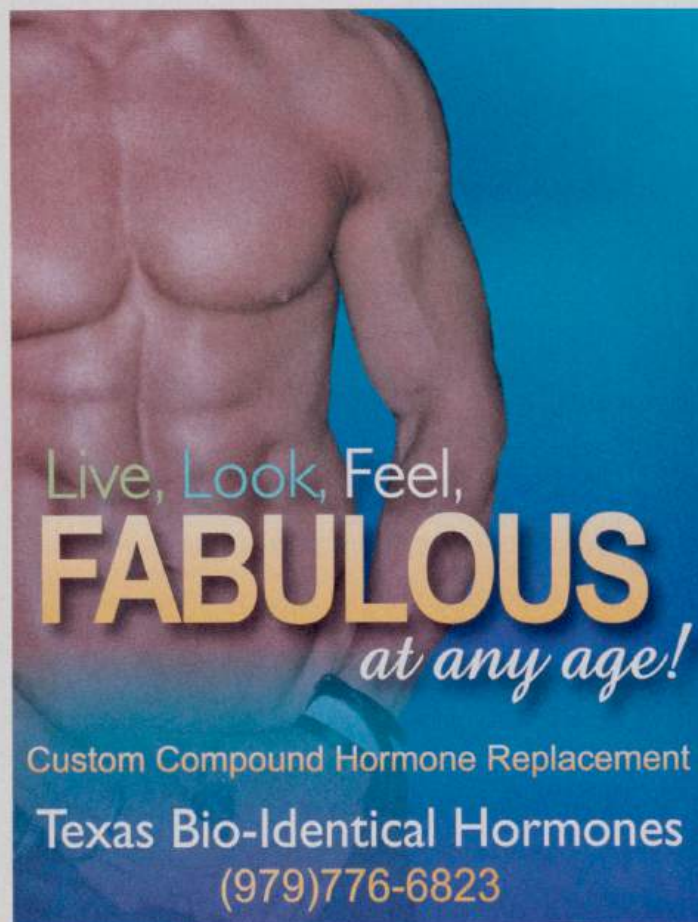
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The Nude Guy in Town continued from page 57

always be out for fire and brimstone. He's a human being."

Finally, the playwright, one Anton Finewitz, is out to protect his creation. "He says, 'My play is my play, and if you change it, I'll shut you down.'"

To play each role, Egging says he will "try to set up different physical parameters for each character and how they talk." *Angels in America* author Tony Kushner "might be somebody to tap into" for his portrayal of Anton, Egging suggests. "Not a straight-up imitation of him, but an amalgamate; a Jewish New York guy, but not 'verklempt,' not a Mike Myers impersonation" (of a Barbra Streisand fan).

As for baring all onstage, Egging says that when he was asked to appear naked, he shrugged, "As long as you guys don't mind."

About six years ago, Egging appeared nude throughout much of a Vermont production of *Snow* by Gordon Porterfield. The two-character play is about a man and a woman "in a dating situation," Egging explains. It had previously been work-shopped in Baltimore with so much nudity that, its author complained, audiences were staring at the actors more than involving themselves in the play. Consequently, the production with Egging had less nudity, he says.

Egging moved from Boston to Houston this year after his girlfriend, Rachel Bush, was hired to develop a stage management program at the University of Houston's School of Theatre and Dance. They live with their 16-month-old daughter in the Midtown area.

Having taught acting, play analysis, theater history, and oral interpretation at Bridgewater State College in Massachusetts, Egging landed a teaching post at San Jacinto College in the spring. This fall, he and two UH acting students will perform *The Compt Works of Wilm Shkspr (Abridged)* at UH and at area high schools.

Jovan Jackson, as an actor portraying a doctor, will appear in the nude scene with Egging. Also cast in *Southern Rapture* are Sally Edmundson, David Wald, Rutherford Cravens, and Pamela Vogel. Directing the show is Kenn McLaughlin, producing artistic director at Stages.

Southern Rapture plays Sept. 16-Oct. 11 (previews Sept. 16-17; opening night is Friday, Sept. 18) at Stages Repertory Theatre, 3201 Allen Parkway (one block west of Waugh Dr.). Tickets are \$26-\$36. Details: 713/527-0123 or stages theatre.com.

Donalevan Maines also writes about the Emmys in this issue of OutSmart magazine.

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Hello, Sailors

Bayou City Concert Musicals brings 'On the Town' to Houston town

by Donalevan Maines

Photo by Dalton DeHart

Leonard Bernstein's *On the Town* is this year's unearthed Broadway musical treasure, which Bayou City Concert Musicals (BCCM) stages this month in a lavish production, with more than 30 performers, including a dozen dancers, and a 19-piece orchestra of union musicians.

The show will play five performances only, Sept. 10-13, at Heinen Theater, 3517 Austin at Holman in midtown Houston.

It marks the first time in history that a Houston company has performed *On the Town*. It fits nicely into BCCM's scheme of showcasing seldom-produced or neglected musicals, especially from years gone by.

BCCM's 10th anniversary season also includes two cabaret events, featuring Roaring '20s music by Cole Porter, and songs of Vincent Youmans ("Tea for Two") from the 1920s and 1930s, in February and May 2010, respectively.

On the Town is the singin', dancin' story of three sailors on 24-hour shore leave in New York City at the end of World War II. Sounds like the 1949 film starring Gene Kelly, Frank Sinatra, Betty Garrett, and Ann Miller, but artistic director Paul Hope says that's exactly what it isn't!

"If you've only seen the movie, then you haven't seen the musical!" Hope exclaims, with big-hearted enthusiasm. "The plot was revised and MGM kept only two songs. One of those was 'New York, New York.'"

Hope heard the complete score of the musical when he was in high school and got an album featuring three of its four Broadway stars, including Nancy Walker (Rhoda's mom on the hit 1970s *Rhoda* TV series) as Hildy, the cab driver who taxis the sailors from adventure to misadventure in search of the girl of their dreams. The sailors sing and dance their way through subways, nightclubs, and museums until they finally find their girls at iconic Coney Island.

Five ballets help move the story along and add to the amount of action that always surprises BCCM audiences who expect a "concert" version of a musical to be stiff and static.

"We do the entire show," Hope assures, not an abridged or truncated version, like the concert musicals that are

currently popular in New York's theater community. "Concert" just means no scenery and the orchestra is on stage. You won't just get a flavor. You will see the full show, complete with sailor costumes and those wonderful '40s dresses."

The three sailors are played by Gregg Alan Dailey, Adam Gibbs, and Will Luton. "He has handsome, farm-boy looks and strawberry-blond hair. He's perfect for the character of Gabey," Hope says, explaining that Luton graduated from Spring Woods High School and was accepted for studies at College-Conservatory of Music in Cincinnati.

Among the female headliners are Melissa Pritchett, Susan Draper, and Tamara Siler (who played Caroline in Tony Kushner's *Caroline, or Change* at Main Street Theater). "And in luxury casting, Susan O. Koozin will play Hildy's hypochondriac roommate," boasts Hope. →

Shore leave: (l-r) Adam Gibbs (Chip), Will Luton (Gabey), and Gregg Alan Dailey (Ozzie) perform in the resurrection of Leonard Bernstein's classic musical in roles made famous on film by Frank Sinatra, Gene Kelly, and ... Jules Munshin?



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Hello, Sailors continued from previous page

"We have six male dancers and six female dancers, all from Sam Houston State University and all as cute as they can be," he adds.

"The Heinen Theater is a jewel box of a theater" with free parking and a parking garage close to the front door, says Hope. "And the sight lines are great. With only 300 seats, even on the back row you can still see [the performers'] faces, and when you don't have scenery, it's important to see their faces."

Hope is co-directing the show with Philip Lehl. Ballets are choreographed by Krissy Richmond, with other musical numbers staged by Jenny Franco. Musical direction is by Art Yelton. The conductor is Dominique Royem.

Top ticket price is \$35. Senior citizens' tickets are \$25, students \$15. They are available at 713/465-6484 or online at bayoucityconcerts.org.

Throughout the years, BCCM has donated more than \$150,000 to support various local charities, including the Center for AIDS. *On the Town* will benefit The Tim Harris Memorial Fund of the Houston Professional Musicians Association for musicians who have suffered a catastrophic illness or injury.

Prior BCCM productions have included *Follies* (which *OutSmart* called a "stirring testament to the depth of talent found in the Bayou City, as well as their matchless star wattage"), *Falsettos*, *A Little Night Music*, *She Loves Me*, *70 Girls 70*, *Assassins*, *Fiorello!*, and *Pal Joey*.

Creators of *On the Town* are a who's who of Broadway's best, with music by Leonard Bernstein (his first Broadway musical), book and lyrics by Betty Comden and Adolph Green (newcomers who also co-starred in the original production), choreography by Jerome Robbins, and direction by George Abbott. Inspired by Bernstein's and Robbins' ballet *Fancy Free*, *On the Town* expanded into a full-length production and opened on Broadway in 1944.

Bernadette Peters was nominated for the 1972 Tony Award for best featured actress in a musical for her role as Hildy in the show's first Broadway revival. Out actress/comedienne Lea DeLaria stole the show in the 1998 Broadway revival with a scat take on Hildy's big number, "I Can Cook, Too." She won Theatre World honors, while Mary Teste, playing Madame Dilly, was nominated for a Tony Award.

BCCM's 10th anniversary season offers two cabaret programs spotlighting under-performed works of the American musical stage and song book.

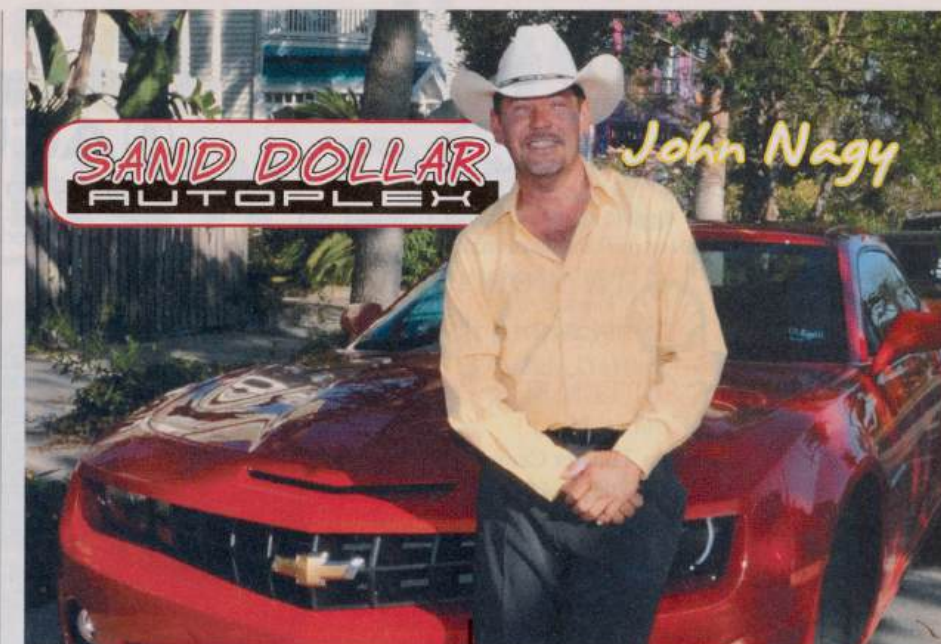
Paul Hope serves as master of ceremonies, weaving the history of the music and its creators into special evenings of song.

The cabaret shows start at 7:30 p.m. in the Performance Centre at the Ensemble Theatre, 3535 Main St. at Berry, on three consecutive Monday nights in February 2010 and May 2010.

February shows are titled "Let's Misbehave—The Early Music of Cole Porter" (1909–1929). Among Porter's featured hits will be "Let's Misbehave," "Let's Do It," "What Is This Thing Called Love," "You Do Something to Me" and "You've Got That Thing."

"Tea for Two—Songs of Vincent Youmans" is scheduled for the May cabarets. While serving in World War I, he wrote "Hallelujah," which became a huge hit with U.S. troops and was later included in the musical *Hit the Deck*. He wrote the music for *No, No, Nanette* before scoring the first Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers movie musical, *Flying Down to Rio*.

Donalevan Maines also writes about the Emmys in this issue of *OutSmart* magazine.



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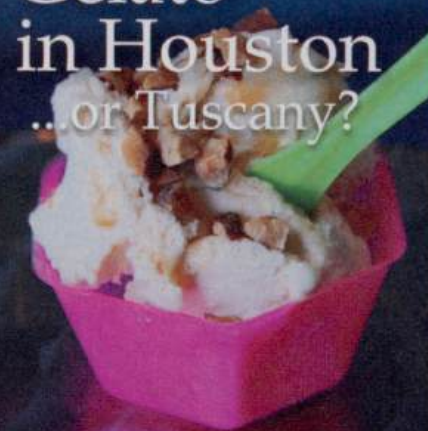
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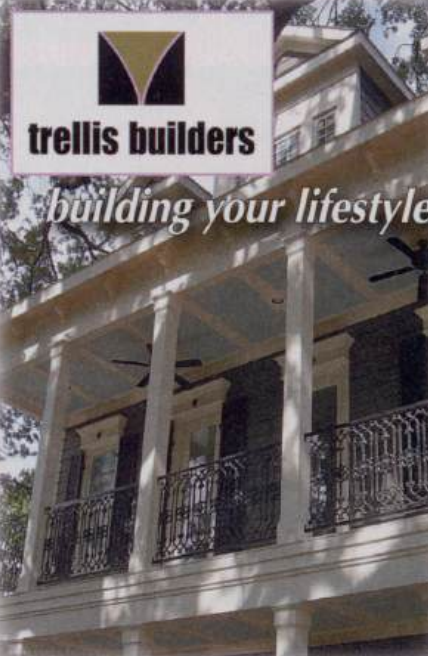
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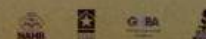
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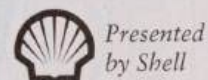
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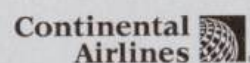
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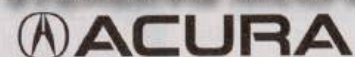
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Sounding a New Direction

Interview with Linus Lerner

by Rich Arenschieldt

Photo by Dalton DeHart



As the new artistic director of Bayou City Performing Arts (BCPA), which comprises the Gay Men's Chorus of Houston, the Bayou City Women's Chorus, and the combined choir known as the Bayou City Chorale, Linus Lerner inherits a 30-year tradition of LGBT music-making in Houston.

The new director is excited about the possibilities that the Bayou City has to offer. "Houston is a key city for me," Lerner says. "There are numerous economic and cultural institutions here, and they are all healthy and vibrant. It is very exciting to be here now."

Regarding the upcoming 2009-10 BCPA season, Lerner was able to be intimately involved in its planning, even as a prospective applicant for the position. "When a person applies for a job such as this one, the interviewers will expect the applicant to create a season of programs, work with the chorus, get to know them, and be very familiar with the organization and its mission." With an impeccable musical pedigree and 23 years of choral experience, Lerner should be able to accomplish all these tasks and extract amazing music from his singers.

The first concert of the season, on December 5 and 8, highlights the Bayou City Women's Chorus and is titled *Winterlight*. According to Lerner, "This performance depicts the different moods and colors associated with the winter season. I've tried to create an ambience and atmosphere that represents both the coziness and joy associated with this time of year."

The venue for this concert will be Houston's spacious Unity Church of Christianity, and this, to some degree, has influenced Lerner's programmatic choices. "Unity is a perfect venue for this type of program. Because of the resonance in this building, the space lends itself to a more specific type of repertoire—I think the women will sound wonderful here. We will present a wide variety of music, including a very interesting arrangement of 'Santa Baby' and



a humorous piece entitled 'Cold and Fugue Season.'"

Following *Winterlight*, the men take center stage at Jones Hall on Tuesday, December 15, whirling in to give us *A Twisted Holiday*. This is a more unusual musical holiday offering than audiences normally expect. "This concert is unique in that it focuses on music that we hear over the holidays and how →

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Sounding a New Direction

continued from previous page

much of that music we hear," Lerner says. This concert pairs well-known carols with their lesser-known and more oddly inspired counterparts. A *Twisted Holiday* presents differing musical views: "Carol of the Bells" versus "Carol of the Malls" or "Winter Wonderland" bundled in the same musical brassiere as "Walking Around in Women's Underwear."

Spring repertoire for BCPA includes an exhilarating evening of music on Tuesday, March 22, in Jones Hall titled *We Can't Stop the Beat*, which features both the men's and women's choruses. "This is a very high energy concert," Lerner says. "We will have some special guest performers join us for this show. We are currently trying to arrange some collaboration with groups from the local community, or we may bring in a group from as far away as Brazil to perform with us. In any event, we anticipate a very energetic performance that audiences will enjoy."

Transitioning from a disco beat to a heartbeat, May 2010 brings us *It's All About Love*, featuring the Bayou City Women's Chorus at Unity Church, once again. "The music in this show is going to illustrate all of the facets of love and what

it means to each of us," Lerner says. "Love may be the one thing that is the answer to all the conflicts in the world." Featured pieces will include "Can You Feel the Love Tonight?" from *The Lion King* and "Love Changes Everything" from *Aspects of Love*.

Lesbian humorist Kate Clinton closes the season, hosting the June 19 *Let's Misbehave* concert, which promises to be an evening full of wit—spoken and sung. Having entertained us for 28 years, Clinton's jokes (in her words) have "supported us through wartime, peacetime, scoundrel time, and economic downturns."

Pieces for this concert will pique everyone's interest, including "Every Sperm Is Sacred" from Monty Python's *Meaning of Life*, "Four Jews in a Room Bitching" from *Falsettos*, and "Everyone's a Little Bit Racist," from *Avenue Q*.

Though the BCPA programs may be more contemporary in approach, Lerner always aims for musical excellence. "No matter what kind of music we do, whether it's popular or classical in nature, I will always aim for great quality. Even when we sing a country hit like 'Stand By Your Man,' it has to be well performed. That is my focus for this year."

Beyond the current season, Lerner plans to expand repertoire and also the locales where the groups perform. "I have several shows in the pipeline that may include some classical literature or even choruses from opera. The choruses have also received invitations to travel abroad. We have been asked to perform at a diversity celebration in São Paulo, Brazil, and may go to China in 2011. If that trip occurs, BCPA will be the first gay chorus to ever travel to China and perform as an openly GLBT group."

Lerner also wants to collaborate with artists and groups here in Houston. "This chorus has a 30-year history in Houston, and we have done a lot of great work here. I want us to continue to embrace the surrounding community as musical and organizational partners. It's important that we continue to refine our niche. As the GLBT community becomes more accepted within society, the perspective from which we view our mission changes. As we gain more rights in the world, how does that change what this group does? It's all about maintaining a tremendous level of musical quality, embracing diversity within this very international city, and giving audiences a life-changing musical experience." ■

Visit BCPA online at www.bayoucityperformingarts.org or call 713/521-7464.

Rich Arenschioldt also writes about visual artist Jason Villegas in this issue of OutSmart.

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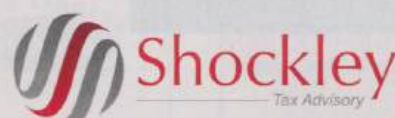
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Filmmaker David Purdie finds inspiration amid the ruins of local landmarks

by Donalevan Maines

Photos by Mark Hiebert

When award-winning gay filmmaker David Purdie was about to be born, his father rushed out to buy a movie camera to document his son's arrival. In like fashion, when Purdie heard in 2005 that his childhood playground, AstroWorld, was going to be demolished, he bought a Sony Handycam to salvage his memories of the iconic Houston amusement park.

"My father's home movies are the best thing he left us," says the Houston native. "The second I heard that AstroWorld was going to die, I knew I had to do this. I spent the final month filming interiors, and I went on the final day it was open [October 31, 2005]," he says. "Then I went out the next week and starting filming the demolition from the freeway. I had no idea I would get hooked on filming the demolition, but I went back almost every day until May 2006."

From all that footage, Purdie and a friend, film editor Radkey Jolink, fashioned a three-minute film, *Astrowhirled*, which won first prize and \$200 in the 2008 Aurora Picture Show's annual Extremely Short Films (under three minutes) juried competition. *Astrowhirled* has since played a dozen times on the silver screen at the majestic River Oaks Theatre.

"It was great to see it up in lights on the marquee," he says.

"After the movie was said and done," Purdie explains, he took a vacation—to Galveston, another favorite childhood destination. "Astroworld and Galveston were the two places I can remember going to bed at night, knowing the next day I was going there! It was huge!"

Something he had never done, though, was stay at the island's historic Flagship Hotel, which stood on the Pleasure Pier that stretched a thousand feet into the Gulf of Mexico. Last summer, Purdie and his friend and Montrose neighbor, Ruth Schulte—deciding to live large—checked into Room 217 →



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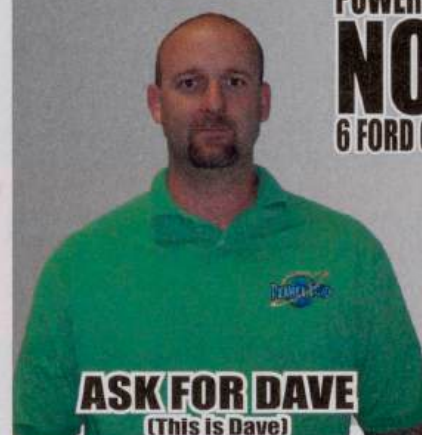
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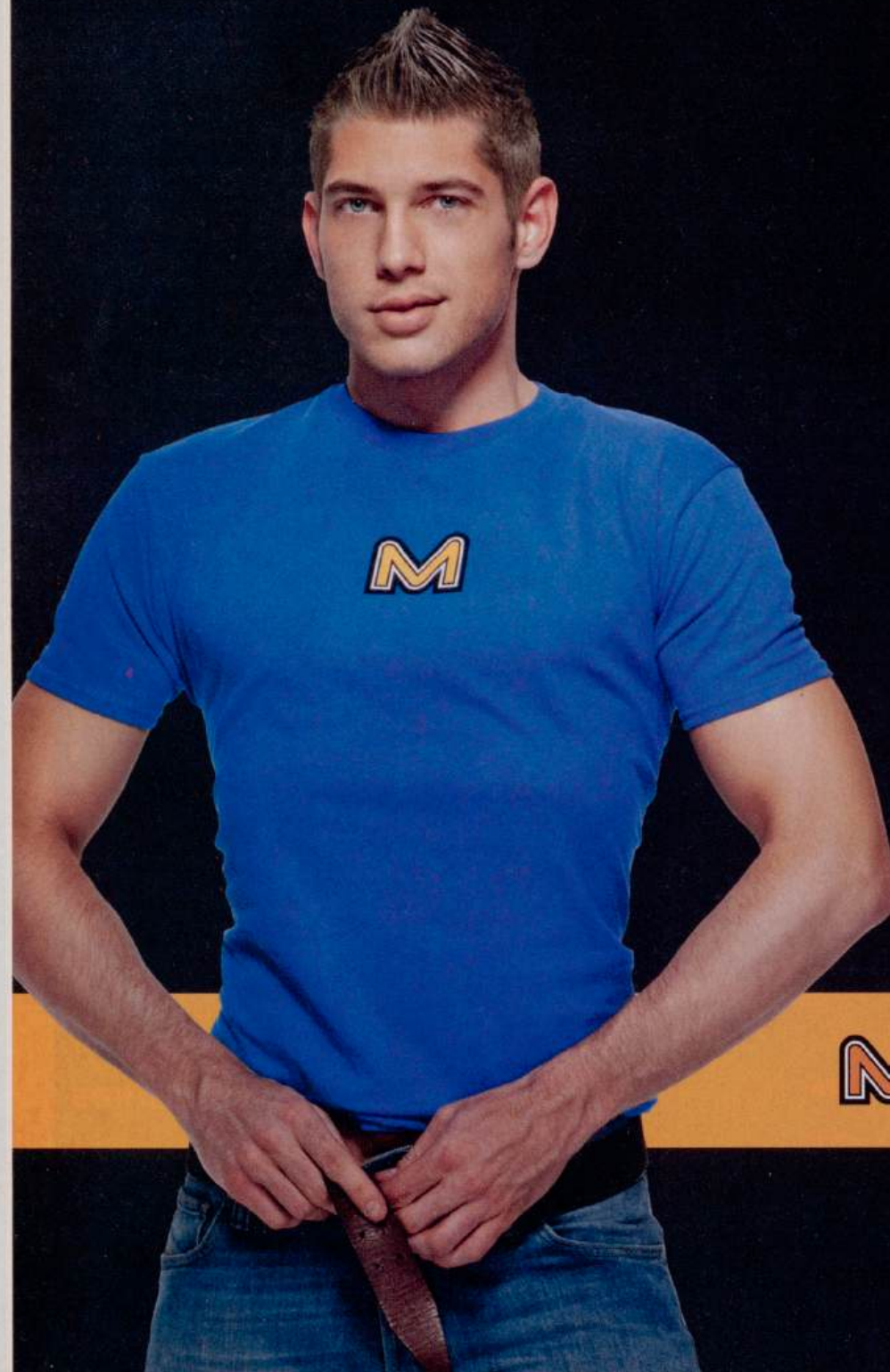


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continued from page 68

for a weekend playcation at the Flagship. From the balcony of their room, Purdie videotaped a panoramic view of the oceanfront.

In the next couple of months, they returned four or five times, always staying in Room 217. Purdie kept a video diary of their activity, including dinners at the legendary Balinese Room, which had been an elite private club and casino in the 1940s, and shopping for souvenirs at Murdoch's Bath House and Mermaid Pier—"It was the *OutSmart* of gift shops in Galveston," Purdie explains.

Tragically, all three landmarks were destroyed when Hurricane Ike hit the island last September. "We had no idea when we checked out of Room 217 for the last time that it would all be gone," Purdie says.

Once again in possession of unique historical footage, Purdie made a short film, which he called *Galvest-Gone!* In June, it placed third at Aurora Picture Show's competition, ahead of submissions from across the globe.

On Saturday, Sept. 12, to commemorate the first anniversary of Hurricane Ike, "Galvest-Gone!" plays on the big screen at River Oaks Theater, prior to a midnight screening of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* with an acting troupe known as The Beautiful Creatures performing scenes during the movie.

The screening marks the first anniversary for Purdie and partner Rob Boyte, who met in Montrose, just hours before Hurricane Ike made landfall and began sweeping through Houston into East Texas.

For 18 years, Purdie has been a waiter, including his current stint at Tony Mandola's Gulf Coast Kitchen on West Gray, but making his living as a filmmaker could be in his future. "I don't see myself stopping!" he says. "More and more people have been asking me if I could [film events] for them."

In addition, Purdie cut a longer film from his AstroWorld footage, which he titled *Disasterworld*. It was shown throughout April in continuous loop at ArtCar Museum on Heights Boulevard.

Not too long ago, a management company asked Purdie to film the retirement of one of its longtime employees. "It's now available on DVD," he laughs, soaking in the enjoyment of his new venture and where it might lead.

Donalevan Maines also writes about the Emmys in this issue of OutSmart magazine.

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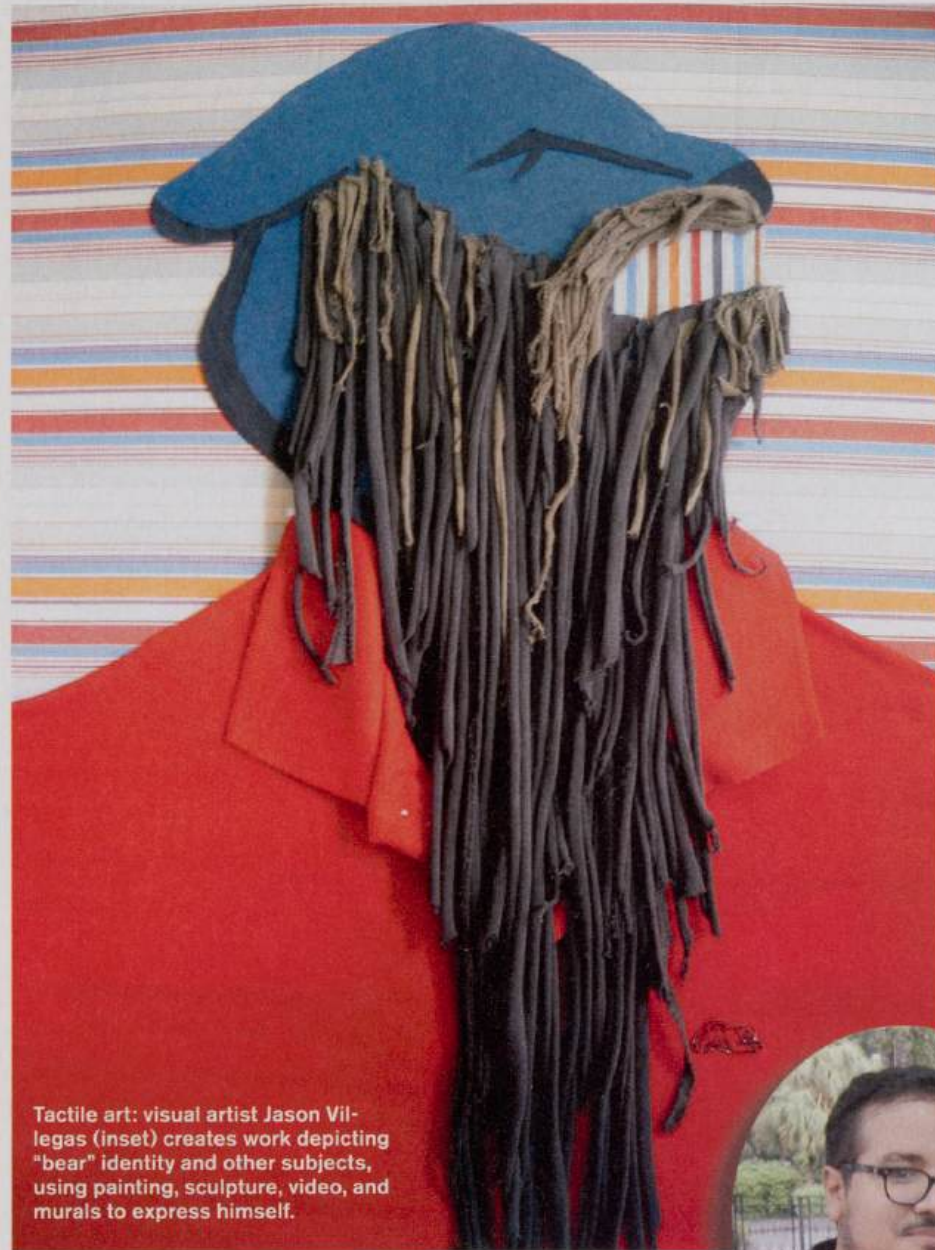
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It's All About Identity

For Jason Villegas, creating art beats robbing banks

by Rich Arenschioldt



Tactile art: visual artist Jason Villegas (inset) creates work depicting "bear" identity and other subjects, using painting, sculpture, video, and murals to express himself.

Animistic prints, collages of fabric, depictions of husky men in various stages of undress, and whimsical creations all serve to voice the creative mind of visual artist Jason Villegas, currently exhibiting his work at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston (CAMH).

CAMH's long-running "Perspectives" series, designed to feature new and emerging talent, spotlights the artist in *Perspectives 167: Jason Villegas*, debuting a new site-specific installation to mark his first solo museum exhibition, on view

through November 1. Villegas's installation combines wall murals, soft sculpture, performance, and video and marks a significant artistic and emotional homecoming.

"This is very exciting for me as a young artist," Villegas says. "Many artists have used this *Perspectives* series as a springboard for their careers. Other local artists who have exhibited here are currently doing very well, nationally and internationally."

A native Houstonian, Villegas attended Lamar High School and received a BFA in sculpture from the University of Houston. Though now living in New York City, his formative years in Houston were challenging. "Growing up in a Hispanic family without any artistic references was difficult," Villegas says. As a teenager, both his cultural and sexual identity were challenged. "As Mexican-Americans, my parents actually downplayed that heritage while I was growing up, preferring that we acculturate into American society."

Additionally, in spite of Villegas's early realization of his sexual orientation, his parents, seeking to reinforce heteronormative standards, essentially dismissed his coming out at age 15. "When given the news, my mother told me, 'You can think about robbing a bank, but that doesn't mean you have to do it.' She was hoping things would change and asked me to 'wait a year.' A year later I told her that I had actually decided to become a bank robber."

This family-imposed repression of self and sex served to make Villegas especially sensitive to issues of identity, both personally and on a global scale. His artistic journey has mirrored his personal development. Villegas's physical features (he describes himself as "chubby") would place him in the "cub" category within the LGBT lexicon, but he didn't discover that moniker easily. "I always felt subcultural growing up. I had trouble finding my way, even within the gay world. Amongst my circle of slim, young men, I was always regarded as 'the overweight friend' in my group. It wasn't until some years later that I discovered an active 'bear' community." →



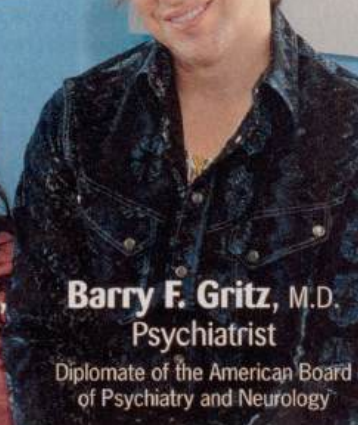
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It's All About Identity

continued from page 72

The artist's self definition has influenced his creative output, but is not its sole feature. "Some of my friends have pushed the bear aspects of my art more than I have," Villegas says. "In the last two years I've started doing some bear paintings, celebrating that particular physique. In a recent show at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, I animated a portrait of a bear who had posed for me. I am happy to bring that aspect of my work to those specific audiences, but I must also be true to all of my own creative instincts."

Villegas has a multitude of methods for his artistic expression, many of which are evident in this exhibition. His primary inspiration comes from the unlikely combining of primitive themes and easily recognizable animistic marketing logos, many of which are found on popular clothing. "Important aspects of this exhibit include the animal logo, the polo shirt, and re-purposed clothing," Villegas says. "These elements take several forms. Painting, sculpture, video, and mural are all represented. Fabric portraits are an especially good combination for me right now. This show at the CAM involves so much cloth that there's been a lot of cut-

ting of fragments for incorporation into these pieces.

"In addition to fabric, one of my primary means of expression for this exhibit is found items. I scour thrift stores for various colors and patterns using, among other things, animal logos and items that are associated with a kind of spiritual animism. I combine these aspects with pop imagery which helps to make my work somewhat more marketable."

Commentary regarding the global marketplace also is prominent in this artist's work. "I've combined luxury items with objects from impoverished parts of the world. This juxtaposition of things that are created in the third world and then shipped and sold within developing countries interests me," Villegas says. "At one point I worked in a clothing store on Madison Avenue. That provided me insight into what wealthier individuals really wanted to possess. Oddly enough, merchandise tags that come with items occasionally inform my work."

The utilization of disparate elements, within a single work or exhibition, challenges audiences, something Villegas is happy to do. "I would prefer that people would not see one of my works and assume that's emblematic of my creative output.

I like to differentiate the physical space of an exhibit and utilize items that are not instantly recognizable as art. Much of my work doesn't fit into a specific genre. People often tell me that I'm not immediately definable. This is great; I've never wanted my work to be a picture on a wall that people would just casually walk by." With a portfolio that includes such titles as "Hamster Infanticide," "Cosmic Anus," and "Infant Blue Whale With Skin Disorder," that's not likely to happen.

After his exhibit at CAMH, Villegas travels to more showings of his work, then returns to New York. "After a few more exhibits, I'll be spending time in the studio and applying for various grants. I've been showing my work for about 10 years, and exhibitions are very important to me. It is vital to me that my work gets seen, but not necessarily sold. I continue to dedicate a significant amount of time to studio work, and I let those efforts speak for me."

Though Villegas fits perfectly within the TBLG (talented bear loving gay) demographic group, in a community obsessed with labels, artistically, this thirty-something cub prefers to remain a vagary.

Rich Arenschioldt also writes about Linus Lerner in this issue of OutSmart magazine.

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Chance of a Lifetime

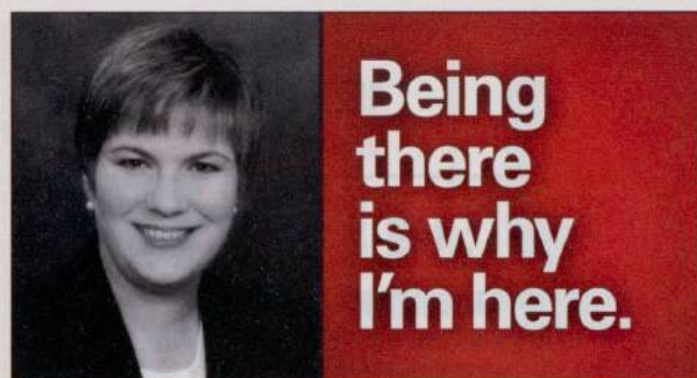
After barely a year, JoAnn Alfano has transformed the once-bland 'television for women' into a fresh, creative, ratings-nabbing network ... and quite possibly the gayest channel on television.

by
Steven
Foster



What a life: JoAnn Alfano enjoys a brief moment of respite between making executive programming decisions for the Lifetime television network, and caring for her two-year-old twin daughters.

always said Lifetime was television for women ... and my friends," admits Lifetime programming executive JoAnn Alfano in her first-ever interview with the gay press— "... my friends and my friend, Kevin, who is the most avid Lifetime viewer of anyone I know. When I got the job, he knew more about the network programming than I did." →



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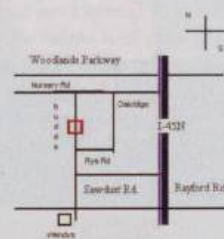
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Lifetime's coming out: Heidi Klum (l) with guest star Rebecca Romijn in *Project Runway*; Brooke Elliott (l) and Margaret Cho in *Drop Dead Diva*; Malcolm McDowell (l) and Shirley MacLaine in *Coco Chanel*; and Ryan Kelly (l) and Sigourney Weaver in *Prayers for Bobby*.

Chance of a Lifetime

continued from previous page

Alfano's pal might have also mentioned just how stale that programming had become, with its tendency to relentlessly air reruns of homo-friendly comedies and women-done-wrong movies of the weak. Granted, we love our *Golden Girls* and *Will & Grace* reruns as much as the next gay, and there is a certain pervy pleasure in watching hot has-beens from the Jenny Garth generation take revenge on abusive husbands. But really, was this the best Lifetime could do?

With ad budgets shrinking like a sweater in a dryer, and competitors We and Oxygen breathing down Lifetime's practically geriatric neck, CEO Andrea Wong had to put some serious muscle behind the channel's much-needed makeover—and do it faster than a reality competition elimination challenge. It appeared such a change was finally happening with programming whiz Susanne Daniels. The topical, intelligent drama *Army Wives* was a critical and commercial hit, causing both advertising agencies to take notice and Jill Q. Public to set her TiVo. *Rita Rocks* signaled a refreshing foray into original scripted comedy. Then, the coup de grace. The ladies at Lifetime showed some serious chutzpah by stealing Bravo crown jewel *Project Runway*.

But the resuscitating breath of fresh air suddenly seemed more like a shock-gasp in a Nora Roberts plot.

First, Daniels abruptly announced her departure, sending industry tongues wagging about female infighting in the halls of power. Reporters seem to bring up this pervasive and patently offensive sexist view at a moment's notice. It's the

journalistic equivalent of blaming a woman's bad mood on her period; wrong at best, insulting at worst. While it probably makes for juicy copy to insinuate that Wong and Daniels tussled, it strains believability that Daniels would happily send Alfano into the Lifetime lioness den.

"Susanne Daniels was a friend of mine, and I called her to wish her well," Alfano recalls. "Then she said, 'Hey, what are you doin'?' Do you wanna go for this job?' It hadn't crossed my mind until that point, and then I was like, *Uh, yeah. Okay, yeah, I do!*"

Alfano met with Wong and the two hit it off. "I loved so many of the things she had to say and what she was doing with the company. I think we had a really good simpatico."

But just as the Emmy-winning, former *30 Rock* producer showed up on the job, the second plot point surfaced. NBC/Universal promptly sued to keep *Runway*'s gorgeous, profitable legs strutting on their runway. The public rarely cares about such legal haggling, but *Runway* was such a cultural phenom that the ensuing drama was as closely monitored as Michele Obama's sleeve length.

"Yeah, that happened right after I came here," says Alfano about the *Runway* nightmare. "We produced the show at that time and we continued to do so, because I didn't know how it would turn out. But separate from that, I just focused on everything else."

Everything else involved Alfano ensuring the network didn't lose precious momentum gained from *Army Wives*. Plus, there were other non-*Runway* projects in the pipeline she had to foster, ones handpicked by her predecessor, not herself, which is sort of like babysitting other people's kids while you're birthing your own. And speaking of the new progeny, Alfano's deliveries needed to fit comfortably into the Lifetime family, while hopefully broadening the network's reach without scaring off the core audience. No small chore.

Still, like one of those former Lifetime movies Alfano and company are trying to get away from, the movie doesn't have a downer ending, and the heroine is destined to succeed.

"We're about victors not victims, if you will," Alfano affirms. "And women in power. Not women in peril."

Cue music. Happy music, that is.

The *Project Runway* debacle was settled and the show debuted with a staggering 45 percent increase over the previous season five debut on Bravo.



And that's after combating a controversial location move from its haute home in New York to the fashionably questionable environs of LA, not to mention the Internet fiasco of having most search engine results for *Runway* taking you to Bravo's website, not Lifetime's. Whatever. An audience of 4.2 million people didn't have any trouble finding their fashion fix on its new home. So naturally, Alfano is experiencing a little relief.

"Oh, lots of relief," she admits from her office in Los Angeles. "I'm so excited for it to finally hit the air and for people to see it. See how good the show is and enjoy it. We've had it in the can for quite awhile."

Other preexisting products in the Lifetime cupboard are holding their own. Respectable numbers kept former *Mad TV* star and gay fave Nicole Sullivan's *Rita Rocks* on the air. And *Army Wives* continued to perform, though its season three bow lost more than a million viewers from last year's highly touted benchmark. Off-net rights to *Grey's Anatomy* and *Medium* start stripping in September, perhaps easing some of the heavy rotations of been there/seen that *Reba* reruns. But it's the new slate, the one spearheaded by Alfano, that is transforming Lifetime from dowdy do-gooder feel-good to a hipper, smarter, younger channel. It's not gay by choice so much as it's increasingly chosen by gays.

Truly, where else is the rainbow coalition to go? Logo's parent MTV is so tightfisted they're forced to grab bargain basement acquisitions featuring Internet "stars" Jeffrey and Cole, a long way from the wickedly inspired satire of *Rick & Steve* and Rosie O'Donnell-backed *Sketch Show* of Logo's glory days. And the once unstoppable Bravo has run out of gas, now sucking so hard on their program pipe, there's barely a fume left in the tank. Seriously, even the spinoffs of spinoffs have spinoffs. The most heinous example being the umpteenth *Housewives* regurgitation, slapping together B-roll outtakes for yawn-inducing director's cut, and then giving homo camera hog Andy Cohen his own interview hour with the peach-holding harpies.

That leaves Alfano and company to slip into the void with one of the most brilliant strategies on cable: keep the loyal core base of women, but open their net just a little with smarter, sharper programming, attracting a more lucrative share of the advertiser-friendly, 18-35 market, while simultaneously seducing the freespending gays who, for the most part, have the same taste.

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Chance of a Lifetime

continued from previous page

beyond that, yes, total viewers." But, she admits happily, "We welcome men to the party. We're glad to have 'em!"

Look no further for the perfection of that strategy than in Lifetime's latest hit, *Drop Dead Diva*, a critical darling that garners ratings as attractive (and plus-sized) as its charming lead, Brooke Elliot, in a star-making performance.

"*Diva* was a script that was in the community. When I came here I produced a number of pilots and I chose *Diva* as a series," Alfano explains, voice more humble than haughty. "I read it and loved it. But the broadcast networks had passed on it, and it was such a perfect fit in terms of being absolutely right for this audience."

In lesser hands, the tired soulswapper plot conceit would be just that. But in the hands of Oscar-winning producers Craig Zadan and Neil Meron of *Chicago* and *Hairspray* fame, *Diva* positively sings. And the sometimes fierce duet between creator Josh Berman and Alfano only helps the show hit the high notes.

"He was a very young programming executive at NBC studios when I worked there and I trained him, of all things. So Josh and I have known each other a very, very long time. And the craziness of me being in this position and him being the writer/creator of this series and doing it together, it's that kind of kismet that feels fantastic for both of us. We have a shorthand, and we also have an ability to get really mad at each other and it be okay."

Next month unveils another refreshingly non-anorexic—and, this time, non-white—lead, this one featuring *The View* talking head and *30 Rock* star Sherri Shepherd.

"It's all part of moving the network forward, just trying to broaden the scope and make it more contemporary, more real, more modern, more relatable, but at the same time not changing our brand in a way that our core audience would reject," relates Alfano. "We want to be inclusive of everyone."

Even Alfano's new off-net acquisitions show stunning savvy. Alfano caused an industry ruckus when she scooped everyone, grabbing the mega hit *How I Met Your Mother*, and before the dust settled on that deal, she snagged *The New Adventures of Old Christine*, hit series featuring out-gay stars Neil Patrick Harris and Wanda Sykes, respectively.

Upcoming Lifetime movies have nary a *Knots Landing* vixen in sight. The network just aired the goofily charming *Accep-*

tance starring Joan Cusack, and will soon unveil Julia Ormand in *The Wronged Man*, produced by Hollywood heavyweight Gale Anne Hurd, and *Twelve Men of Christmas* with Kristin Chenoweth. Continuing to grab overlooked gems, Alfano lifted the Georgia O'Keeffe biopic, starring and produced by Joan Allen, after HBO passed.

"I think what brought our eye to that project is, more than just about Georgia O'Keeffe being a luminary as a painter, is that she has a really interesting love story in terms of her life and her relationship with Alfred Stieglitz. That is what the focus of the movie is and why it just felt really, really right for us." Alfano's passion grows palpable. "It is an example of the type of movie that we're trying to step up and do—where we're willing to spend more money and to attract greater talent, in the interest of moving the network forward."

That investment is paying off. Two recent films, *Prayers for Bobby* and *Coco Chanel*, racked up Emmy nominations, along with nods for stars Sigourney Weaver and Shirley MacLaine. Not bad for a channel whose production budget on a film is probably half of what HBO spends to simply market one of theirs.

Maybe the new, hipper, sexier, have-the-cake-and-eat-it-too slate is just a reflection of the woman in charge. In addition to having her say on Lifetime, Alfano's not shy about having a life.

"I try to be home somewhere in the sevens because I have twin two-year-old girls." Alfano pauses a moment, perhaps because she realizes how all this sounds. Taking a new high-stakes, high-pressure job at a major cable network. And doing it all with twins? The Lifetime movie coincidences keep piling up higher than diapers in a Genie.

"I didn't give birth," she demurs. "I have to say that. My partner gave birth. We have fraternal twin girls and they're fantastic. Being a mom is great. And I work at a company that's fantastic. There are a lot of parents here, so it's a very supportive environment."

Then, in true mogul fashion, Alfano confesses. "Either fortunately or unfortunately, however you look at it, I don't ever really get off work. You're on a BlackBerry, after you put the kids down at night you answer a lot of e-mails and such, and it keeps you tethered in that kind of way. But," she adds, "it also gives you a freedom to balance your life out."

A Lifetime character couldn't have said, or done, it better.

Steven Foster interviewed Mad Men's Bryan Batt for the August issue of OutSmart.

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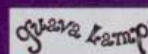
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AND THE *Emmy* GOES TO...

2009's Emmys air September 20 on CBS

by Donalevan Maines



Host this: out actor Neil Patrick Harris,
shown here as a presenter on last year's
Emmy telecast, is this year's host.

The 2009 Tony Awards could not have been "gayer if Liza was named mayor," as host Neil Patrick Harris sang in the show's "11 o'clock number." The question is, can television's 61st annual Emmy Awards on Sept. 20 out-gay the Tonys?

Same host (NPH), same network (CBS), but this time Harris could even win an award, as he's nominated for best supporting actor in a comedy series for playing womanizing Barney on *How I Met Your Mother*.

In the race for best supporting actor in a drama series is William Shatner, whose Denny Crane married James Spader's Alan Shore in the series finale of *Boston Legal*. Oh, and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia officiated the same-sex bromance wedding.

Emmys' biggest haul of the night might go to the mother-daughter affair, *Grey Gardens*, which picked up 17 nominations and surely has Hollywood's brightest gay minds wondering how to evenly split the winged trophy for best actress in a TV movie between stars Drew Barrymore (Little Edie) and Jessica Lange (Big Edie). Their competition, with every nominee playing a real person, includes Sigourney Weaver as a homophobic woman who repents after her gay son commits suicide, in *Prayers for Bobby*, a nominee for best TV movie; Shirley MacLaine, who was off-the-rack as inventor of the little black dress in *Coco Chanel*; and Houston's Chandra Wilson, who went homeless for the holidays in last fall's *Accidental Friendship*. Wilson is also nominated for best supporting actress in a drama series for *Grey's Anatomy*.

Our town's Jim Parsons is finally up for best actor in a comedy series for his highly acclaimed Sheldon Cooper on *The Big Bang Theory*. How did that happen?

Well, this year the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences decided to honor six nominees in comedy- and drama-series categories.

Parsons, 36, studied acting at the University of Houston and co-founded Infernal Bridegroom Productions. Eleven years ago, he played The Worm, in IBP's rendition of Bertold Brecht's *In the Jungle of Cities*, in a sweltering, corrugated metal barn with no air-conditioning—in Houston, in June! Now he's nominated for an Emmy for working with Johnny Galecki, 34, who was David on *Roseanne*, and more enticingly, on Broadway he played a full-frontal nude scene as male prostitute Alex in 2006's *The Little Dog Laughed*. Out actor and Sir Ian McKellen is nominated for playing no less than the title role in *King Lear*, but let's not dwell on his nude scene.

That extra nomination slot also paid off for our own two-time Tony-winning actress Cherry Jones, whose portrayal of a U.S. president on 24 is nominated for supporting actress in a drama series. *OutSmart* cover girls Kristen Chenoweth (May) and Vanessa Williams (this month) duke it out for best supporting actress in a comedy series.

Where are Kathy Griffin's gays? On Emmy night, many will be jammed in the closet at Nokia Theater in Los Angeles, secretly hoping for a marriage-equality shout-out should Griffin win again. Newly christened as "Norma Gay," Griffin could pick up two trophies this year. Her series *My Life on the D List* is the reigning outstanding reality program, and *Kathy Griffin: She'll Cut a Bitch* is nominated for best music or comedy special.

Other outrageous Griffins are nominated for best comedy series, as *Family Guy* is the first animated show to make the cut in the category since *The Flintstones* in 1961. Or so I'm told. I don't watch the show, →



Jessica Lange (l) and Drew Barrymore in *Grey Gardens*.



Cherry Jones in *24*.



Ian McKellen in *King Lear*.

And the Emmy Goes to...

continued from previous page

but wouldn't you know, on the one episode I happened to catch, the Griffins flee to Texas, where cross-dressing Stewie enters a "Little Miss" pageant? (My research reveals there was another episode in which Stewie, watching girls undressing in a locker room, remarked, "It appears my wee-wee's been stricken with rigor mortis.") I don't watch *United States of Tara* either, but Toni Collette reportedly plays a biker dude (sometimes) and must do so pretty well, as she's up for best actress in a comedy series.

I get 400 or 500 channels, yet never see a lot of this stuff. But hopefully, in the list of major nominations, you'll find plenty of hopefuls to root for, even if there's no hardware in sight for makeup or costumes on *RuPaul's Drag Race*, best boy toy (Branden) on *Make Me a Supermodel*, or best villain (Wes) or hero (Jake) on this season's *The Bachelorette*.

Also, you won't find Kyle Chandler or Connie Britton nominated for their deserving work as a straight Texas married couple on *Friday Night Lights*, or Matthew Rhys and Luke McFarlane as gay newlyweds Kevin and Scotty on *Brothers and Sisters*. However, both shows are nominated for outstanding casting in a drama series, along with *Damages*, *The Tudors*, *True Blood*, and reigning Emmy champ *Mad Men*.

Donalevan Maines also writes about Southern Rapture in this issue of *OutSmart* magazine.

And the Nominees (in a few categories) Are . . .

Outstanding Drama Series

Big Love
Breaking Bad
Damages
Dexter
House
Lost
Mad Men

Outstanding Comedy Series

Entourage
Family Guy
Flight of the Conchords
How I Met Your Mother
The Office
30 Rock
Weeds

Outstanding Actor in a Drama Series

Brian Cranston, *Breaking Bad*
Michael C. Hall, *Dexter*
Hugh Laurie, *House*
Gabriel Byrne, *In Treatment*
John Hamm, *Mad Men*
Simon Baker, *The Mentalist*

Outstanding Actress in a Drama Series

Sally Field, *Brothers & Sisters*
Kyra Sedgwick, *The Closer*
Glenn Close, *Damages*
Mariska Hargitay,
Law & Order: Special Victims Unit
Elisabeth Moss, *Mad Men*
Holly Hunter, *Saving Grace*

Outstanding Actor in a Comedy Series

Jim Parsons, *The Big Bang Theory*
Jemaine Clement,
Flight of the Conchords
Tony Shalhoub, *Monk*
Steve Carrell, *The Office*
Alec Baldwin, *30 Rock*
Charlie Sheen, *Two and a Half Men*

Outstanding Actress in a Comedy Series

Julia Louis-Dreyfus,
The New Adventures of Old Christine
Christina Applegate, *Samantha Who?*
Sarah Silverman,
The Sarah Silverman Program
Tina Fey, *30 Rock*

Toni Collette, *United States of Tara*
Mary-Louise Parker, *Weeds*

Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Drama Series

William Shatner, *Boston Legal*
Christian Clemenson, *Breaking Bad*
Aaron Paul, *Breaking Bad*
William Hurt, *Damages*
Michael Emerson, *Lost*
John Slattery, *Mad Men*

Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Drama Series

Rose Byrne, *Damages*
Sandra Oh, *Grey's Anatomy*
Chandra Wilson, *Grey's Anatomy*
Dianne Wiest, *In Treatment*
Hope Davis, *In Treatment*
Cherry Jones, *24*

Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series

Kevin Dillon, *Entourage*
Neil Patrick Harris,
How I Met Your Mother
Rainn Wilson, *The Office*
Tracy Morgan, *30 Rock*
Jack McBrayer, *30 Rock*
Jon Cryer, *Two and a Half Men*

Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series

Kristin Chenoweth, *Pushing Daisies*
Amy Poehler, *Saturday Night Live*
Kristin Wiig, *Saturday Night Live*
Jane Krakowski, *30 Rock*
Vanessa Williams, *Ugly Betty*
Elizabeth Perkins, *Weeds*



OutSmart cover girls Kristin Chenoweth and Vanessa Williams duke it out over supporting actress in a comedy series. When Chenoweth was asked who (other than herself) she would like to see win, she answered: "Vanessa Williams. I think she's terrific in *Ugly Betty*. Just terrific."

Outstanding Made for Television Movie

Coco Chanel
Grey Gardens
Into the Storm
Prayers for Bobby
Taking Chance

Outstanding Lead Actor in a Miniseries or a Movie

Kevin Kline, *Cyrano de Bergerac*
Brendan Gleeson, *Into the Storm*
Sir Ian McKellen, *King Lear*
Kevin Bacon, *Taking Chance*
Kiefer Sutherland, *24: Redemption*
Kenneth Branagh,
Wallander: One Step Behind

Outstanding Lead Actress in a Miniseries or a Movie

Chandra Wilson, *Accidental Friendship*
Shirley MacLaine, *Coco Chanel*
Drew Barrymore, *Grey Gardens*
Jessica Lange, *Grey Gardens*
Sigourney Weaver, *Prayers for Bobby*

Outstanding Variety, Music, or Comedy Series

The Colbert Report
The Daily Show
The Late Show with David Letterman
Real Time with Bill Maher
Saturday Night Live

Outstanding Reality-Competition Program

The Amazing Race
American Idol
Dancing with the Stars
Project Runway
Top Chef

Outstanding Host for a Reality or Reality-Competition Program

Phil Keoghan, *Amazing Race*
Ryan Seacrest, *American Idol*
Tom Bergeron, *Dancing with the Stars*
Heidi Klum, *Project Runway*
Jeff Probst, *Survivor*
Padma Lakshmi and Tom Colicchio,
Top Chef

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Lady Gaga

(Out, 9/09, Joshua David Stein and Noah Michelson)

I very much want to inject gay culture into the mainstream. It's not an underground tool for me. It's my whole life. So I always sort of joke that the real motivation is to just turn the world gay.

Kylie Minogue

(Instinct, 9/09)

When I started out in music, going from acting to singing, that transition was very successful, but I also got flack for it. Many hurtful things were said. It wasn't easy. I was only 19, and I think the gay audience kinda picked up on that and decided to defend me and adopt me. They saw I was being criticized for being myself. While learning what does that mean, who am I? So I think all the attacks that were around at the time, took them to heart. And I love that. It means it was a totally organic coming together.

Carrie Fisher

(Out, 9/09)

We want someone gay on the Supreme Court so it would be more like "Diana Ross and the Supremes Court"!

Reba McEntire

(Out, 9/09, Dustin Fitzharris)

Dustin Fitzharris: There are going to be people who will not appreciate you doing an interview with a gay publication. What do you say to those individuals who are more conservative and don't support the LGBT community?

Reba McEntire: I just try not to judge. Don't judge me, and I won't judge you. And that's what it says in the Bible—"Don't judge." Keep an open mind. That would be my voice. I have gay friends. I have a lot of straight friends. I don't judge them. I take them for what they are. They're my friends, and I can't defend my feelings for them, other than I like 'em.

Do you think there is a place in country music for an openly gay artist?

[Laughs] I can't say for sure, but anything is possible.

Lily Tomlin

9 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

(Seattle Gay News, 9/2000)
Jane Wagner is Tomlin's life-partner.
Seattle Gay News:
What turns you on?

Lily Tomlin:
Jane Wagner.
Ha ha!

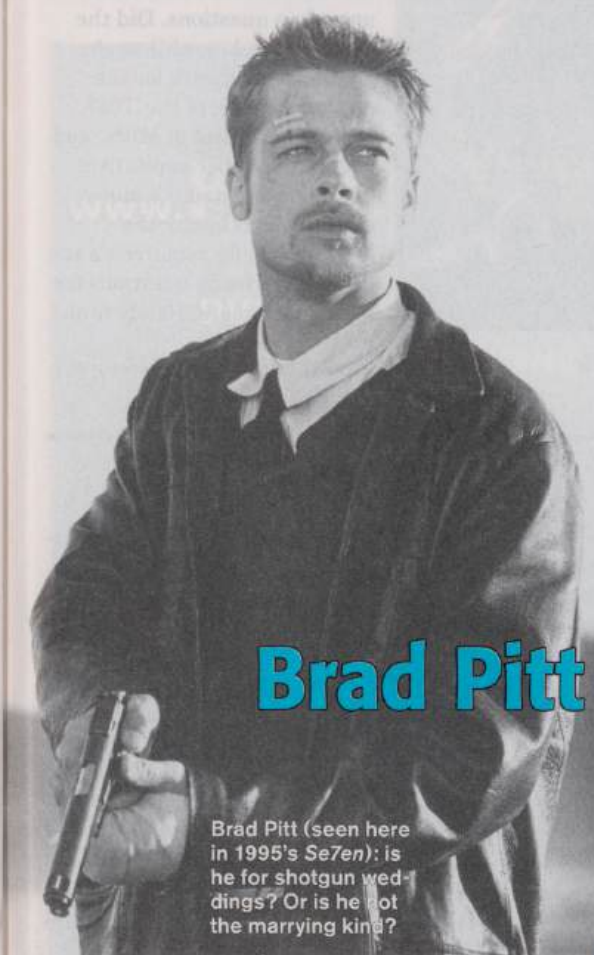


Neil Patrick Harris

(TV Guide, 7/27/09)
Harris is hosting this year's Emmys (see page 83) and is nominated for supporting actor in a comedy (How I Met Your Mother).

Being asked to host the show—terrific. Getting a third nomination—fantastic. Having the ability to scribble my name in the envelope backstage when no one is looking—priceless.

Openly gay Neil Patrick Harris (seen here hosting the recent Tony Awards): what's the cost of hosting the Emmys this year?



Brad Pitt

Brad Pitt (seen here in 1995's Se7en): is he for shotgun weddings? Or is he not the marrying kind?

Queer Quotes

Compiled by Blase DiStefano

Daniel Radcliffe

(Attitude, 8/09, Matthew Todd)

I just loathe homophobia. It's just disgusting and animal and stupid, and it's just thick people who can't get their heads around it and are just scared. And I'm not just saying that because I'm being interviewed for Attitude [a UK gay magazine]. I'd be using a lot stronger language if this wasn't on tape.

Daniel Radcliffe (pictured here in 2002's Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets) and at 20 years old on the cover of Attitude (inset): is he disgusted with homophobia?



Brüno

(Brüno is Sacha Baron Cohen's character in the film Brüno)

(GQ, 7/09)

In reality, ich sleep in a seaweed body wrap. . . In mein dreams, ich sleep naked in a giant reed basket drifting slowly down ze Nile, cradled in ze arms of Daniel Radcliffe.



(Parade.com, 8/5/09, Dotson Rader)

When someone asked me why Angie and I don't get married, I replied, "Maybe we'll get married when it's legal for everyone else." I stand by that, although I took a lot of flak for saying it—hate mail from religious groups. I believe everyone should have the same rights. They say gay marriage ruins families and hurts kids. Well, I've had the privilege of seeing my gay friends being parents and watching their kids grow up in a loving environment.

(The Today Show, 8/13/09, Ann Curry)

Ann Curry (showing him a BRAD PITT FOR MAYOR T-shirt): If chosen, would you run? Would you serve?

Brad Pitt: Yeah. I'm running on the gay-marriage, no-religion, legalization-and-taxation-of-marijuana platform.

Okay.

[Smiling] I don't have a chance.

THE PRODUCT OF ANARCHY

The Summer of Love had its consequences



Acting out: in *Born in 68*, Christophe (Edouard Collin, l) and Boris (Théo Frilet) are childhood best friends, then adult lovers. **BELOW:** Théo's mother, Catherine (Laetitia Casta), is the film's anchor.

Does what comes from what come? Oliver Martin and Jacques Ducastel appear to answer this question in the affirmative in their nearly three-hour epic tale of two generations of French gentle folk whose lives span the 40 years from the Paris riots of 1968 to the election of Nicolas Sarkozy.

Born in 68 (*Nés en 68*) begins with the Sorbonne riots of 1968 and follows the trajectory of French politics from the repressive post-war DeGaulle to the Socialist

Mitterrand to present-day Sarkozy. Of more immediate interest is the arc of socio-sexual evolution from the free-love communal life of the '60s to the early dark days of HIV to ACT UP and Le Pacs (the French civil union or *Pacte civil de solidarité*).



Born in 68 is told through the lives of Sorbonne revolutionaries Catherine, Yves, and Herve, their commune neighbor Maryse, and their children Ludmilla, Boris, and Christophe. Catherine is the fulcrum of the film, an innocent and heroic figure and the mother of Ludmilla and Boris. Catherine has sex with everyone, but the children are Yves'. Herve is too busy taking the revolution seriously and departs the commune for the underground. Maryse and Catherine become lifelong friends, and their sons Christophe and Boris become lovers.

Born in 68 is beautiful for the French countryside, the French language (English subtitles), and French sensibilities toward sex. The sex is more about love than sex, and tenderness abounds. The film is not

without lessons, though, and the lessons take the form of unspoken questions. Did the hippies' free-love philosophy lay the groundwork for the sexual excesses of the '70s? Did the socialism of Mitterrand lead to the hyper-capitalism of Sarkozy? Is today's multiculturalism laying the groundwork for tomorrow's xenophobia? Heady questions for a heady 40 years. Heady film.

John W. Stiles (johnwstiles.com) is a frequent contributor to OutSmart magazine.

DVD/VHS Shorts

Asian Queer Shorts



This grouping of five short films for and about gay Asian males includes works from South Korea, Indonesia, the USA, and, from the UK, *Yellow Fever*, the acclaimed 1998 comedy about self-esteem by director Raymond Yeung. Strand Releasing (strandreleasing.com). —Preview: Nancy Ford

James Dean: The Fast Lane

As we approach the 54th anniversary of James Dean's tragic death behind the wheel of his Porsche Spyder on a California highway, it's harder than ever to separate the legend from the artist. One way to do it, though, is



to go back to his art, particularly his contributions to three iconic films of the mid-1950s: *East of Eden*, *Rebel Without a Cause*, and *Giant*. Less familiar are his stage and television appearances. Unfortunately, we can only read about the stage work, but 10 of his television appearances are collected in a new two-disc set, *James Dean: The Fast Lane*. You'll need a certain amount of patience, or perhaps obsessive interest, to sit through some of these rather moldy-looking antiques, but if you're a true Dean fan, it's worth it. The set doesn't include the three Dean film classics, but it does contain a rather dreary (if still essential) 1957 documentary, *The James Dean Story*, directed by none other than

Robert Altman. Infinity Entertainment Group (infinity-entertainmentgroup.com). —Review: Jack Varsi

The Judy Garland Show: Volume 1



Sure, it's entertainment of the highest caliber. Even more, this intro to the legendary performer whose death is said to have helped spark the modern gay rights movement is a remarkable slice of history. Here are the first two episodes of the frail powerhouse's 26-episode television season, circa 1963-64, with guests Count Basie, Mel Tormé, and a teenaged Liza. Infinity Entertainment Group (infinity-entertainmentgroup.com). —Review: N.F. ■

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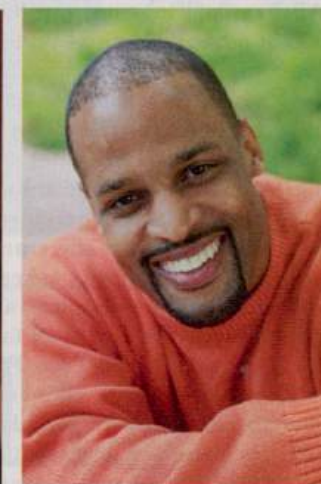
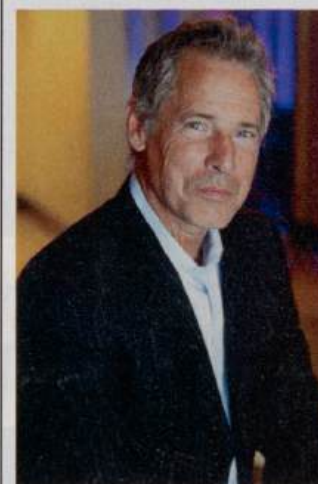
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Television

by Nancy Ford

ON THE TUBE

It's a fine time for gay TV

Tired of getting your queer TV fix with Logo's reruns of *Queer as Folk* and *The L Word*? Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) recently announced the findings of The 2009 Network Responsibility Index, its third annual report analyzing representation of homosexual characters and themes on television. And the news is good.

ABC ranked tops among the five broadcast networks with 24 percent of programming hours reflecting LGBT content, with little wonder. It's harder, frankly, to name an ABC show that doesn't feature a gay character.

But ABC is not resting on its laurels, rolling out *Modern Family*, whose mere previews are already cracking us up. ABC's new comedy takes "an honest and often hilarious look at the composition and complexity of family life in 2009." In it, Jesse Tyler Ferguson (Mitchell) and Eric Stonestreet (Cameron), with their newly adopted Vietnamese daughter, represent the gay nucleus in an examination of a... well, modern family starring Ed O'Neill (*Married With Children*) and Julie Bowen (*Boston Legal*). Sept. 23, 8 p.m. ABC (abc.go.com).

Otherwise on gAyBC, *Desperate Housewives* returns for a sixth season, after knocking off Edie (Nicollette Sheridan) and knocking up Lynette (Felicity Huffman). Gay sons, gay neighbors... gaygaygay. Sept. 27, 8 p.m. ABC (abc.go.com).

Brothers & Sisters enters its fourth season, after last season framing not only a same-sex wedding but featuring ongoing, nonsensational gay themes in every episode. As the long-suffering matriarch, Sally Field is up for yet another Emmy Award (see page 83), adding even more credibility to the show that has become PFLAG's best friend. Sept. 27, 9 p.m. ABC (abc.go.com).

For those who need a distraction from the raging national health care debate (but not too much of a distraction), *Grey's Anatomy* is now in its sixth season. For this go 'round, Jessica Capshaw, playing resident lesbian Dr. Arizona Robbins, gets an upgrade from part-time



Gayer than Logo? (clockwise from top left): Jesse Tyler Ferguson (I) and Eric Stonestreet in ABC's *Modern Family*; Jane Lynch in Fox's *Glee*; Hayden Panettiere in NBC's *Heroes*; Luke Macfarlane (I) and Matthew Rhys in ABC's *Brothers & Sisters*; and Sara Ramirez in ABC's *Grey's Anatomy*.

to full-time cast member, which should allow her more face time, so to speak, with Sara Ramirez (Dr. Callie Torres). Hmmm... anybody know whatever became of Isaiah Washington? Sept. 24, 8 p.m. ABC (abc.go.com).

Switching channels, Fox rose to third place in the index with 11 percent LGBT-inclusivity in its 782.5 total primetime programming hours. Contributing to that bump, one of our favorite out actors, the hysterical Jane Lynch, stars as "Coach Sue Sylvester" in *Glee*, a twisted answer to the wildly popular *High School Musical* franchise. Matthew Morrison (Broadway's *Hairspray*) plays Will Schuester, intent on taking McKinley High School's glee club to the national competition. Did somebody say "show tune"? Sept. 9, 8 p.m. FOX (fox.com).

Eight percent of NBC's programming features a queer character, GLAAD found. This month, in *Heroes*' fifth "volume," the ever-indestructible Claire (Hayden Panettiere), now a college student, finds herself living with lesbian Gretchen (Madeline Zima). Is our favorite teen super heroine super enough to avoid becoming a LUG? Sept. 21, 7 p.m. NBC (nbc.com).

CBS saw the greatest decline among the broadcast networks this year, dropping to last place with only five percent of its programming being LGBT-inclusive content. But don't forget the NFL returns this month: the Houston Texans start their eighth season here at home, facing off against the New York Jets, replete with its skintight knee pants and unbridled ass-slapping. Admit it—it doesn't get much gayer than that. Sept. 13, noon. CBS (cbs.com).

Wild About Houston

The lovely and talented Alton LaDay has landed his own segment on KTBV-TV Channel 55's popular program spotlighting local happenings. LaDay's weekly segment, entitled "The A! List," concentrates on arts, food, fashion, and social scenes as well as Houston's undiscovered treasures, locales, and events. Sept. 25, 1 p.m. houstons55.com. ■

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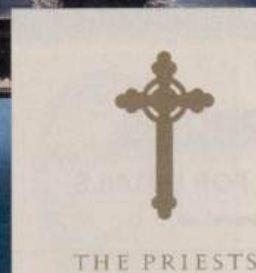
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Am I the only one who thinks that the concept for the self-titled disc by **The Priests** (RCA) sounds like the punchline to a joke? Something like, "Three priests walk into a recording studio. . . ." Of course, The Priests are no laughing matter. Taking time out of their busy schedules (there's another sa-creligious joke in there somewhere), Irish tenors/siblings Father Eugene O'Hagan and Father Martin O'Hagan and Father David Delargy recorded 14 tracks of sacred music (including Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Pie Jesu" and Schubert's "Ave Maria"), and officially joined the ranks of pop stars.

Much has been made of unlikely TV talent show diva Susan Boyle. But a couple of years before she became an Internet sensation, there was **Paul Potts**. The winner of the first season of *Britain's Got Talent*, Potts paved the way for Boyle. On his domestic major-label debut *Passione* (Sycor Music/Columbia), Potts shows off his pipes on songs including "La Prima Volta" (an Italian version of "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face"), "Sei Con Me/There for Me" (a duet with Hayley Westenra), "A Time for Us" (Nino Rota's dazzling love theme from Zeffirelli's *Romeo &*



Juliet), Italian versions of "Whiter Shade of Pale," "Memory," as well as selections by Puccini, Chopin, and others.

Another celebrated tenor, **Andrea Bocelli**, is the voice behind *Incanto* (Sugar/Decca), a collection of romantic Italian. It's the kind of album that would do Mario Lanza proud.

The kings of classical crossover **Il Divo** maintain the status quo on *The Promise* (Sycor Music/Columbia), their most recent release. Opera queens are sure to delight at the way they ratchet up the drama on "Adagio" and Abba's "The Winner Takes It All," and go the distance with Ennio Morricone's "L'Alba Del Mondo" but don't quite answer our prayers on Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah." A slightly schmaltzier (if that's possible) all-female version can be found in the **Three Graces**, who have a self-titled (Decca) disc to their name.

Like The Section Quartet, **East Village Opera Company** works in the realm of the →

GrooveOut Shorts

Janis Ian
The Essential Janis Ian

Janis Ian became a songwriter at the age of 12, and that first song, "Hair of Spun Gold," starts off this exciting two-CD collection with a haunting childlike audacity. The sequencing of the *Essential* survey of 31 Ian songs is not chronological—rather she time-bops around from 1966 to 2008—and we get a picture of a life lived out loud (she came out in 1993 with her album *Breaking Silence*), sometimes lyric, sometimes intense, whether confronting the hypocrisy of '60s society or singing the wrenching "Johnny I Hardly Knew Ye" in 2005 for a music collection by former U.S. attorney general Janet Reno. Sept. 8. Columbia/Legacy (legacyrecordings.com, janisian.com).

—Review: Ann Walton Sieber

Editor's Note: Ian performs at the Dosey Doe in the Woodlands on October 23. Tickets are \$64, \$72 with dinner. More info: 281/367-3774.

Linq
Rx and the Side Effects

It's fitting this former pharmacist has chosen the sad state of health care in America as the theme of her fourth album. Old-school lesbian womyn's music; you'll want to go camping. Foremother June Millington (Cris Williamson) produces and guests on bass. Linq Songs (linqmusci.com). —Preview: Nancy Ford

Sarah Bettens
Never Say Goodbye

A frequent favorite of the Houston Women's Festival, this former K's Choice fronter gathers new songs, old favorites (including the disturbing "Daddy's Gun"), and even a couple of covers for this debut on her own label. Tasty. Cocoon Records (sarahbettens.com). —Review: N.F.

Cazwell
Watch My Mouth

The gay king of whimsical hip-hop/dance busts a full CD package chock full of various MP3s and videos of his cult-pleasing tracks, including the new title tune and last year's hysterical "I Seen Beyoncé at the Burger King." Peace Biscuit (peacebiscuit.com). —Review: N.F.

Colton Ford
Under the Covers

We approached listening to this collection of 18 cover tunes with a skeptical ear, but were pleasantly surprised. A darling of Logo's *Now Next* series, Ford's remake of REM's "Losing My Religion" is among the best. Peace Biscuit (peacebiscuit.com). —Review: N.F. →

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GrooveOut continued from page 92

opera/rock hybrid. On *Old School* (Decca), they put Wagner through a Led Zeppelin process on “The Ride,” while Mozart is dipped in Queen on “King of the Night.” Handel’s “Help Me (Jove, in Pity)” and “Walk” turn out to be two of the most sweetly accessible tracks on the disc. Verdi gets funky on “Brindisi Libera (pop the cork),” while Bach sounds like he belongs in a Broadway musical on “You’re Not Alone.”

Britain’s got more talent than just Susan Boyle and Paul Potts. Competitors **Escala**, an all-female string quartet (remember Bond from a few years ago), are ready to sweep American audiences off their feet with their self-titled debut disc (Syco Music/Columbia). Drawing on an interesting range of material, including Led Zeppelin’s “Kashmir” (on which they are joined by Slash), Paul McCartney’s “Live and Let Die,” and the Nina Simone chestnut “Feeling Good,” as well as more classically minded compositions by Handel and Barber, Escala proves that they have pluck.

David Garrett is another young wizard of the strings and he burns them up on his new self-titled disc (Decca). He raises the temperature on Vivaldi’s “Summer” and follows it with an exquisite arrangement of “Nothing Else Matters” by none other than Metallica. Garrett also restrains the late Michael Jackson (“Smooth Criminal”), Queen (“Who Wants to Live Forever”), AC/DC (“Thunderstruck”), and Bill Withers (“Ain’t No Sunshine”), and narrowly avoids sounding like elevator music.

Like Escala, pianist **William Joseph** tries his hand at Zeppelin’s “Kashmir” and doesn’t do too much damage. It’s only one of two covers (the other is Morricone’s “Cinema Paradiso”), on Joseph’s *Beyond* (Reprise/143), which features a number of collaborations with David Foster (if you have the stomach for that).

Gregg Shapiro is a past recipient of the annual OutMusic award that recognizes contributions by non-musicians in furthering the work of LGBT performers.

GrooveOut Shorts

continued from page 92

Elektrik Red

How to Be a Lady, Vol. 1



With its motto, “It’s hard being an authentic girl in a Botox world,” this most recent leggy femme quartet spins some funky, freaky tunes, including the nasty “We F*ck You.” Plus, we appreciate their support of the ongoing fight against California’s heinous Proposition 8. Island Def Jam (defjam.com). —Review: N.F.

Kaylah Marin Loving Life



Just done scoring the music for the environmental award-winning *Texas Gold* documentary, this soulful, easy-listening artist with techno roots wowed the audience at San Francisco’s 2009 Pride celebration, especially with the breakout single “Green Caddie.” Multi-Grammy winner Narada Michael Walden produces. Epiphany Productions (kaylahmarin.com). —Review: N.F.

Daniel Gray Invictus



The inspiration for this Hurricane Katrina survivor’s debut album came after he spotted his couch floating down the street on the news. Though he says he’s straight, he hopes his dramatic dance/pop music transcends sexuality; “Lost-Found” and “Bombastic” are fine starts. Stryker Brown Entertainment (danielgrayworld.com). —Review: N.F.

LeToya Lady Love



Houston-born Ms. Luckett entered our consciousness as a member of Destiny’s Child, having co-written “Say My Name.” Here, she teams with Grammy Award-winning artist Ne-Yo on “Not Anymore,” which may become an anthem for women done wrong by their triflin’ boyfriends. Capitol Records (capitolrecords.com). —Review: N.F.

Anjulie Anjulie



There’s something Winehouse-y about this debut album from the exotic alt pop singer-songwriter, especially on the seductive initial track, “Boom.” And the at-first lush, then mildly threatening strings on “Crazy That Way” lend a creative touch. But the acoustically driven “Same Damn Thing” wins the big prize here. Hear Music (anjuliemusic.com). —Review: N.F.

Ledisi Turn Me Loose



Ledisi’s first offering since her first album, *Lost & Found* (which snagged her a Grammy nomination for best new artist), utilizes the considerable talents of contemporary producers Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, and Rex Rideout. But damned if she doesn’t take us back to the days of the Cotton Club with her brief tease of Willie Nelson’s “Crazy,” of all things. Verve Records (ledisi.com). —Review: N.F.

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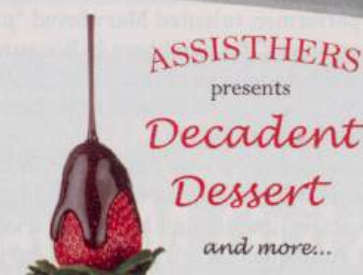
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DOUBLE JEOPARDY

The dual lives of TV host and media mogul Merv Griffin

You just can't help it. Much as you try, you can't help picking up one of those tabloids while you're waiting in line at the grocery store. This star divorced that one after he had an affair with this one over there because she split up another star's marriage and...

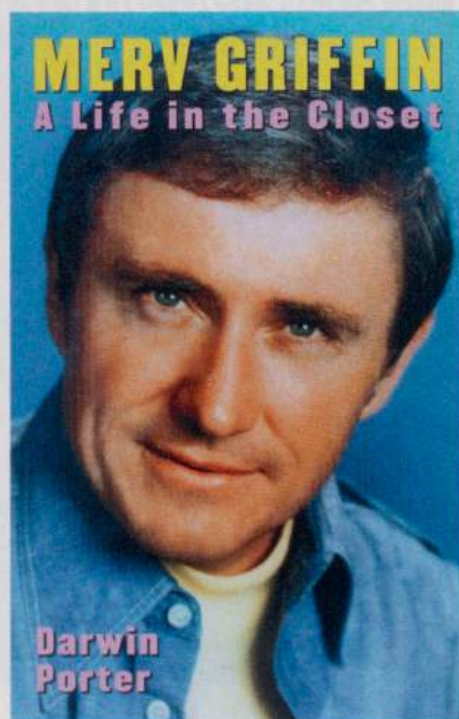
It's just way too much fun to stargaze. Read the new book *Merv Griffin: A Life in the Closet* by Darwin Porter (Blood Moon Productions, bloodmoonproductions.com), and you'll get an eyeful. Just remember—you've been warned.

One of the most powerful memories Merv Griffin ever had was when his parents were forced out of their home, their belongings confiscated, when young Merv was just five years old. Even at that tender age, he vowed to his mother that he would build her a mansion someday.

Though his father didn't want him to be a performer, talented Merv loved "putting on shows" for neighbors in his aunt's house. That same aunt taught the boy to play piano and, in short order, he was a better pianist than she.

Long before he was a teenager, Porter says, Merv knew he was attracted to boys. That attraction, though his father tried early on to quash it, strengthened during Merv's adolescence.

Because his uncle was a tennis pro who owned a club and gave lessons to Hollywood's elite, young Merv was able to meet and spend time with stars such as Errol Flynn, Johnny Weissmuller, and others.



Though Porter says much of that time was spent ogling men in the locker room, Merv became close friends with people—both men and women—who quickly furthered his budding career. Soon, he was singing for and with some of Hollywood's brightest stars.

Never one to miss an opportunity, Merv manipulated his career at every turn by pouncing on every opportunity he found. Porter indicates that, by the time Merv (the eventual creator of the game

show *Jeopardy!*) was called for an audition with producers Mark Goodson and Bill Todman, he was well-known and had an established fan base.

And he had quite a reputation in Hollywood... for more than just his singing.

Reading like a naked *Who's Who* of Hollywood, *Merv Griffin: A Life in the Closet* is, on one hand, a delightful guilty pleasure. On the other hand, it's a bit overwhelming because names are tossed out like fastballs and chronology seems to be merely a suggestion.

Author Darwin Porter says in his acknowledgements that he spoke to "hundreds of people associated with the entertainment industry," and not just about Merv. His research, though staggering, is nothing if not thorough. Astute readers, however, will notice a lot of direct quotes and entire conversations that purportedly happened decades ago, which makes for an engaging read but eventually feels tabloid-fakey. While it's true that this book fits with others in the tell-all genre, I would've been happier with just the facts, ma'am.

Still, if you're a hopeless tab junkie and you can't get enough scandal, pick up this book. For you, *Merv Griffin: A Life in the Closet* will have you hung up and hooked.

Terri Schlichenmeyer has been reading since she was three years old, and she never goes anywhere without a book. She lives on a hill in Wisconsin with two dogs and 11,000 books.

For more ReadOut (a review of Chandler Burr's *You or Someone Like You*) see page 98 →

ReadOut Shorts

Café Tempest

Barbara Bonfigli

Tell Me Press (tellymepress.com)

I love fictional memoirs—they allow writers to share the heart of a story while allowing them to protect the innocent. In *Café Tempest*, Sarah agrees to direct the local Greek townspeople in a production of the *The Tempest*. Everything you would expect from such a setup ensues. This book has it all—a magnificent sense of place, wonderful characters to care about, and some of the best dialogue I've read in a while. I'm trying hard not to hold the publisher's apparent homophobia (we're

told it's a gay book by a mis-cut little piece of paper inserted in the reader's copy) against this excellent debut novel. —Review: Angel Curtis

Cheever: A Life

Blake Bailey

Borzoi Books (aaknopf.com)



John Cheever (1912–1982), Pulitzer Prize-winning chronicler of suburban angst, was the very model of a post-modern, self-loathing, closeted, alcoholic bisexual who viewed his sexual orientation as "some enormous bruise." In 679 pages, his biographer titillatingly traces

Cheever's 70 sad years as an "imposter" in 20th-century society, including how, in Berlin, gay Texan Paul Moor rebuffed Cheever's advances. —Preview: Donalevan Maines

Pop Salvation

Lance Reynald

Harper Perennial (harpercollins.com)



Caleb is a small southern boy at a Washington private school. Lonely and isolated, he comes into his true self when he discovers the art of Andy Warhol, *Rocky Horror Picture Show*, and the people who were always there, but not previously seen. Darkly humorous →

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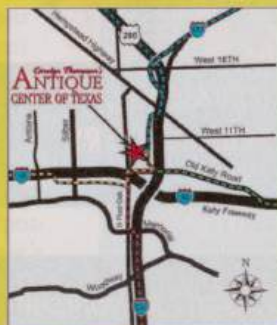
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ReadOut continued from page 96

FORBIDDEN LOVE, BUBBALA

What happens when a Jew and a Gentile mate



As the English mother of a half-Jewish Agay son, Anne Rosenbaum is the kind of person who . . . no, she is a person, period, who doesn't let nationality, culture, or inherited religious beliefs define her. She's also one of relatively few fictional characters in Chandler Burr's terrific debut novel *You or Someone Like You* (HarperCollins, harpercollins.com), which is roundly peopled by bold-faced Hollywood names ("Kate," for example, is actress Kate Caphsaw, and her son "Sawyer" is Sawyer Spielberg, son of Steven).

Married to Hollywood executive Howard Rosenbaum, Anne improbably finds herself leading a book club that becomes a big draw for Tinseltown's elite (improbable because "nobody reads in Hollywood," a character quips). But when son Sam, 17, goes to Israel and is rejected by a yeshiva for being impure because of his Gentile mother, Howard faces a crisis of conscience and becomes a "ba'al teshuva," a Jew returned to "G-d." Temple commands that Howard extinguish his "forbidden love" for the shiksa and divorce Anne.

Backed by Sam and Jack, a budding gay screenwriter, Anne fights to restore her marriage by sampling passages from the couple's best-loved authors and channeling her pleas to Howard through members of the book club.

Burr, 46, who is gay, allows that "what happens to [Sam in Israel] happened to me, in real life, more or less exactly as described." It's taken Burr 20 years to process that event into a thoughtful, acerbic work of comic fiction. While I've read that Burr has never had a long-term romantic relationship, it strikes me as odd because his book is a beautiful portrait of a marriage and loving parenthood.

I nominate Angelina Jolie to play strong-willed Anne in the movie version.

—Donlevan Maines ■

ReadOut Shorts

continued from page 96

and nicely plotted, *Pop Salvation* is an insightful look at becoming who we truly are. Don't let the fact that gay coming-of-age stories are all the rage right now keep you away from this right-on story. —Review: A.C.

Official Book Club Selection

Kathy Griffin

Ballantine (ballantinebooks.com)



The feisty comic settles a few scores, celebrates the friends and mentors who helped her claw her way to the middle, and shares insider gossip about celebrity behavior—the good, the bad, and the very ugly. She also reveals intimate details about her life before and after she made it to the big time. We're buying it for the title alone. Sept. 8. —Preview: Suzie Lynde

Editor's note: see next month's issue of OutSmart magazine for an interview with Kathy Griffin.

Ready or Not . . . They're Gay

Paul and Hjordy Wagner

Synergy Books (synergybooks.com)



Coming out to one's family is often one of the most anxiety-producing events a family experiences. This new volume not only shares the story of a family, it includes information about how to come out to family in a way that maximizes your chances that it will be a positive experience. It also includes information about how to respond when someone you know comes out to you and a checklist to help make schools safer for everyone involved. Have this in hand when you come out to your family. —Review: A.C.

Men in Motion: The Art and Passion of the Male Dancer

Photographed by François Rousseau

Universe Publishing (rizzoliusa.com)



Rousseau explores the beauty and power of dancers by capturing the movements of members of classical dance companies, including Opera de Paris and the New York City Ballet, and contemporary dance troupes, such as Alvin Ailey and Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane, as well as dancers from the worlds of Broadway, hip-hop, acrobatic, and folk dance.

—Preview: Troy Carrington

Retail Hell: How I Sold My Soul to the Store, Confessions of a Tortured Sales Associate

Freeman Hall

Adams Media (adamsmedia.com)



Long on title but even longer on snarky laughs, this memoir of a gay man who won countless awards (Purse Oscars?) for his expertise in handbag sales at a high-end department store reminds us why we stopped shopping at the Galleria years ago. —Preview: Nancy Ford ■



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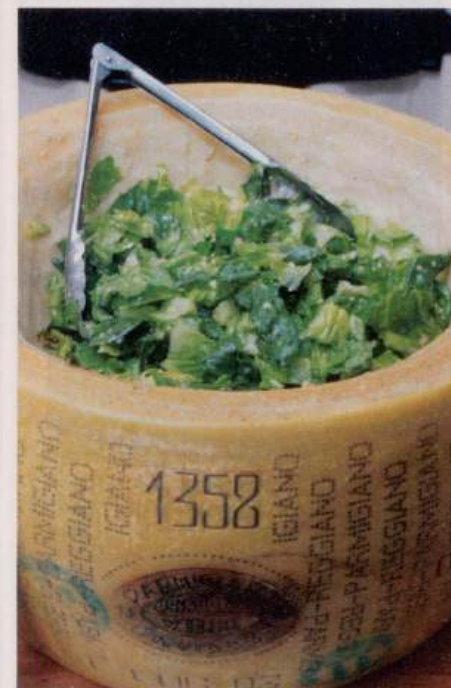
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DineOut

by Nancy Ford

TOSS YOUR SALADS

The 25th Annual
Caesar Salad
Competition



Lettuce munchers in the know are already aware that the garlic and anchovy-heavy classic palate pleaser was not named for that wily skirt-wearing ruler of ancient Rome. According to salad lore, it was chef Caesar Cardini who first fashioned the salad from a hodgepodge of available ingredients in his San Diego restaurant in 1924.

Eighty-five years and a lot of croutons later, some of Houston's most acclaimed chefs/restaurateurs compete for the title of our city's Best Caesar Salad, with tossers vying for Best Classic Caesar, Most Creative Caesar, Consumers' Choice, and Best Overall Presentation.

Adding additional pressure, direct descendants of Chef Cardini are scheduled to be in attendance to help commemorate a quarter-century's worth of festivities.

October 2, 5-8 p.m. Doubletree Hotel Houston Downtown, Allen Center, 400 Dallas St. The \$35 ticket includes food and wine. Benefits Food & Beverage Managers' Educational Endowment. caesarsaladcompetitionhouston.com. ■

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Calendar of Events

Compiled by Nancy Ford

Queer Film (in Austin)

Houston's annual queer film festival is defunct, so 'philes with a craving for cinema might want to consider a road trip to AGLIFF, the revered Austin Gay and Lesbian International Film Festival.

As usual, AGLIFF chose an ambitious roster of six days' worth of films appealing to movie-loving palates of all descriptions. Among the guaranteed audience-pleasers is *The Reluctant Traveler*. The vérité documentary is told in first-person form by Marco Orsini, a gay man who, though accustomed to being pampered by his affluent

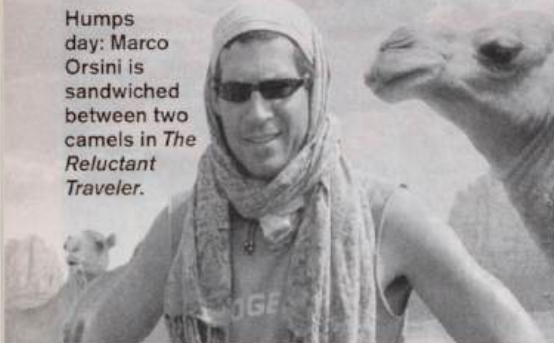
partner, embarks on a rugged journey through Ethiopia to fulfill that ailing partner's dream. *The Reluctant Traveler* screens September 10.

But the 22nd annual festival possibly peaks with *Hannah Free*, screening September 12, 4:55. Sharon Gless (*Queer as Folk*) stars in the title role in this passionate lesbian drama "about a lifelong love affair between an

independent spirit and the woman she calls home."

The entire festival plays September 8 through 13. Alamo Draft-house, 1120 S. Lamar Blvd. Details: agliff.org. —Nancy Ford

Humps day: Marco Orsini is sandwiched between two camels in *The Reluctant Traveler*.



Gless goes gay: Sharon Gless plays the title role—and gets affectionate with Maureen Gallagher (inset)—in the lesbian drama *Hannah Free*.

FILM

Return to Oz. Landmark Theatres presents the second thrilling live-action adventure based on L. Frank Baum's Oz books as part of its Midnight Madness series. Sept. 4-5, midnight. Landmark's River Oaks Theatre, 2009 W. Gray. landmarktheatres.com • 713/866-8881.

Ann Arbor Film Festival. Internationally recognized showcase for groundbreaking cinema, presented by Aurora Picture Show. Sept. 12, 7 p.m. Freneticore, 5102 Navigation Blvd. aurorapictureshow.org • 713/868-2101.

Matango. Cannibalism-theme feature (1963) about why eating forest fungi can be dangerous. Plus shorts by Jason Villegas, who is currently exhibiting at Contemporary Arts Museum. Sept. 18, 8:30 p.m. Domy Books, 1709 Westheimer. domystore.com • 713/523-3669.

Two Women (La ciociara). Vittorio De Sica's 1960 masterpiece starring Sophia Loren. Italian with English subtitles. Sept. 19, 7 p.m. Museum of Fine Arts Houston, 1001 Bissonnet. mfa.org • 713/639-7300, 713/639-7379 (Spanish).

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. **E-MAIL INFO TO:** calendar@outsmartmagazine.com. **MAIL INFO TO:** OutSmart Magazine, 3406 Audubon Place, Houston, TX 77006. **FAX INFO TO:** 713/522-3275.

NO LISTINGS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE DEADLINE DATE—5 P.M., THURSDAY, SEPT. 10.

SEPTEMBER PERFORMING ARTS

House of Yes. Wendy MacLeod's dark comedy about a family and their black secrets. Through Sept. 12. Country Playhouse, 12802 Queensbury Ln. countryplayhouse.org • 713/467-4497.

The Lighter Side of the Recession. Sketch comedy that deals with the current economic climate. Sept. 3–Nov. 21. Radio Music Theatre, 2623 Colquitt St. radiomusictheatre.com • 713/522-7722.

The Wayside Motor Inn houses five pairs of travelers who check into the same motel room (at different times, of course). Sept. 4–26. Theatre Southwest, 8944-A Clarkcrest St. theatresouthwest.org • 713/661-9505.

Houston Brazilian Festival showcases Brazilian dance, art, history, cultural performances, and cuisine from across the country. Sept. 5, 4–10 p.m. Jones Plaza, 615 Louisiana. houstonbrazilianfestival.org • 713/862-3300.

The House of the Spirits. English-language premiere of Caridad Svich's adaptation of Isabel Allende's sprawling, multi-generational novel. Sept. 5–Oct. 11. Main Street Theatre, 2540 Times Blvd. mainstreettheatre.com • 713-524-6706.

Bollywood Blast 2009. Samskri Society for the Indian Performing Arts presents songs and dances with an Indian flair. Sept. 6, 8 p.m. Miller Outdoor Theatre, 100 Concert Dr. Free. milleroutdoortheatre.com • 281/373-3386.

Grease. Theatre Under the Stars presents *American Idol* winner Taylor Hicks starring in the seminal 1950s musical. Sept. 8–20. Hobby Center for Performing Arts, 800 Bagby. tuts.com • 713/558-8887.

On the Town. Three sailors experience New York City on a 24-hour leave. Presented by Bayou City Concert Musicals. Sept. 10–13. Houston Community College's Heinen Theatre, 3517 Austin. 713/465-6484.

13. Theatre Under the Stars presents Jason Robert Brown's new

musical comedy about coming of age, teen traumas, and high school survival. Sept. 10–12. Hobby Center for Performing Arts, 800 Bagby. tuts.com • 713/558-8887.

Manon. presented by Houston Ballet, portrays a young woman who free-falls through Parisian society, until degraded and penniless, then dies an outcast. Sept. 10–20. Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas Ave. houstonballet.org • 713/227-2787.

Fresh Fest. University of Houston Dance Ensemble and Travesty Dance Group present dance and theatrical performances, a poetry booth, film screenings after dark, an instrument petting zoo, and more. Sept. 11, 6:30–10 p.m. Discovery Green Park, 1500 McKinney. Free. fresharts.org.

The Trilogy: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Dominic Walsh Dance Theater presents a program set to Mozart's classics. Sept. 11–12. Free. Miller Outdoor Theatre, 100 Concert Drive. milleroutdoortheatre.com • 281/373-3386.

Ambassadors International Ballet Folklorico showcases the beauty and traditions of Mexico and Bolivia. Sept. 12, 11 a.m. Miller Outdoor Theatre, 100 Concert Dr. Free. milleroutdoortheatre.com • 281/373-3386.

El Grito features artists from Mexico, mariachis, folkloric dances, and more. Sept. 15, 3 p.m. Miller Outdoor Theatre, 100 Concert Dr. Free. milleroutdoortheatre.com • 281/373-3386.

13th Annual Grand Taiko Festival drumming concert combines with authentic Japanese classical dancing. Sept. 18–19, 7:30 p.m. Miller Outdoor Theatre, 100 Concert Dr. Free. milleroutdoortheatre.com • 281/373-3386.

See Rock City, a comedy/drama by Arlene Hutton. Sept. 18–Oct. 24. Theatre Suburbia, 4106 Way Out West Dr. theatre suburbia.com • 713/682-3525.

A Conversation with Russell Simmons. Brilliant Lecture Series welcomes the entertainment mogul, now the newly appointed United Nations Goodwill Ambassador. Sept. 19, 2:30 p.m. Arena Theatre, 7326 Southwest Freeway. \$20–\$150. brilliantlectures.org • 713/974-1335. →

One Year Later in Galveston

'Revival and Reflections' marks first anniversary of Hurricane Ike

It's a story of strength and survival as much as it is a story of tragedy. This month, Islanders commemorate the one-year anniversary of Hurricane Ike with Revival and Reflections, a series of events scheduled September 8 through 13.

With theatrical and musical presentations, historical films, a celebration of pets, and a "rebirth race," the events are as diverse as were the victims of the greatest natural tragedy to hit Galveston since the 1900 hurricane.

Galveston Island's Convention and Visitor's Bureau's public relations manager, RoShelle Gaskins, says the wide variety of events are intended to continue to heal those affected by Hurricane Ike's wrath.

"So many people have been expressing themselves with their art, or sculpture, or quilting," she says. "We thought this would be a great way to recognize how far we've come."

The events begin with a luncheon hosted by the United Way, thanking and honoring the many volunteers who responded to the Island in its time of need.

"We've worked really hard, and I think everyone deserves a pat on the back," Gaskins says.

Gaskins particularly recommends the Revival and Reflections closing ceremony, a commemorative walk through Galveston's downtown historic district that was decimated by the storm.

"I think people will be very moved by the before and after photos on display," she says.

Simultaneously, the Grand 1894 Opera House screens two films depicting Hurricane Ike as well as the Great Hurricane of 1900, offering an opportunity to those who have never experienced the opera house to see the grandeur of the venue.

For a complete roster of the commemorative events, log on to galveston.com or call 888/425-4753.

GALVESTON REVIVAL AND REFLECTIONS EVENTS

A Salute to Galveston. Moody Mansion Museum, 2618 Broadway. Presented by the Treasure Ball Association. Sept. 5–13, 5:30 p.m.

The 2009 United Way Galveston Kickoff Luncheon and Hurricane Ike Volunteer Celebration. Sept. 8, 12 p.m. Frances Anne Moody Ballroom at the Moody Gardens Hotel.

Revival and Reflections Opening Ceremony and Torch Relay. Sept. 8, 5:30 p.m. Fort Crockett Park, 4700 Seawall Blvd.

Remembrance Concert with the Lance Aldridge Band, featuring multi-media presentation of Ike's wrath

and destruction and scenes of Galveston's rebirth and redevelopment. Sept. 9, 6:30 p.m. Saengerfest Park, 23rd and Strand. Free.

Remembrance Concert with the Galveston Beach Band, featuring a multi-media presentation of Ike's wrath and destruction and scenes of Galveston's rebirth and redevelopment. Sept. 10, 6:30 p.m. Saengerfest Park, 23rd and Strand. Free.

25th & Market Street Revival and Street Party features food, music, and raffles to raise money for re-planting of Galveston's trees. Sept. 11, 6 p.m. 25th and Market.

Remembrance Concert by Chameleon, featuring a multi-media presentation of Ike's wrath and destruction and scenes of Galveston's rebirth and redevelopment. Sept. 11, 6:30 p.m. Saengerfest Park, 23rd and Strand. Free.

Opening of the Ike Quilt Exhibit and Poetry Readings. The Grand 1894 Opera House, 2020 Postoffice. Sept. 11, 7 p.m.

Mostyn Law Firm Galveston Rebirth Race, hosted by the Galveston Historical Foundation. Sept. 12, 8:30 a.m. galvestonhistory.org.

Warbird Flights and Scenic Air Tours: An Aerial Celebration of Galveston. Sept. 12, 9 a.m. Lone Star Flight Museum, 2002 Terminal Dr.

Galveston Island State Park Open House. Sept. 12, 10 a.m. 14528 Stewart Road.

Making Tracks to Recovery features mini-train rides and museum tours. Sept. 12, 10 a.m. 25th & Strand.

Artist Studio Tours/Beachtown Open House Photo Exhibit, presented by Artist Homestead Galveston Island and sponsored by the Galveston Historical Foundation. Sept. 12, 1 p.m. Beachtown, East Beach Drive.

"Celebration of Endurance" YMCA Benefit. Sept. 12, 3 p.m. Crazy Oaks, 12410 Stewart Road.

Revival and Reflections Closing Ceremony, with activities throughout the downtown historic district including the "Shine a Light" Remembrance Walk from Saengerfest Park to The Grand 1894 Opera House. Sept. 12, 6 p.m. Saengerfest Park, 23rd & Strand.

Ike: The Documentary and The Great 1900 Storm. Sept. 12, with screenings at 6 and 9:30 p.m. The Grand 1894 Opera House, 2020 Postoffice St. Free.

9th Annual PAWS Gala: Meowling Bros and Barkum and Bailey Circus. Sept. 12, 7 p.m. Galveston Island Convention Center, The San Luis Resort, 5222 Seawall Blvd. Benefits Galveston Humane Society.

Sunrise Service: Stewart Beach Pavilion. Sept. 13, 7 a.m.

One in a Million Jess Tree Fundraising Campaign. Sept. 13, 1 p.m. 25th Street and Seawall Boulevard.

Galveston Symphony Pops Concert. Sept. 13, 7 p.m. Moody Gardens Hotel Ballroom, 1 Hope Blvd. Free. ■



YVONNE FREED

ISLAND PRIDE

Musical headliners promise a gay ol' time at 3rd Annual Galveston Pride 2009

Tiffany, the darling of '80s pop music, headlines Galveston Pride 2009, scheduled October 24. Far more accomplished than her shopping mall reputation would have you believe, Tiffany's 1987 self-titled debut album produced three top 10 hits, with "I Think We're Alone Now" and "Could've Been" selling 4 million copies. Her 2000 album, *The Color of Silence*, was called "one of the finest pop albums of 2000" by *Billboard* magazine.

Local entertainers also perform at the festival, with Houston Pride Idol 2009 AJ Cabrera singing cuts from his recently recorded four-song demo CD. *American Idol* contestant and Katy, Texas, resident Kady Malloy is also scheduled to perform. The festival features vendor and information booths, and takes place at Saengerfest Park, 23rd Avenue and The Strand in Galveston. The Pride After Party is hosted by Pink Dolphin, Seawall Blvd. and 9th Avenue. For information, call 832/392-1361. ■



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LookOut

by Nancy Ford

Random House. Court members Chris Valk and Falcon host Oh Sh*t, an evening of well-intentioned mayhem during which community entertainers perform in no pre-set order. **Sept. 4, 8:30 p.m.** Benefits Empire of the Royal Sovereign Imperial Court of the Single Star. George Country Sports Bar, 617 Fairview Ave. erssics.org.

Hungry for Community? Houston GLBT Community Center revives its monthly Dinner Night. Diners are responsible for their own checks. **Sept. 8, 6:30 p.m.** West Gray Café, 415 W. Gray. houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org. • 713/524-3818.

Keeping Abreast of the Walk. Ranch Hill Saloon invites walkers to join their team, the Ranch Hill Strutters, at the big 2009 Komen Houston Race for the Cure (see below). If you do, they'll provide transportation to the walk, along with prizes for the group's top fundraisers. To kick things off, join them for a barbecue luncheon and silent and live auction, hosted by Heather Moon. All proceeds go to the Strutters. **Sept. 13, \$8.** 247041 I45N, suite 105. 281/298-9035. ranchhill.com, myspace.com/ranchhill_saloon.

Tea Time. The LIVE Consortium wants to educate folks about its programs, build awareness about the negative effects of HIV stigma, and bring people together to fight those stigmas. It also wants people to dance. That's why it's bringing in renowned DJ, Roland Belmares, for a good old-fashioned Tea Dance. **Sept. 13, 2-7 p.m.** Location to be announced. \$20. liveconsortium.org.

To Sirs with Love. International Mr. Leather Jeffrey Payne appears at Lube: Misfits Ball 11, the annual party attracting leather/Levi enthusiasts from far and wide. **Sept. 13, 5-9 p.m.** Numbers, 300 Westheimer. Benefits Pet Patrol and PFLAG/HATCH Youth Scholarship Fund. \$15. You can also meet the Misfits at The Ripcord where members bartend the third Saturday of each month. misfitshouston.org.

Clang, Clang, Clang Went the Drag Queen. Instead of staying at (or near) the theater where the show is staged, this month's Out@TUTS comes to Montrose. Celebrating Theatre Under the Stars' production of *Meet Me in St. Louis*, the evening features a Judy Garland-themed karaoke contest, with guests invited to bust out their best Garland drag. **Sept. 24, 7 p.m.** JR's Bar and Grill, 808 Pacific St. tuts.com.

Planning Ahead. The 2009 Komen Houston Race for the Cure ranks first in funds raised by the 125 worldwide runs fighting breast cancer, drawing more than 5,000 participants in 2008. The Oct. 3 run, stepping off in Sam Houston Park Downtown, is preceded by a carb-loading Pasta Party and Auction, **Oct. 1, 6 p.m.** Westin Galleria, 5060 W. Alabama. komen-houston.org • 713/783-9188.

Early Stocking Stuffers. Keep track of birthdays, anniversaries, and assorted community events with Lone Star Lariats' Charity Calendar, raising money for assorted community organizations, including Colt 45's, ERSICSS, Houston Area Bears, Kindred Spirits, Mistfits, NLA Houston, Project Illuminations, Southern Country Houston, PWA Holiday Charities, and Sundance Cattle Company. Log on, find your favorite organization, and order some today. charitycalendar.org. ■

Seven Guitars. The 1940s are represented in August Wilson's fifth work in a 10-drama series chronicling the American black experience during the 20th century. **Sept. 19-Oct. 18.** Ensemble Theatre, 3535 Main. ensemblehouston.com • 713/520-0055.

A Musical Offering. Ars Lyrica presents works by Bach and Telemann evoking far-flung locales. **Sept. 20, 5 p.m.** Hobby Center for Performing Arts, 800 Bagby. arсылricahouston.org • 713/315-2525.

Swing, Live, Pop! Into Dance. Houston Metropolitan Dance Company presents dance transcending all styles and eras. **Sept. 23, 11 a.m.** Miller Outdoor Theatre, 100 Concert Dr. Free. milleroutdoortheatre.com • 281/373-3386.

Night of the Giant. Mildred's Umbrella Theater Company production about two sisters who discuss their family's history while their father sleeps, bound and gagged, on the floor. **Sept. 23-26, 8 p.m.** Barnevelter Movement Arts Complex, 2201 Preston. mildredsumbrella.com.

Southern Rapture parodies the real-life controversy created when North Carolina's Charlotte Repertory Theater produced Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*. **Sept. 23-Oct. 18.** Stages Repertory Theatre, 3201 Allen Parkway. stagestheatre.com • 713/527-0123.

Il Tabarro/Pagliacci. Puccini and Leoncavallo operatic classics. **Sept. 24-26, Oct. 1-3.** Opera in the Heights, 1703 Heights Blvd. operaintheheights.org • 713/861-5303.

Red Light Winter. Horse Head Theatre Company's premiere focuses on two long-time friends and an Amsterdam prostitute. **Sept. 24-26, Oct. 1-3, 8-10.** Frenetic Theater, 5102 Navigation Blvd. horseheadtheatre.org.

Without Boundaries. presented by Houston Ballet, includes Jiri Kylian's *Falling Angels*, Twyla Tharp's *In the Upper Room*, and artistic director Stanton Welch's *Elements*. **Sept. 24-Oct. 4.** Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas Ave. 713-227-2787.

15th Annual Weekend of Texas Contemporary Dance. presented by numerous local companies. **Sept. 25-27.** Miller Outdoor Theatre, 100 Concert Drive. Free. milleroutdoortheatre.com • 281/373-3386.

Der Rosenkavalier--Film and Music. Houston Symphony plays along with Robert Wiene's 1926 film adaptation of Richard Strauss' operatic masterpiece. **Sept. 25-27.** Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. 713/224-7575.

Oliver! Masquerade Theatre presents the classic musical about the streetwise street urchin. **Sept. 25-Oct. 4.** The Hobby Center's Zilkha Hall, 800 Bagby. masquerade theatre.com • 713/861-7045.

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? East End Theatre Company presents the classic marital drama. **Sept. 25-Oct. 17.** 2001 Postoffice. Galveston. islandetc.org • 409/762-3556.

Dance Around the World. Dance Source Houston presents a special family matinee performance. **Sept. 26, 11 a.m.** Miller Outdoor Theatre, 100 Concert Dr. Free. milleroutdoortheatre.com • 281/373-3386.

Marvelous China. a five-hour multi-art show, includes folk dance, traditional opera, acrobats, chorus, oriental musical instruments, Kung Fu, ethnic costume shows, and more. **Sept. 26, noon.** Miller Outdoor Theatre, 100 Concert Dr. Free. milleroutdoortheatre.com • 281/373-3386.

Nobuyuki Tsujii. 13th Van Cliburn International Piano Competition Gold Medalist, makes his Houston debut. **Sept. 27, 2 p.m.** Society for the Performing Arts. Wortham Center's Cullen Theater, 501 Texas Ave. spahouston.org • 713/227-45PA.

Meet Me in St. Louis. Theatre Under the Stars' stage version of the 1944 MGM film that starred Judy Garland. **Sept. 29-Oct. 11.** Hobby Center for Performing Arts, 800 Bagby St. tuts.com • 713/558-8887.

Little Shop of Horrors. Texas Repertory Theatre Company presents the classic musical about a man-eating alien plant. **Sept. 30-Oct. 31.** 14243 Stuebner-Airline Rd. texreptheatre.org • 281/583-7573.

The Storm Show. DiverseWorks and Pick Up Performance Company present Veanne Cox as a female survivor of the 1900 Galveston hurricane. **Oct. 1-3.** Barnevelter Arts/Movement Complex, 2201 Preston St. 713/529-1819.

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type. Farmer Brown's musical problem. **Sept. 26; Oct. 3 & 10.** Main Street Theater-Chelsea Market, 4617 Montrose Blvd. mainstreettheater.com • 713/524-6706.

RADIO

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ART/PHOTOGRAPHY

Amy Blakemore: Photographs 1988-2008. Thirty-six intriguing works from Houston-based Blakemore's collection includes black-and-white street settings to lush colorful landscapes. Through Sept. 13. Museum of Fine Arts' Audrey Jones Beck Building, 5601 Main St. mfa.org • 713/639-7300, 713/639-7379 (Spanish).

Challenge VII: dysfunctional and Unknitting: Challenging Textile Traditions. Dual summer exhibits challenge the traditional uses of wood, textiles, and other materials. Through Sept. 13. Houston Center for Contemporary Crafts, 4848 Main St. craftshouston.org • 713/529-4848.

Ways of Seeing: Photography of Ishimoto Yasuhiro. 300 photographs reveal why Yasuhiro was considered the most influential Japanese photographer of his generation in the development of postwar Japanese photography. Through Sept. 13. Museum of Fine Arts' Caroline Wiess Law Building, 1001 Bissonnet. mfa.org • 713/639-7300, 713/639-7379 (Spanish).

North Looks South: Building a Latin American Art Collection. More than 80 works celebrate MFAH's major Latin American art acquisitions ranging in date from the 1920s to the present. Through Sept. 27. Museum of Fine Arts Houston's Caroline Wiess Law Building, 1001 Bissonnet. mfa.org • 713/639-7300, 713/639-7379 (Spanish).

Miles and Miles of Texas: The Lone Star State Through the Eyes of Buck Schiwetz. Works in graphite, watercolor, mixed media, and oil pay homage to Texas' earliest buildings and homes. Through Sept. 30. Heritage Society Museum, 1100 Bagby. Free. heritagesociety.org.

Art For All works from children's summer art classes. Through Oct. 4. Moody Mansion, 2618 Broadway, Galveston. galvestonartscenter.org. 409/763-2403.

Houston. It's Worth It. IKE. Photographs from the new book by Dave Thompson and Randy Twaddle. Through Oct. 4. Galveston Arts Center's Exile 2, 2501 Market St., Galveston. galvestonartscenter.org. 409/763-2403.

No Zoning: Artists Engage Houston. Through Oct. 4. Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 5216 Montrose Blvd. camh.org • 713/284-8250.

Terra Cotta Warriors: Guardians of China's First Emperor features life-size clay figures and artifacts excavated in 1974. Through Oct. 18. Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Herman Circle Drive. hmns.org • 713/639-4629.

Stilet "O"s. Omar Angel Perez' fantasy footwear artwork. Through Oct. 25. Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, 4848 Main St. craftshouston.org • 713/529-4848.

Besa: Muslims Who Saved Jews During the Holocaust is a photographic exhibition depicting stories of Albanian Muslims who saved Jews from extermination despite great danger to themselves. Through Feb. 7. Holocaust Museum Houston, 5401 Caroline St. hmh.org • 713/942-8000.

Big Llectric Fan to Keep Me Cool is puppeteer/artist's Wayne White's tribute to George Jones and Houston's heat. Sept. 10-Oct. 18. Rice Gallery, 6100 Main St. ricegallery.org • 713/348-6069.

Now That I'm By Myself. Group show featuring Laurel Nakadate, Yuki Okumura, Brian Bress, and Wynne Greenwood. Sept. 11. DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway. diverseworks.org • 713/335-3445.

Houston Museum District Day. Enjoy a free day in the Houston Museum District, when 17 participating museums waive their admission fees and provide free shuttle service between venues. Sept. 12, 10 am-5 pm. houstonmuseumdistrict.org.

Understanding Poverty. Photojournalist Ben DeSoto's multimedia exhibition sheds light on the devastating impact of poverty in America. Sept. 12-Nov. 1; reception Friday, Sept. 12, 6-8 pm. DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway. diverseworks.org • 713/335-3445.

Planes, Trains, Bikes and Cars. Art Car Museum presents its 5th annual open call exhibition. Sept. 12, 7-10 pm. 140 Heights Blvd. artcarmuseum.com • 713/861-5526.

Josephine Meckseper. Works engaging leftist theories and politics in a consumerist reality. Sept. 12-Nov. 14; reception, Sept. 11, 6-8 pm. Blaffer Gallery, University of Houston's Fine Arts Building, entrance 16 off Cullen Boulevard. blaffergallery.org • 713/743-9971.

Jon Pylypchuk. Works drawn from the animal world. Sept. 12-Nov. 14; reception, Sept. 11, 6-8 pm. Blaffer Gallery, University of Houston's Fine Arts Building, entrance 16 off Cullen Boulevard. blaffergallery.org • 713/743-9971.

Art on Water floats down Buffalo Bayou in conjunction with the Bayou City Art Festival Downtown, scheduled Oct. 10-11.

Deadline for design applications is Sept. 18. bayoucityartfestival.com • 713/521-0133.

Multiplicity features a wide range of work from women artists, Elizabeth Cencini, Susan Spjut, Brenda Furman, and Kay Tasuji. Sept. 26, 2-8 pm. Artists Bookworks Houston, 2711 Main St. 832/671-3826.

DAILY

Sept. 3
Serpentine. Walk the movable Labyrinth, set up indoors for prayer and meditation. 1:30-7 pm. St. Paul's United Methodist Church, 5501 Main St. stpaulshouston.org.

Sept. 9
Building Faith: Church, Mosque, Synagogue; Visiting Houses of Worship. Holocaust Museum Houston presents a guided tour of Judaism's Congregation Beth Yeshurun. 9:45 am. 4525 Beechnut St. hmh.org • 713/942-8000.

Sept. 11
Petalooza Kickoff Party. 7-9 pm. Hard Rock Café, 502 Texas St. 713/227-1392 • houstonhumane.org.
Swift Night Out Tailgate Party. View the birds as they begin their fall migration, with representatives from Houston Audubon Society, Nature Discovery Center, and Texas Parks and Wildlife. 7 pm. St. Paul's United Methodist Church, 5501 Main St. 713/528-0527.

Sept. 12
Petalooza, presented by Houston Humane Society and Whole Foods Market, provides adoptables, doggy massages, pet caricatures, a magician, a Doggy Idol Trick Competition, other pet-related activities, and the Jud Johnson Band. 9 am-2 pm. Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney. houstonhumane.org.
Galveston 5k Walk/Run through three historic districts on the island marks the first anniversary of Hurricane Ike's landfall. Benefits Galveston Historical Foundation. 8:30 am. 2300 Ship's Mechanic Row. Galveston. galvestonhistory.org • 409/765-7834.

Sept. 13
PFLAG Houston. Small groups break off after the program for discussion in a safe, confidential environment. 2 pm. St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Jones Building, 5501 S. Main St. pflaghouston.org.

Sept. 17-19
Simon Fashion Now celebrates fall fashion and trends with fashion shows and interactive entertainment. The Galleria, 5085 Westheimer. simon.com.

Sept. 19
Kemah Boardwalk's 1st Annual Wine Festival features more than 50 selections from winemakers and owners from 13 Pacific Northwest wineries. 2-5 pm. Kemah Boardwalk. \$35-\$45. kemahwinefest.com • 281/535-8100.

Sept. 24-27
Houston Survivor Challenge 2009, presented by city councilmember Jolanda Jones, recreates the reality show with physical and emotional challenges. Sesquicentennial Park. Benefits Buffalo Bayou Partnership and U'jana Conley Foundation for AIDS. houstonsurvivorchallenge.com.

Daily (Mon.-Fri.)
HIV Testing. Free HIV testing, with no gold card or donation required or requested. 9 am-1 pm. HCHD Thomas Street Clinic, 2015 Thomas St. 713/873-4157 • 713/873-4026.

Daily (Sun.-Fri.)
HIV Testing. Legacy Community Health Services offers free confidential rapid HIV testing using the OraQuick-Advance collection method with results available within 20 minutes at the following locations. • **MONDAYS:** ALL STAR NEWS AND VIDEO EMPORIUM, 3415 Katy Frwy & Studewood, 4-8 pm; GEORGE SPORTS BAR, 617 Fairview, 6-10 pm. • **TUESDAYS:** 611 HYDE PARK PUB, 611 Hyde Park, 4-8 pm; MIDTOWN SPA, 3100 Fannin, 4-8 pm. • **WEDNESDAYS:** Club Houston, 2205 Fannin, 8 pm-12 am; EJ's, 2517 Ralph, 10 pm-1 am. • **FRIDAYS:** MIDTOWN SPA, 3100 Fannin, 5-9 pm; EJ's, 2517 Ralph, Fri. 10 pm-1 am. • Free, confidential syphilis testing is also offered. HIV and syphilis testing is offered at 215 Westheimer, Monday-Thursday, 11 am-7 pm, and Friday, 11 am-5 pm. 713/830-3070.

Daily (Sun.-Fri.)
HIV Testing. Planned Parenthood offers free anonymous or confidential testing at clinic locations throughout the area. To speak with an HIV counselor: 1-800-230-PLAN, Dickinson: 281/337-7725, Fannin: 713/831-6543, FM1960: 281/587-8081, Greenspoint: 281/445-4553, Huntsville: 936/295-6396, Lufkin: 936/634-8446 x223, Rosenberg: 281/342-3950, Stafford: 281/494-9848.

Weekly (Sundays)
The Women's Group. A feminist group for all women. Sept. 6: Stephanie Betts and Trish Cunningham discuss finding life through confronting death. Sept. 13: University of Houston law professor Laura Oren discusses the lasting impact of *Brown*

v. *Board of Education*. 10:45 am. First Unitarian Universalist Church's Sojourner Truth Room, 5200 Fannin. 713/529-8571.

Weekly (Mondays)
TG Support Group. Helping TransGenders Anonymous is a facilitated support group for all transgenders, supporters, family, and significant others. 7-9 pm. TG Center, 713 Fargo. transthouston.com • 713/520-8586.

Get Healthy with Your Community. Montrose Community Meltdown Challenge features motivational speakers, light exercises, and weight-loss progress checks. Through Sept. 17, 7 pm. Montrose Counseling Center's GLBT Cultural Center, 401 Branard St. 281/974-9917.

Weekly (Tuesdays)
Houston Roller Derby Rec League. Skate to train or just recreationally with the women of the Houston Roller Derby. 7:30-9:30 pm. Dairy Ashford Roller Rink, 1820 S. Dairy Ashford St. houstonrollerderby.com.

Weekly (Thursdays)
GLBT-Friendly Depression & Bipolar Support Group. 7:15-8:30 pm. Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, 1440 Harold, room 232. Free. 713/526-1018.

Weekly (Sun., Wed., Sat.)
Love and Rackets. Houston Tennis Club welcomes players and enthusiasts of all skill levels. Sundays, 9 am-noon; Wednesdays, 7:30-9 pm; clinics, every Saturday 9-10:30 am. Memorial Park Tennis Center, 1500 Memorial Loop. Annual membership, \$30; court fees, \$3 per session. houstontennisclub.org.

Monthly (1st Sun.)
Free Legal Consultations for PWAs. AIDS Foundation Houston and Katine & Nechman LLP offer 30 minutes of free legal consultation on any legal issue to persons with HIV and AIDS, by appointment. Katine & Nechman, 1111 North Loop West, Suite 180. lawkn.com • 713/808-1000.

Monthly (1st Fri.)
First Friday Happy Hour. Northwest Corner, a social and civic GLBT organization for Houstonians living northwest of Loop 610, meets. Time and location TBA. nwcorner.org.

Transgender Center presents a monthly barbecue, with vegetarian food available. BYO beer and wine. 7-11 pm. \$10. 713 Fargo. tgctr.org.

Monthly (1st Sat.)
First Saturday Arts Market. Local artists display and sell original works of art, and local musicians entertain. 11 am-6 pm. Wind Water Gallery, 548 West 19th. Free. yalestreetmarket.com.

Monthly (2nd Sat.)
Second Saturdays at Winter St. Studios. Meet and hang with artists in the studios marked by a large red dot on or near the door. 1-6 pm. Winter St. Studios, 2101 Winter St. winterstreetstudios.net • 713/862-0082.

Monthly (3rd Sun.)
LOAF Meet and Greet. Lesbians Over Age Fifty meet for munchies and fellowship; bring some of both. 2 pm. 1034 West 17th.

Monthly (2nd Tues.)
Community Center Dinner Night. presented by Houston GLBT Community Center. Participants are responsible for their own meals. 6:30 pm. West Gray Café, 415 W. Gray. houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org • 713/524-3818.

Monthly (3rd Tues.)
Chapter One Book Group discusses *The Faith Club*, a groundbreaking book about Americans searching for faith and mutual respect. 7:30 pm. St. Paul's United Methodist Church, 5501 Main St. stpaulshouston.org.

Monthly (3rd Wed.)
Bingo with the Divas. hosted by An' Marie Gill & Jessica Van Shelton. 8-10 pm. Tony's Corner Pocket, 817 W. Dallas St. Bering Omega Foundation.

Monthly (4th Wed.)
Lesbian Dinner Group. Single and coupled women come for a meal, but stay for the camaraderie. 7:30 pm. Cafe Express, 1422 West Gray. lesbian.dinner.group@gmail.com.

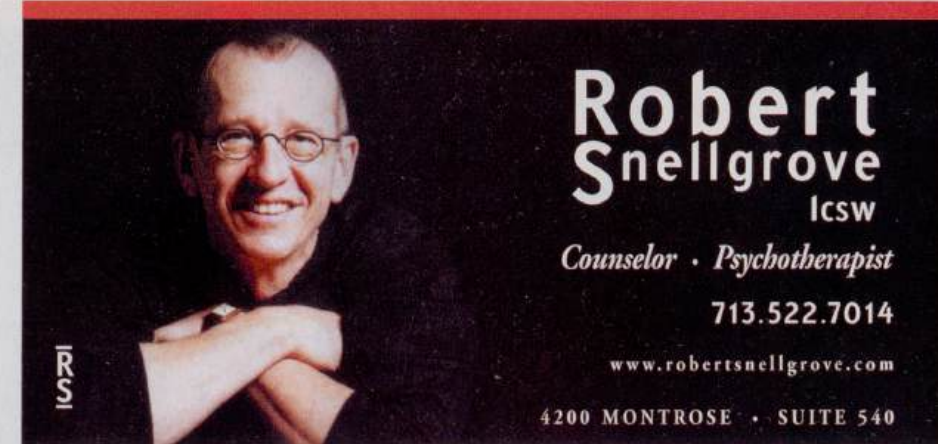
Monthly (3rd Thurs.)
Share with PFLAG Houston in a safe, confidential setting. 7:30 pm. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church's Chatham Room, 1805 Alabama. pflaghouston.org.

PLANNING AHEAD

OCTOBER Oct. 1-4

43RD Annual Original Greek Festival features authentic Greek food, dancing, shopping, special events, and presentations. Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral Complex, 3511 Yoakum, with shuttle available from Lamar High School, 3325 Westheimer. \$5. greekfestival.org • 713/526-5377.

Deadline Oct. 15
Scriptapalooza opens its television writing competition, inviting submissions for existing one-hour and half-hour shows, original pilots, and reality shows. scriptapalooza.com. ■



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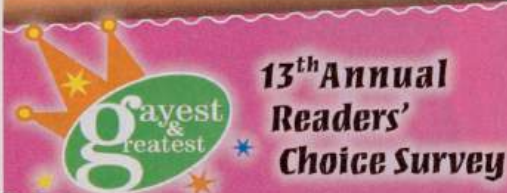
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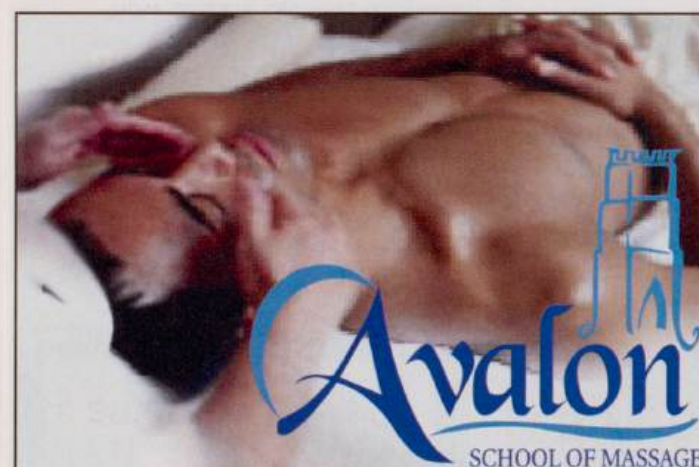
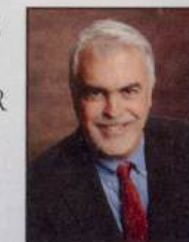
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Galveston

Business News

by Nancy Ford

14 YEARS OF DELECTABLE SWEETNESS.

On September 19, Dessert Gallery chef/owner Sara Brook celebrates 14 years of making her customers happy with award-winning cakes and other sweets. To celebrate the anniversary, Brooks has designed a 14-layer Sweet Celebrations Anniversary Cake, piled high with 14 layers of fresh crepes, sliced fresh strawberries, and creamy chocolate hazelnut (Nutella) filling. The Sweet Celebrations Anniversary Cake is available for a limited time only during the last two weekends of September. Brooks is asking customers to share a 300-word-or-less "sweet story" about a memorable experience at Dessert Gallery, with the winner receiving a \$50 gift certificate. Deadline for submission is Sept. 14. 3600 Kirby Dr., 713/522-9999 and 1616 Post Oak Blvd., 713/622-0007. dessertgallery.com.

SPEEDY AND ACCESSIBLE. Computer-Wiz owner Jonathan Lanz has announced the opening of a new customer-friendly storefront just north of Loop 610. Lanz says the new store offers one-stop-shopping convenience for computing needs, including computers, printers, software, cables, accessories, and laptop sleeves. Two-day turnarounds on computer repairs are performed by Dell-certified technicians. Lanz adds. 3017 Durham St., Suite 110. 713/979-4500.

CRUISING. Tom Baker, owner of the Houston-based LGBT travel business, Aquafest Cruise & Tour Events, was recognized by *Condé Nast Traveler* magazine as one of 126 top travel specialists. Since its founding more than eight years ago, Aquafest Cruises & Tours has produced 26 cruise events for more than 8,000 clients. aquafestcruises.com. ■

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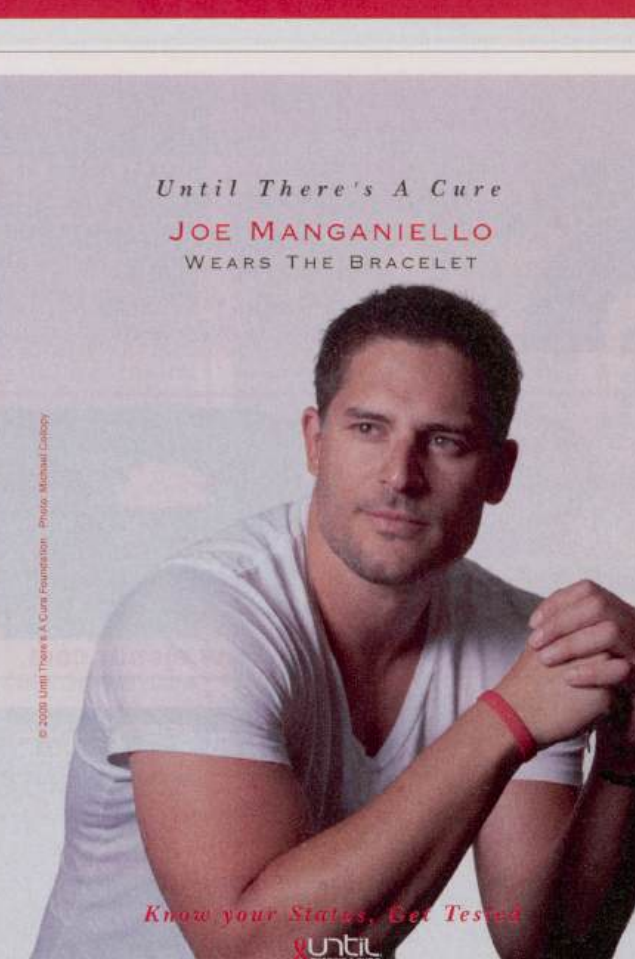
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BAR & CLUB GUIDE

Houston

AZTECA'S VIP LOUNGE

The talented DJ Rocky B holds court and spins for "the best girl-4-girl night in Houston," held each Friday atop this Greenway-area Mexican restaurant. 2207 Richmond Ave. Details: throbparties.info.

BAYOU CITY BAR & GRILL

Experience a new attitude and new menu at this trendy Montrose spot. Open Tuesday through Sunday ("til 6 a.m. on Friday and Saturday) for lunch, dinner, and after-the-bars-close dining. 2409 Grant St. • 713/522-2867 • bayoucitybar.com.

BEER ISLAND

Tropical touches combine with Texas roadhouse chic at this comfortable Heights hangout. Beer is king, but the island is also becoming famous for their sake shots. 2631 White Oak Dr. • 713/862-4670.

BLUR

This multi-level dance club features an expansive patio upstairs lounge, and balconies that overlook the busy Pacific St. traffic. The ladies enjoy Wet and Wild Wednesdays, 18-year-olds are welcome on Thurs., resident DJ Lorenzo spins Wed.-Sat. nights, DJ Pollo spins Karumba Latin night on Sun. Happy hour, 8-10 p.m.; free cover before 11 p.m. 710 Pacific St. • blurbar.com.

BOCADOS

Patrons enjoy dining on the deck at this cozy Meni-area Mexican restaurant that also accommodates special events, like charitable dinners for AIDS Foundation Houston and American Cancer Society. 1312 W. Alabama • 713/523-5230.

BRAZOS RIVER BOTTOM

The BRB, Houston's leading gay country-western bar, is located in Midtown, just outside Montrose. Expect to see some fast and fancy two-stepping. Southern Country dance club offers lessons on Thurs. night. 2400 Brazos • 713/528-9192 • brbhouston.com.

CHANCES/THE NEW BARN/G-SPOT

Houston lesbians and those who love them enjoy three separate clubs under one roof, satisfying their C&W, urban dance, and live chick-music needs. Expanded and renovated bars include multiple video screens, banquette seating, and more: 1100 Westheimer • 713/523-7217 • chancesbar.com.

CLUB 2020

Located downtown near the Toyota Center, this urban club features Clubbers Friday with male and female dancers. Its 6,400 square feet also offers theater-sized viewing screens and VIP rooms. 2020 Leeland • 713/227-9667 • club2020houston.com.

CLUB ADAM AND EDEN

Serving the collective party needs of the Clear Lake area's gay men and lesbians, the adjacent clubs are open seven days a week, offering a large video lounge, a martini bar, pool tables, a private VIP area, and a 1,200 sq. foot dance floor. 522 W. Nasa Parkway. Details: 281/557-0434 • clubadam.net.

CLUB CRYSTAL

If you miss the now-closed Inergy, you'll find many of its former staff, management, and décor at this two-room Latin/hip-hop club. Sunday evening drag shows rule the roost. 6680 Southwest Frwy, next to Colorado. crystaltheclub.com • 713-278-2582.

CROCKER

New ownership has taken over this durable Montrose nightclub that boasts "the longest happy hour in Montrose." Miss Jenny hosts Wii tournaments, with gay boxing on Wed. and gay bowling on Sun. 2312 Crocker • 713/529-3355.

DECADES

This casual neighborhood bar attracts a devoted crowd of regulars. It hosts a Monday pool tournament and Wednesday dart tournament and offers free pool on Sundays. 1205 Richmond • 713/521-2224.

EJ'S

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

GEORGE

Regulars rule at this comfortable neighborhood sports bar, just like most other neighborhood sports bars in town. But George's occasional benefit drag show makes it a wonderful, campy alternative. Sports Saturdays start at 3 p.m. with dart and pool tournaments; Steak Night is Sun., 3-7 p.m. 617 Fairview • 713/528-8102.

GUAVA LAMP

The club left Shepherd Plaza and reopened with a larger space near Allen Parkway. Guava Lamp presents karaoke nights on Sun. and Wed. and offers a free happy hour buffet on Fri. 570 Waugh • 713/524-3359.

IN-N-OUT

Heights residents appreciate this nearby alternative to Montrose haunts with state-of-the-art large digital displays, Internet jukebox, comfy seating, and daily drink specials. 1537 N. Shepherd Dr. • 713/589-9780.

BEHIND THE BAR

WHO: Ian Hiett

WHERE: Meteor Lounge
2306 Genesee • meteorlounge.com
713/521-0123

WHAT'S UP: Without doubt Houston's most sophisticated gay bar, Meteor offers comfy lounging, delicious cocktails, and shimmering eye candy in its new "Meteor Showers."



JR'S BAR & GRILL

With house emcee Kofi, OutSmart's Gayest and Greatest reigning drag champion, this Montrose standard offers shows Sun.-Wed., as well as pool tables, go-go boys, and karaoke. 808 Pacific St. • 713/521-2519.

LADY BARBARA'S CLUB TRUE COLORS

Lady Barbara and MC Zip, who previously held court at Bella Aida Gardens and Bartini, have opened this new southwest club for "everyone in the community" featuring "Free For All" open mic on Sundays. 2727 Crossview Dr. • 713/266-6505.

MARY'S, NATURALLY

The oldest gay club in Houston, this is a legendary night-spot, though not as notorious as in days past. Mary's hosts many community fundraisers, including the Imperial Court of Houston's Jukebox Wednesdays event. 1022 Westheimer • 713/527-9669.

METEOR

Gorgeous men of Manwatch and Muscles in Action rinse down in the newly added "Meteor Shower" stall, with VJ's Tad Dvorak, Chris Allen, and Joe Ross playing top billboard videos every night in this posh but comfy lounge on the downtown edge of Montrose. 2306 Genesee • meteorlounge.com • 713/521-0123.

MICHAEL'S OUTPOST

This comfortable neighborhood club doubles as a piano bar with a regular roster of evening pianists including Wayne Gray and Roger Woest. 1419 Richmond Ave. • 713/520-8446.

MONTROSE MINING COMPANY

Studly 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.

RAINBOW ROOM

Every Thursday, Heather Moon hosts karaoke at this north Houston club. DJ Kenny supplies music on Fri. and Sat. 527 Barren Springs • 281/872-0215 • therainbowroombar.com.

RIPCORD

Named best place to show off your leather in the Gayest & Greatest poll. The Black Hawk Leather shop is located inside the club. Another big draw is the Houston Big Men's Club's bi-weekly hamburger BBQ fundraiser. 715 Fairview • 713/521-2792 • theripcord.com.

THE 611

This neighborhood club is a popular spot with pool sharks. On Fri. and Sat., the 611 dishes up buffet dinners. Features include a garden-style patio. 611 Hyde Park • 713/526-7070.

SOUTH BEACH

This expansive, ultra-chic dance club is a frequent winner of OutSmart's Gayest and Greatest awards, with Billboard Magazine favorite DJ Jimmy Skinner and frequent high-producing-value drag shows on Sunday. DJ Franky Boy spins Thursdays for Noche Latina Latin Night. 810 Pacific St. • 713/529-5086 • southbeachthenghtclub.com.

TC'S

Drag fans frequent this club in the heart of Montrose, now under new management, for its campy benefit shows frequently presented on the weekends. 817 Fairview • 713/528-9204.

TONY'S CORNER POCKET

This comfortable club located close to downtown has one of the friendliest bar staffs in town, both inside and outside at its patio bar. The raised stage where local charities perform also features an amateur dance contest each Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 11 pm. Opens daily at noon. 817 W. Dallas. 713/571-7870 • tonyscornerpocketbar.com.

THE USUAL

Formerly a house of ill repute, this lesbian-owned neighborhood bar now has plenty of repute, especially on Wednesday, when "Her Usual" night packs in the women. Enjoy drink specials, dancing, karaoke, and gazing at the downtown skyline from the spacious front deck. 5519 Allen St. theusualpub.com • 281/501-1478.

VIVIANA'S

This club, in a new location, appeals to fans of Latino music and drag alike. 4624 Dacoma • 713/681-4104.

Spring

RANCH HILL SALOON

With its two pool tables, 52-inch plasma televisions, and large dance floor, the gayest spot on the north side also accommodates private parties, holy unions, and receptions. Enjoy Wii tournaments Fridays, 7-9 p.m., and Sundays, 5-8 p.m. 247041-145N, Suite 103. 281/298-9035 • www.ranchhill.com • myspace.com/ranchhill_saloon.

Humble

WHISPERS

Northerly GLBTs meet at this comfy neighborhood bar that offers pool, darts, video games, karaoke Thursday, and dancing. 226 First St. • 281/359-2900 • whispersbar.com.

Galveston

3RD COAST BEACH BAR

Enjoy the best gay view of the Gulf from inside the spacious club as well as outside on the upstairs and downstairs decks, with Recessio Buster Power Hour Thursday, 9 'til 10 p.m., and \$1 mimosas on Sunday. 31st and Seawall Blvd. • 409/765-6911.

CLUB GROOVE

This spacious second-story club where gay and straight patrons mix comfortably boasts 5,000 square feet of dance and lounge space. Drag and live performers entertain on two stages. 2409 Market • 409/789-9134 • myspace.com/groovegalveston.

THE PINK DOLPHIN

Opened by Eldridge Langinais, formerly the Paradise Guest House proprietor, this club in the former 3rd Coast Beach Bar location offers an expansive Gulf view. 9th and Seawall Boulevard • 409/621-1808.

ROBERT'S LAFITTE

A neighborhood bar, the island institution attracts a colorful crowd of regulars and travelers. The private patio includes a swimming pool. On Sat. and Sun. nights, the Ladies of Lafitte show takes the stage. 2501 Avenue Q (at 25th) • 409/765-9092.

Beaumont

THE COPA

This popular two-story club provides a friendly place for Lamar University and east Texas GLBTs to shoot pool, dance, enjoy karaoke, and take in the occasional drag show. Open Wednesday through Sunday. 304 Orleans • 409/832-4206 • myspace.com/officialcopanightclub.

ORLEANS STREET PUB AND PATIO

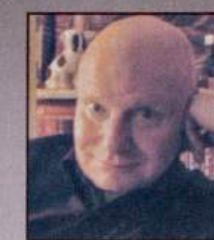
The place to hang for food, fun, and booze in a newly renovated pub, in good weather or bad. Open every night from 7 pm-2 am. 650 Orleans • 409/835-4243.

Bryan/College Station

HALO VIDEO BAR

The only GLBT dance club in Bryan/College station, this sleek spot is open Thurs.-Sat. Smack in the middle of Aggieland, "our venue is always packed with the hotties," the owners promise. 121 North Main • 979/823-6174 • haloobs.com.

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SignOut

by Lilly Roddy

Our nemesis, Mercury retrograde, begins its path of looking back at the past on September 3. So I hope you have all your projects started, papers signed, and electronics purchased. Time for a month of reflection about relationships and details about daily routines. Mercury will be direct October 1. And on that date, you can once again begin your projects and document signing. • With Pluto direct this month on the 11th, some of the financial bickering related to the government should begin to calm down. And many of the issues around the Federal Reserve should also be getting straightened up. • This month the Sun is in Virgo and enters Libra, the first day of fall, on September 22. Mercury starts off in Libra but retrogrades back into Virgo on the 17th. Venus starts off in Leo and enters Virgo on the 20th. Mars is wading through Cancer. And the rest of the planets are happy where they are.

ARIES (March 21–April 19). Your theme for the month is to get organized at both home and work. Mercury retrograde will have a strong influence on you there. So get ready to get cleaning and organizing. For some of you, this will include a period of deep reflection about your relationship. Some of you will be looking for new long-term goals in your partnership, and some of you may be moving on to greener pastures. It is a good time to pay attention to health and to restart any diet programs that you have forgotten that you started. Family relationships could be tense, and there may be a time to clear the air about some hidden feelings that aren't being spoken about. Work is still in the process of evolving. Give it some more time for stability.

TAURUS (April 20–May 20). September is more of a laid-back and playful month for you. You are in a very creative space and can be better at problem-solving at work and at home. If you have children, this month is about them and their needs. They are supposed to be showing you the way to not take life so seriously. If you don't have children, you can focus on your inner child and take her out to play. Your communications skills are better and you are able to get to the point easier. And at work, this is a great time to contact existing clients or reconnect with friends whom you haven't seen in a while. And if you are working on a project, try to get it finished by the end of this month.

GEMINI (May 21–June 21). You are working on making your home a much more comfortable place for you this month. This is a good month for entertaining at home, some family projects, or just some general cleaning and organizing. You may be visiting family members whom you haven't seen in a while. And you may need to spend more time with parents, as they are trying to finish up a project and they need your help. Work is a little crazy for you and you aren't really up for all the drama. You will be trying to find an escape. A vacation to a familiar place could be especially helpful. Or you may consider starting a new business, but wait for October to start.

CANCER (June 22–July 22). This is a real mixed month for you energetically. First, Mars, planet of action and confrontation, is making his way through your sign. Mars will be there until October 16. So, being busy, active, and attempting to start new projects will be high on your list. However, with Mercury retrograde, you are supposed to be looking back at the past and taking care of old projects.



VIRGO (August 23–September 22). This is your birthday month when the sun makes its annual pass through the sign of Virgo. It is your yearly ending and beginning cycle. This is an especially important month as you are reviewing so many things. Mercury, your ruling planet, is retrograde and in your sign, so this is definitely the month to finish up old task and take care of the things that you have been putting off. Relationships could be more tense than usual, since you are getting to the bottom of things. You focus shifts to money as we near the end of the month. Make sure that you have some time for a birthday party. A part of you will think it is just too much trouble, but it is not.

So, you will have plenty of energy for completing tasks but not starting new ones. Sometimes this coincides with excess energy, not being able to sleep well, short temper, and being accident-prone. You should consider an exercise program that you have already started and getting back to that. Relationships are going to be more tense, as problems that arise to the surface have to be faced and not avoided as usual.

LEO (July 23–August 22). You continue your focus on money and finances this month. Reviewing your spending will be paramount this month with Mercury retrograding through this part of your chart. You are really working hard to get rid of debt, and to also gain some self-respect as you won't allow people to take advantage of you this month. Relationships are better because you are able to ask for what you want more clearly. You will be tempted to redecorate yourself this month. You may want to wait until next month to put your plans into action on this. Your work ethic remains strong as you try to get everything finished. Don't overdo the work thing.

LIBRA (September 23–October 23). You are in a rest-and-retreat mode this month. Best to keep things low-key or to take a place in the background. You are more sensitive than usual, and too much drama or people demanding too much of you or your time will have a much stronger impact on you than usual. Work could be very demanding physically this month. Make sure that you don't overdo it. And any effort you would like to put into diet or exercise programs would be very beneficial this month. Relationships are about to begin a period of review and renewal. This may last quite a while. You will be talking about the things that bug you. A time to clear the air.

SCORPIO (October 24–November 21). Your career, friends, and business associates are in the spotlight for this month. And you are feeling fairly motivated. This is a great month for you to connect to old friends or previous clients or customers. Some are already looking for you. Be sure to make all those networking meetings this month. There is a strong

desire for family and home this month. Be sure that you spend some time entertaining at your own home this month. And if you want to travel back home to visit family, this is a great month to do that. Romance is a bit more easygoing, but you are still having a bit of a time feeling as intimate as you would like.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22–December 21). Career is big on the menu this month, and with Mercury retrograding there, you can bet there are going to be some problems come up for you deal with. Most of these problems are from the past but have been getting in the way currently. It is still a good time to market yourself this month, as long as you connect with old customers. You are more focused than usual and are very intent about getting your projects finished. You seem to have a lot of energy to make that happen. Classes, writing, and travel are still good aspects for you through the end of the year. Relationships are more significant after the end of the year.

CAPRICORN (December 22–January 19). This is a more relaxed month for you. You have been working hard and paying attention all year, and this month is totally for resting as far as career goes. What is on the main fare is relationships. This is a big time of renewal in that area if you are in an existing relationship. If you are single, this is a great time to be putting yourself out there in the very beginning of the month and the very end of the month. Otherwise, it is best to date people you already have met or know. And it would be especially good for you and your partner to get out of town for a brief vacation. This would really help the sexual energy. If you are in a relationship and unhappy, this could bring all that to a head. Pay attention and make the correct choices.

AQUARIUS (January 20–February 18). Working with your relationship and finding the right place in it for you is your theme for the month. First, you are wanting the people who you are in relationships with to be more real and more intimate. And you are willing to push through whatever barrier they have as you try to get to the truth about you and that person. Words mean a lot this month and you are listening more intently than usual. Sex could also come up as an expression of intimacy but also as a renewal process for you and your partner. Good month for health and exercise programs. Watch your relationship with your coworkers. It could be tense there. Try to convince them of your plan, not to make them do your plan.

PISCES (February 19–March 20). This is an excellent month for you to get out and meet some of your old flames or people you dated in your past. You are very open to this energy. Some of you are looking for a commitment in a relationship, and you are not willing to have just anybody in your life. You are being very choosy. Any restrictions could be very bothersome at the end of the month. You are not willing to do anything that makes you feel trapped. I would avoid dating brand-new people this month, although you could do that next month. And if you could find some time to get out of town for a couple of days, it would do wonders for you.

Read Lilly Roddy's forecast for all of 2009, which appeared in OutSmart's January issue. For more astro-insight, log on to lillyrodgy.com.

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Photos by Dalton DeHart



Renee Tappe, Lynn Schwartzburg, and Linda Arnold at the Kindred Spirits 2009 reunion, August 15.



Eric Alan, Brenda Salinas, and Richard Gonzalez at Eric Alan's birthday celebration at Bocados, August 18.



Gary Killingsworth, Ray Marak, Trevan Ross, and Dan Meador at Quadra 2009 birthday celebration at Status, July 11.



Wenden Sanders, Beau Miller, Sarah Marie, Shane Stimmel, and Spencer Howard at Live Consortium live social at El8HT, July 7.



Paul Lister, Terry McNabb, Sean Ryan, Russel Garrison, Esteban Caro, Rob Chapman, Ricky Gonzalez, HS.H, Jesse Guterrez, Adrian Acosta, and Jeff Bates at the Houston Hurricanes flag-football team car wash at Guava Lamp, August 16.



Designer Carmen Marc Valvo (l) and Jeff Shell at a show for Valvo's 2009 fall collection at the home of Robin and Charles Reimer, April 25.



Craig Laskowski, Russell Cotton, Kirk Kveton, Dave Lanfrankie, Gary Lackey, Michael Lord, and Kelly Cunningham (in front) at the BCBC cocktail fundraiser at Blue Label, August 9.



Susan Hayes, Ms. Mint Julep; Mona Lott (Robert Brooks), Miss Mint Julep; and Tami Shaffer, Mr. Mint Julep at Miss Mint Julep 2009 competition, July 19.



Emily Smelser, Stephen Smith, Deborah Melenson, Sheri Smith, Michael Bloemer, Cynthia Hinsley, Charlie Driggs, Tim Ausburn, and Alden Clark (in front) at the Alden Clark birthday bash at Pino & Picasso on July 1.



Carter Mayer, Edward Poshtakohi, Amy DeVore, and David Wong at the Montrose Softball League Vipers car wash fundraiser, August 16.

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