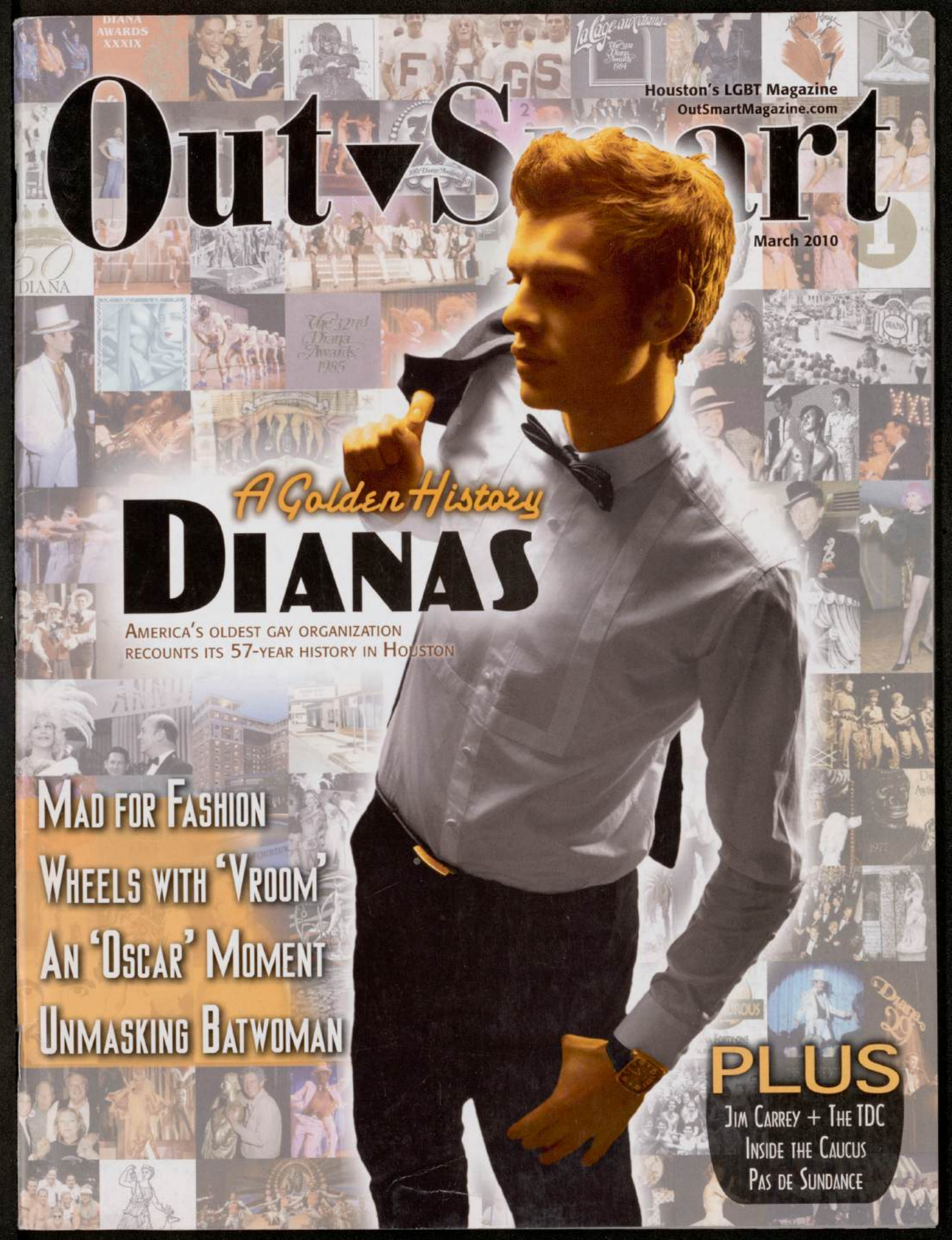

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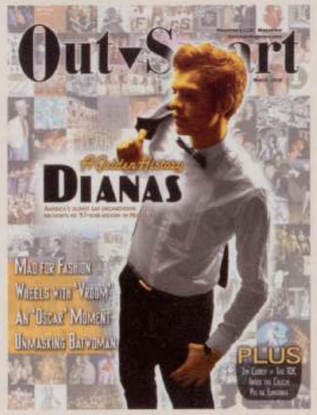
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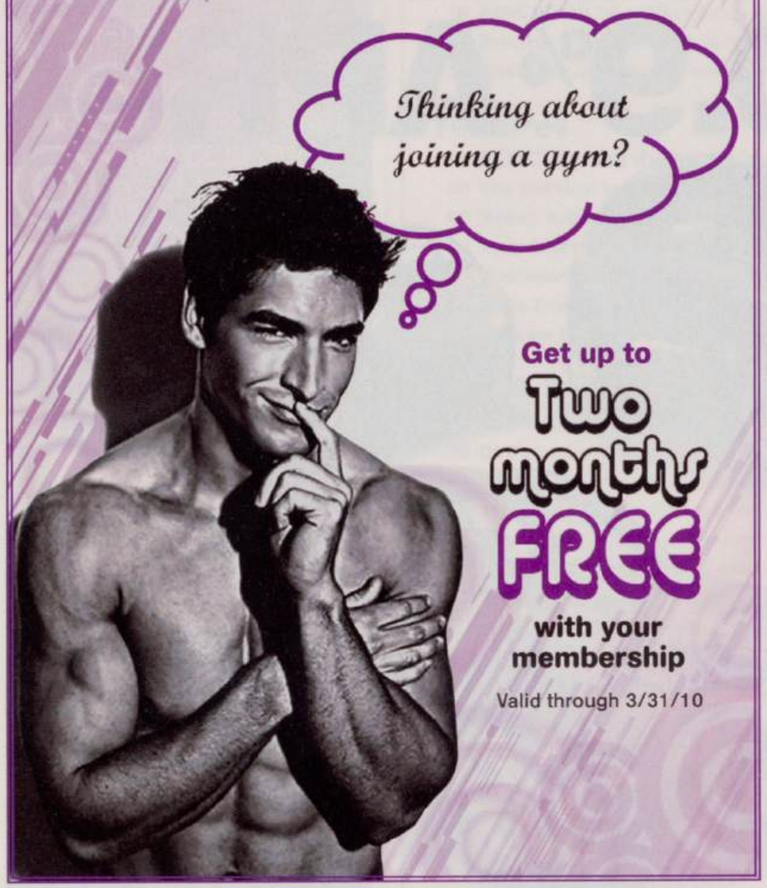
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STAND UP AND BE COUNTED

Same-sex couples to be counted in the 2010 Census



Every 10 years, the United States government conducts a census of the entire population. Those numbers, along with other information about each person's nationality, race, and income, are used by federal departments and other organizations to determine how their resources should be allocated.

"The census is important, because around $400 billion flows from the government to communities where they think it will do the most good," said Che Ruddell-Tabisola, a partnership specialist with the Census Bureau in Washington, D.C.

He and about two dozen employees are working to form a national network of organizations to reach out to the gay community and ensure that everyone is not only counted, but that their relationships are reflected in the census as well.

While the majority of individuals are counted, the Census Bureau hasn't always recorded the status of same-sex relationships correctly. Elizabeth Lyon, the Texas partnership specialist for the Census Bureau, said that the first time the government tried to count unmarried partners was in the 1990 census. When same-sex couples noted their relationship status, many census counters changed the sex of one of the respondents or disregarded the notation. This year, the census forms will be processed in a way that ensures same-sex couples are accurately counted.

"It's historic in that the Census Bureau will now count the number of same-sex couples who answer," Ruddell-Tabisola said. The answers will count, even if federal and state laws don't recognize same-sex marriage.

"The beauty of the census this year is that it's self-identifiable," Lyon said. "If a couple considers themselves married, they are married."

She emphasized that the answers people give on the form are completely anonymous, and encourages respondents to list their correct status. "Don't put 'roommate' or 'boarder' because that doesn't reflect a close, intimate relationship, and it doesn't reflect the families with children that are part of that relationship," Lyon said.

Ruddell-Tabisola is encouraging the gay community to spread the word about the importance of the census, especially to same-sex couples.

"The census forms will be mailed out in mid-March," he said, "and when you receive it, fill it out and mail it out right away."

The Census website, 2010census.gov, contains information about the census, as well as resources and links for people who want to get involved in the outreach efforts. The "Partners" link on the site shows a list of organizations working with the Census Bureau to reach out to the community.

Individuals who want to help out without going door-to-door can also make a difference. "We're encouraging people to get the word out," Ruddell-Tabisola said. "You can update your Facebook status to let people know you filled out your census form, and get other people to do the same." He also suggested adding an e-mail signature encouraging others to fill out their census forms, adding a blog entry about the census, and talking to friends and family.

When all of the numbers are finally tallied, Lyon thinks the 2010 census will reflect the growing number of same-sex couples in the United States.

"When we get the numbers, we'll be able to say, 'Look at how many couples we have all over,'" Lyon said. "There will be no denying that we have gay married and coupled people living in a congressman's district." —*Josef Molnar*

More News on page 10





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News by Nancy Ford

continued from page 8

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON CLARIFIES NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY, OPENS LGBT RESOURCE CENTER

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON has issued a memo stating that the term "sex" in the university's nondiscrimination statement includes protections for transgender individuals. Citing the 2008 court case, *Lopez v. River Oaks Imaging and Diagnostic Group*, the memo issued by the university's legal department reaffirms the University of Houston's commitment to upholding the same standard of discrimination protections as those outlined in *Lopez*.



In 2003, UH student Josephine Tittsworth (r) began working to extend UH's nondiscrimination statement to include the phrase "gender identity or expression." UH student Christopher Busby (c) and professor Maria Gonzalez aided Tittsworth in her efforts.

"As you know, the university (as well as other campuses in our system) includes 'sex' in its nondiscrimination policy, and this should be adequate to provide protection for transgendered individuals who make a claim of sexual discrimination due to stereotyping on our campuses," Dona Cornell, the university's vice chancellor of legal affairs, wrote in the memo.

In 2005, Izza Lopez, a male-to-female transgender, was hired as a scheduler by River Oaks Imaging and Diagnostic Group. After learning that Lopez had been born male, River Oaks rescinded its offer of employment, saying that Lopez had misrepresented her gender in the interviewing process. A federal court ruled that Lopez had a viable claim of sexual discrimination under Title VII, based on sexual stereotyping.

"Although transgender individuals are not specifically identified as a protected class under Title VII, the court in *Lopez* explained that any employee (including a transgendered individual) is protected if they can demonstrate that they were discriminated against because they do not conform to traditional sex stereotypes," Cornell continued in the memo. "This case provides a good analysis of the protections offered to our campus community, including those who are transgendered, through our nondiscrimination statement."

Further underscoring its commitment to its LGBT community, the University of Houston opened a new LGBT resource center on February 10. The center is located within the main University Center, in the same office as the university's Women's Resource Center. A director who will work as an LGBT liaison to the University of Houston administration is currently being sought by university officials.

ADVANCES IN EQUALITY NOTED AT 'CREATING CHANGE' CONFERENCE

IN CONJUNCTION WITH ITS ANNUAL Creating Change conference held in early February in Dallas, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force executive director Rea Carey delivered her "State of Our Movement Address," citing advancements in equality for LGBT Americans that have occurred in the past decade.

In the speech, Carey noted that the number of states recognizing same-sex relationships increased from two to 11 plus the District of Columbia, with the number of states outlawing discrimination based on sexual orientation increasing from 11 to 21.

The number of states outlawing discrimination based on gender identity and expression jumped from just one state to 13. And in 2010, Carey noted, the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Act were signed into law, protecting LGBT people in federal law.

Rea also noted the increasing number of openly gay individuals elected to public office, including Annise D. Parker, who became mayor of the city of Houston in January.

HOLLYFIELD FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES 2010 GRANT CYCLE

THE HOLLYFIELD FOUNDATION has announced it is currently accepting grant proposals from LGBT and HIV/AIDS organizations, with all requests for funding due April 30. A two-part process is now in effect, requiring a letter of intent to be submitted prior to the complete request for a proposal. Applications for grants are available via the foundation's website at hollyfield.org.

CAUCUS PAC INTRODUCES MOBILE ENDORSEMENT CARD

JUST IN TIME FOR TEXAS' MARCH 2 PRIMARY ELECTIONS, the Houston GLBT Political Caucus PAC has introduced a mobile endorsement card to supplement its hard-copy endorsement cards.

"You can do almost anything on your phone now. Why not be able to see which candidates are the best for the GLBT community?" said Kristopher Banks, caucus president, in a statement to the press.

Interested voters may text 2010 to the number 24587 to receive a returned text with a link to the mobile endorsement card, which is accessible via a smart phone.

The mobile endorsement card lists all candidates endorsed by caucus members for the March 2010 primary.

"In the past, we have mailed the caucus card to identified GLBT and pro-GLBT voters, and those who did not receive it in the mail could get it from a caucus volunteer at the West Gray Multi-Service Center early voting poll, or at any Montrose precinct on Election Day. We're still doing that," Banks said. "However, members of our community live all over Harris County. With the mobile endorsement card, we'll be able to get our message to more people."

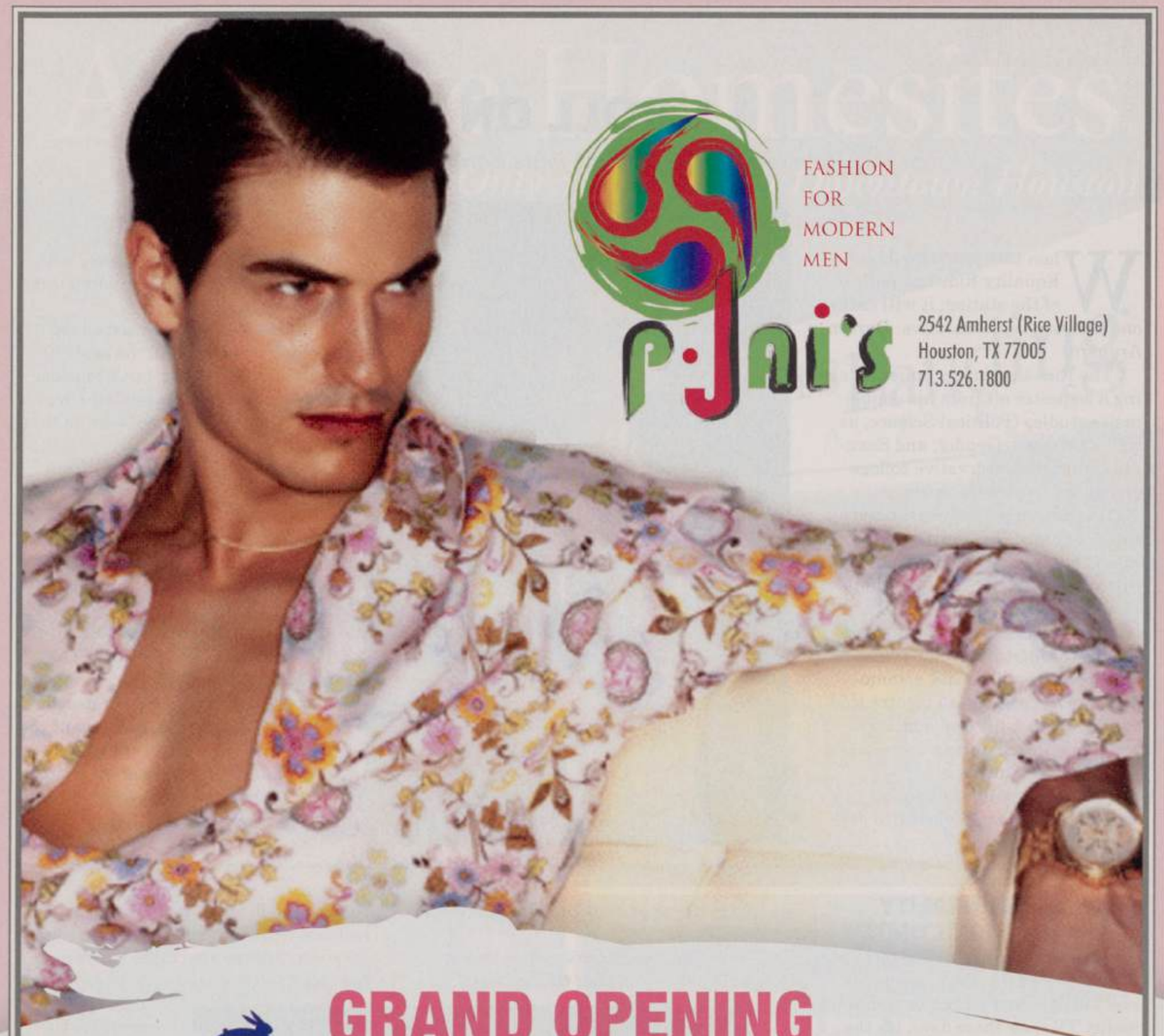
Banks added that while voters are encouraged to look at the mobile endorsement card before they vote, it is a violation of the Texas Elections Code to use a wireless communication device within 100 feet of a polling location.

More News on page 103

Milestones



DIED. Michael Hatcher, 48, at his home on February 16. Born in Liberty, Texas, Michael had been employed as an account executive at *OutSmart* magazine since 2008, and had served as a member of the board of directors of Pride Houston since 2009. He is survived by his wife, Angela Hatcher of Kingwood, Texas; daughters Jennifer Hatcher and Jill Hatcher, both of Houston; his parents, Bill Hatcher of Buffalo, Texas, and Pat Hatcher of Stockton, California; his brothers, Mitchell Hatcher of Dayton, Texas, and Mark Hatcher of Mexia, Texas; and his sister, Michelle Wagnor of Stockton, California. Michael is also survived by a host of family and friends. Funeral services were held February 20 at West End Baptist Church in Saratoga, Texas. A celebration of Michael's life will be held on March 25 from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm at the The GLBT Cultural Center, Suite 106, 401 Branard, Houston, Texas 77006.



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ROLL ON

Houston college student joins Soulforce excursion

When this year's Soulforce Equality Ride bus pulls out of the station, it will carry one Houston representative: Darren Arquero.

The Rice University junior is taking a semester off from his double-major studies (Political Science, as well as Women, Gender, and Sexuality) to visit conservative college campuses around the country.

"People expect us to go in and cause a ruckus, but our goal is to go in and educate people in teaching institutions about the gay community," Arquero said.

His training began in Austin at the beginning of the year, where he learned about the LGBT community and the systems of bigotry that exist; however, his real education begins in March during a two-month adventure in Baltimore.

"We're basically going to be studying scripture" in order to better debate and discuss issues with the leadership at college campuses, Arquero said.



PHOEBE ARQUERO

Darren Arquero

"I'm not that religious, so I'm looking forward to it," he said. "I was raised Catholic, but I consider myself a 'grocery store' Catholic: I pick and choose what I want to take from my religion."

Soulforce has set up a donation page to help cover the cost of Arquero's trip (soulforce.org/darren_arquero). He invites donations of all sizes, no matter how small. Even if someone isn't able to contribute much, he hopes that visitors to his page will take the time to learn about the Equality Ride.

"I don't feel like a lot of people know about the ride, and I want to let people know about it through what I'm doing," he said. "It's important to the gay community that I do this." —*Josef Molnar*

FAUX REALITY MEETS GAY COMEDY

From vapid, shirtless bachelors to big-boobed Snookies, seems like every idiot with a schtick or tic has a reality TV show these days. It's the Internet superstars who find it harder to get any traction, though there have been some successes: Pearl, the cussing toddler landlord; the *Star Wars* kid; and that bizarre baritone singing "Chocolate Rain." Local production company Zenfilm is hoping their Natty Ice is the latest character to join the Internet pantheon of semi-stars.

As the star of Zen's is-it-or-isn't-it reality show *Get Out! Of the Closet!*, Natty is a misguided matron who is hell-and-hetero bent on helping queens come out, intervention style. Problem is, her targets may not actually *be* gay. This is of little consequence to the scrunchy-haired, spandexed, stiletto-heeled harpie, though her production crew, dumbstruck victims, and gay-panicked parents who enlist her services feel every cringe-worthy move.





▲ Natty Ice (Deb Malone, r) is about to pull a Neely O'Hara on this drag queen in the new web series, *Get Out! Of the Closet!*
◀ Kyle Sturdivant (Barry) gets miked for an upcoming scene in *Get Out!*

Boston comedienne Deb Malone plays Natty with undeniable dedication as a smoking, cursing, moronic caricature, complete with a stock *New Yawk* dialect. Kyle Sturdivant is great as her shock-and-awed producer, as is Rebekah →



continued from page 10

Dahl as a hippie chick who fears that her addiction problems may have turned her


Did Brian's (Philip Hays) mom make him gay?

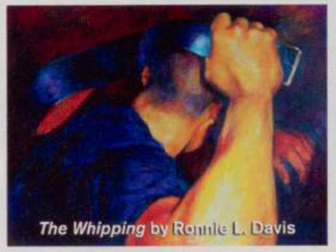
son gay. For Houstonians, there is the lookie-there thrill of seeing confrontation locations such as Audio Video Plus and Tony's Corner Pocket—local settings so wondrously goofy that even their kitschy signs look like low-budget props.

The outing-for-comedy concept isn't fresh. Local laughing gal Vickie Shaw basically pitched the show in her stand-up routine years ago. But that doesn't mean the idea isn't ripe for exploration. With hard work and social media word-of-mouth (the star will be Facebooking and Tweeting, in character, to her followers), Natty may indeed find Internet success. This is, after all, a medium that has awarded fame to everything from dramatic hamsters to piano-playing cats.

Visit getoutofthecloset.tv on April 2 for the premiere episode. —*Steven Foster*

HOUSTON ARTIST NABS TOM OF FINLAND PRIZE

The Tom of Finland Foundation's worldwide Emerging Erotic Artist Contest has announced their winners for the 2010 competition, and local artist Ronnie L. Davis was awarded second prize in the single-figure category for his painting *The Whipping*. The work, a dramatic 48 x 36 inch acrylic on canvas (pictured below)

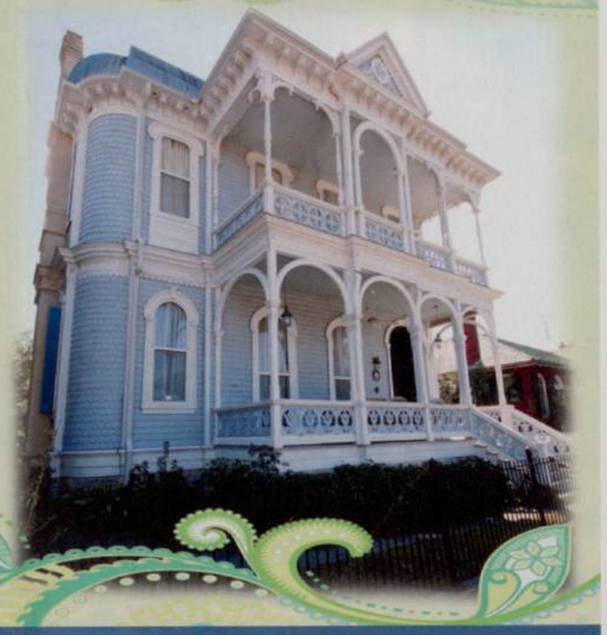

The Whipping by Ronnie L. Davis

depicts a close-shorn young man wielding a wide leather belt, held aloft, mid-swing. The painting is lustrous in color, deftly textured, and electrically evocative. "My goal, as an artist, is to portray our choices in strong, sensual images that intrigue and communicate," says Davis. To view the painting, and other multi-media works by Davis, go to rldavisart.com. —*S.F.*

UNHINGED PRODUCTIONS HOSTS OPEN FORUM ON GAY MARRIAGE

Local LGBT theater company Unhinged Productions will be holding a open forum on the subject of gay marriage in preparation for their May production, *Uncivil Unions*. Members of Unhinged have been interviewing members of the Houston community about same-sex unions to create this show, which Joe Angel Babb, artistic director, describes as "combining docudrama and sketch comedy and interviews and journalism and research." The conversation will cover equal rights, federal to local government, taxes, and religion, with the intention that *Uncivil Unions* truly represents where Houston is on the subject at this moment in history. Be part of the conversation at the GLBT Community Center, 3400 Montrose, Suite 207, on March 11 at 7 p.m. Learn more about Unhinged Productions at comeunhinged.com. —*Suzie Lynde*

More Community on page 105

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by Nancy Ford

REMEMBERING A FRIEND

Sometimes saying goodbye is harder than we'd expect

Unbeknownst to most of you, I have been in a long-term, committed relationship for some time. She was big and bright and loud, yet sleek and trim in all the right places. I called her TeeVee.

Every night after my long, hard day of gaygaygay, TeeVee was there, waiting to greet me with a story or a song. Always ready to be turned on, she was an unlimited, reliable source of information and entertainment. On any given night my friend allowed me to visit Rachel Maddow without the slightest hint of jealousy. She switched blithely from the History Channel to the Food Network to *I Love Lucy* reruns without a moment's hesitation. Sometimes she surprised me on a weekend with a daylong marathon of *The Godfather* saga. She told me when to toss an umbrella into my briefcase.

She didn't get angry or hurt when I stared blankly at her without listening. The touch of one magical button muted her while I conducted another conversation or was simply longing for some peace and quiet. She even turned herself off at night after I'd gone to sleep.

It was the perfect relationship. She fit into my life as comfortably as ABBA at a Pride parade.

One night near the end of January, I came home from my office ready to spend the evening with my loyal companion. As was the common drill, I reached for her as I simultaneously unfastened my bra. But there was no response. She was as cold as Al Roker in a Washington, D.C., snowdrift at dawn.

I tried in vain to revive her, pushing all her buttons, switching cables. I even hit her on her side to jump-start her inner parts—all to no avail.

Letting go, I pulled TeeVee's plug, retreating numbly to my bedroom to spend time with her much older, much heavier sister—let's call her Clunky—who isn't nearly as sharp or vibrant.

Damn. I didn't even have a chance to say goodbye. But how could anyone have imagined this would happen? She was just fine one day, and then the next day, she was gone. I took her presence for granted. I regret that.

It wasn't long before my numbness turned to anger. How could she leave like this with no warning after all the time we spent together? How dare she do this, just a few days before the Super Bowl? I was as pissed as Elizabeth Edwards listening in on the extension phone on Christmas Eve.

Repairing TeeVee would cost almost as much as replacing her, I soon learned. Because I know she wouldn't have wanted me to suffer long without a new companion, I began trolling the Internet for her successor: *SGF seeks companion for long-term relationship. Must be willing to be turned on for hours, and then abandoned without explanation. Sets of color welcomed; non-American a plus. The bigger, the better.*

Because I know she wouldn't have wanted me to suffer long without a new companion, I began trolling the Internet for her successor.

After some intense Googling, I found a company based right here in Texas, one that's well-known for manufacturing computers, that offered a beautiful new set—one in my league that I was able to afford. She was bigger and stronger than TeeVee, yet weighed less. No one had ever turned her on before. And she was Asian! Undeniably, we were a match.

I quickly dragged her into my electronic shopping cart and entered my Visa number. The painful gush of hundreds and hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of dollars being drained from my bank account was offset by my anticipation of the rich Dolby sound that would soon fill my living room. I was as happy as Angelina Jolie signing adoption papers.

The website promised she would arrive in plenty of time for Super Bowl kick-off. In less than a week and, remarkably, within the first hour of the vaguely appointed window of her arrival, the deliveryman toted my new friend up my winding staircase. The freshly dusted entertainment center awaited her, as shiny as a new Walmart cradle at the Duggars' house.

Moments after she was delivered through the door, it became apparent that somewhere along the way someone had taken a sledgehammer to her. Her flimsy, delicate packaging had been bashed as wantonly as a drag queen at a Promise Keepers' convention.

Inexplicably, the driver had not noticed the mauled packaging before he hauled it off the truck, through the entrance doors, across the courtyard, and up the stairs. But it's heartwarming to know that a blind man can find employment in shipping.

After I refused delivery, he dragged the broken package away, leaving me all by myself to stare at the empty space once occupied by my friend. I was lonelier than a newborn in a commode on prom night.

I spent the next two hours on the telephone telling and retelling my tale, again and again, to at least six new friends who, despite unimaginable linguistic obstacles, enjoy successful careers in customer service. Again: heartwarming.

Then came insult to my injury. Replacing TeeVee's bashed replacement would be impossible, you see, because that new, sleek, lighter, Asian model is now permanently out of stock.

Nearly three weeks after opening my bank account to the vultures who greedily took advantage of me in my delicate time of need, I was still awaiting my refund. Meanwhile, Clunky has moved from my bedroom into my living room where TeeVee once held court in all her expansive, flat-screen glory. But it's just not the same.

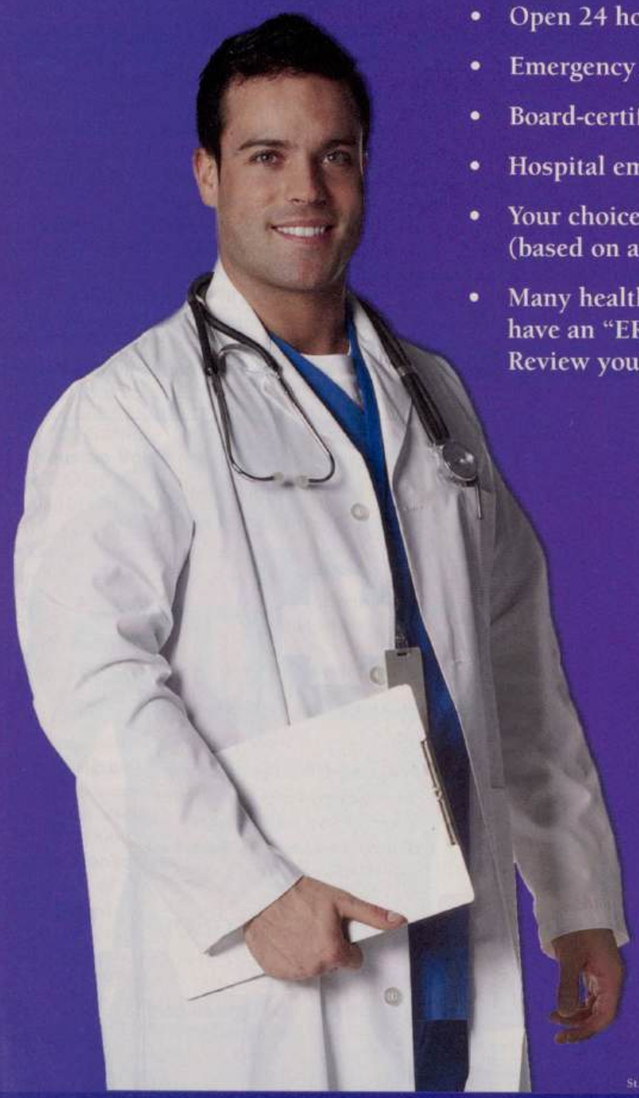
I don't spend much time with Clunky. Most of my evenings are now spent commiserating with others who are suffering like I am, in a chatroom at IHateDell.net. The site has more horror stories than Stephen King on a six-pack of Red Bull.

I hope I never see you there. ■

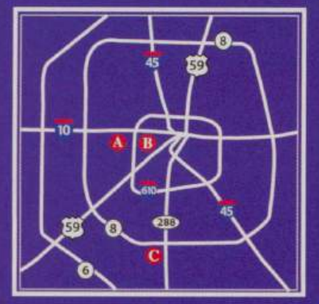
This one's for you, Michael. Rest in peace.

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AIDS Watch

by Kelly A. McCann

RED RIBBON, GREEN ATTITUDE

Now 21, AIDS Walk Houston is both socially and environmentally responsible

AIDS Walk Houston turns 21 years old this month. She's come of age, and with age comes responsibility. That's why this year's AIDS Walk is going green.

We at AIDS Foundation Houston—the organization that creates and executes the event each year—are encouraging everyone to solicit donations online, thus reducing the need for cash envelopes, checks, and the like. In addition, we have made a concerted effort to reduce the amount of printed materials we use for this year's walk. A greener walk is just one of the changes we at AFH are making this year to be kinder to the environment while still delivering life-enhancing services to our clients.

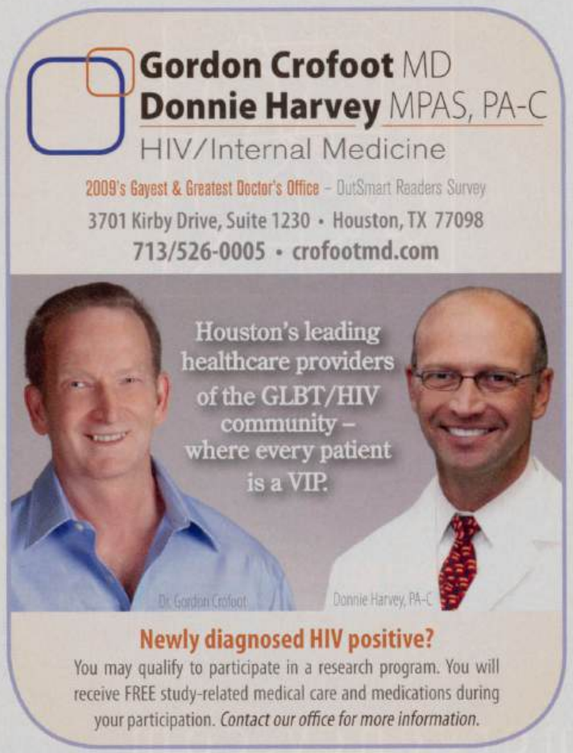
Our 21-year-old AIDS Walk Houston is not just environmentally conscious, she's socially conscious as well. That's why for the past several years, we at AFH have allowed other AIDS service providers to raise money for their programs through our fundraiser, AIDS Walk Houston.

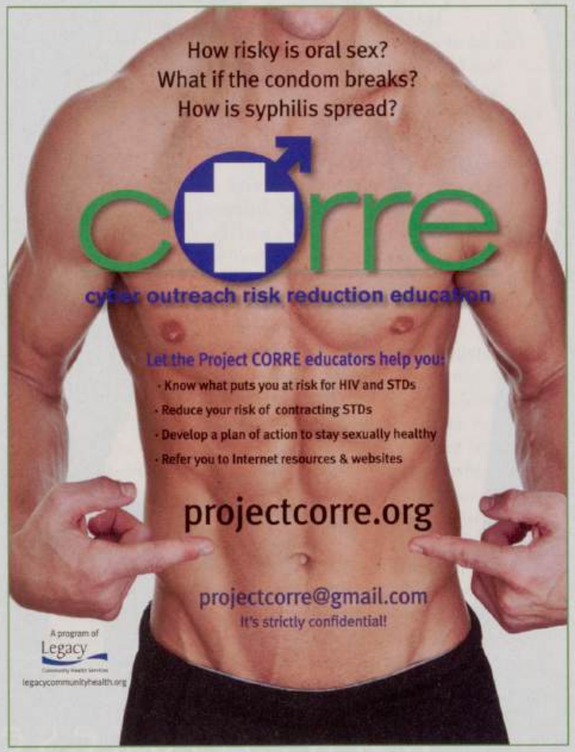
In the not-for-profit world, such a move is really unusual. Think about it: does Susan G. Komen allow local breast-cancer organizations to raise money through their walk? Does any organization other than the National Multiple Sclerosis Society raise funds through the MS 150? The answer to both questions is No.

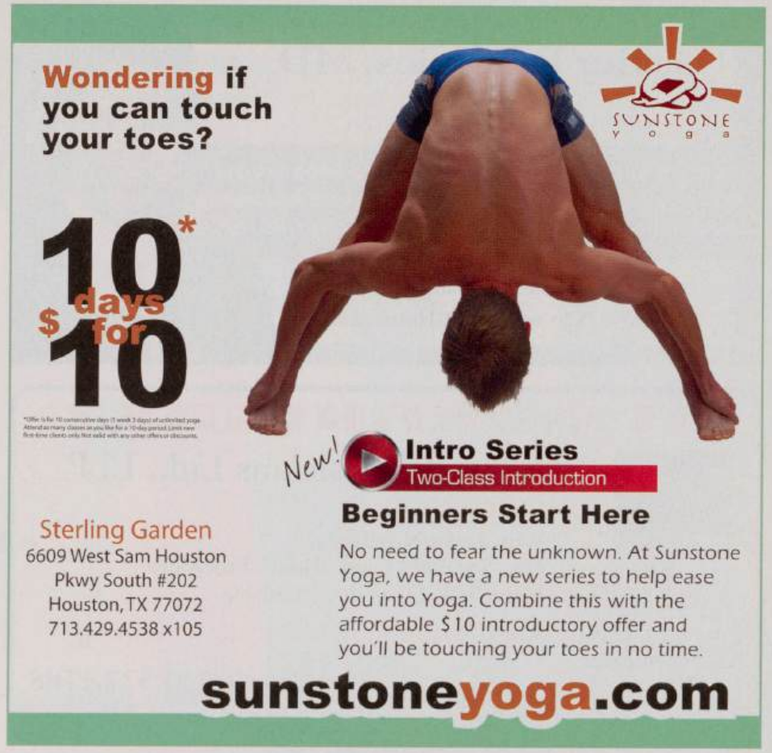
Our AIDS Walk is just one more thing that makes Houston unique. Most of the other AIDS service providers in our community embody the spirit of collaboration. We work together to make our city better and our citizens healthier. We at AFH embrace such partnership and we demonstrate it through our AIDS Walk every year.

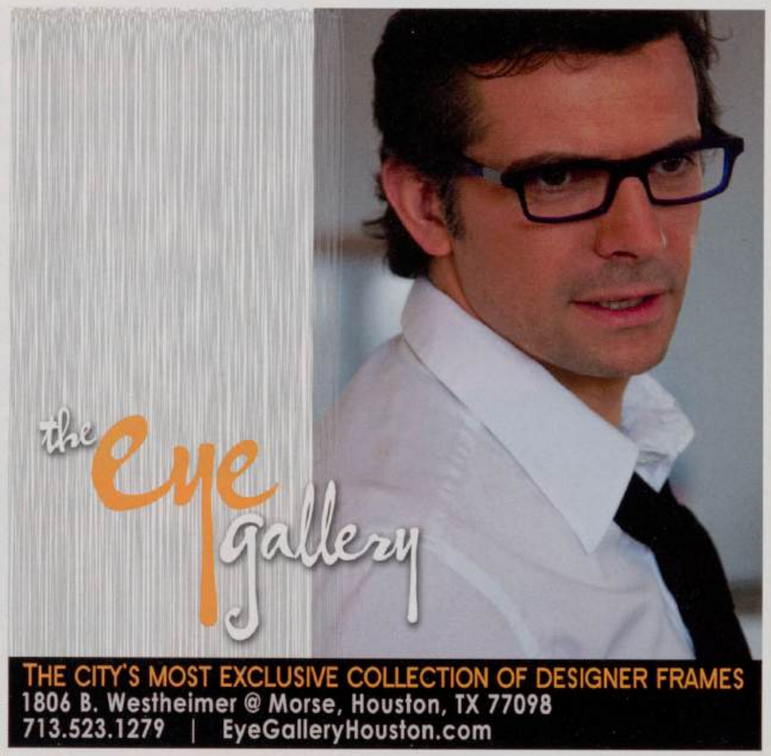
The event, and the money and awareness raised through it, are vitally important to many agencies within our HIV community. Please support this year's AIDS Walk Houston by making a financial contribution to AFH or one of the other 16 benefiting organizations below:

- **AIDS Foundation Houston** provides testing and prevention interventions to reduce the spread of HIV as well as a broad array of supportive services for those living with HIV/AIDS including: housing and homeless prevention programs, rent/mortgage/utility assistance, Stone Soup Food Assistance Program, Camp Hope, Teen Leadership Forum, and many others.
- **Baylor College of Medicine Teen Health Clinic** offers community-oriented primary and reproductive care to adolescent males and females, 13–22 years of age.
- **Bering Omega Community Services** exists to nurture the well-being and meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of persons affected by HIV/AIDS through compassionate health care and social services. 713/529-6071
- **Brazos Abiertos, Inc.** is a Texas-based organization dedicated to empowering the people of Yucatan, Mexico, to respond to AIDS; our vision is to be the catalyst for change where knowledge, prevention, and treatment of AIDS replaces fear, discrimination, prejudice, and death for those infected. 832/722-6191
- **Bread of Life, Inc.** is now a low-impact emergency shelter providing services to those most in need of safety, love, and compassion through an array of social services. 713/650-0595
- **Brentwood Community Foundation** is a nonprofit organization committed to providing education and supportive services to people with HIV/AIDS. 713/852-1451
- **The Center for AIDS Information and Advocacy** empowers people living with HIV to make informed decisions about their health care by providing the latest research and treatment information and by advocating for accessible, affordable, and effective treatment options until there's a cure. 713/527-8219
- **FLAS, Inc.** is dedicated to providing and creating positive social impact through advocacy, innovative and acculturated prevention of HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, and other health issues. 713/772-2366
- **Houston Buyers Club** works to improve the quality of life for people with health-related conditions through nutritional education and affordable supplements. 713/520-5288
- **Houston Volunteer Lawyers Program, Inc.**'s AIDS Project provides legal representation in civil matters to persons living with HIV/AIDS. 713/228-0735
- **Lazarus House**, a nonprofit organization, provides a low-cost program of wellness in a comfortable environment to clients suffering from muscle loss due to a chronic illness. 713/526-5071
- **Legacy Community Health Services** empowers its clients to lead a better life by providing premium, compassionate, primary health-care services. Legacy is committed to serving a diverse community including those persons who have traditionally faced problems accessing quality health care. 713/830-3000
- **LIVE Consortium** is comprised of diverse members of the Houston community who have united to provide HIV and anti-stigma education, support, research, and advocacy so that all people, regardless of status, can have the opportunity to live healthy and full lives. 713/252-7348
- **Planned Parenthood of Houston and Southeast Texas, Inc.** provides health care, testing, information, and education so that people can make informed decisions to live and love the way that is best for them. 713/522-6363. →





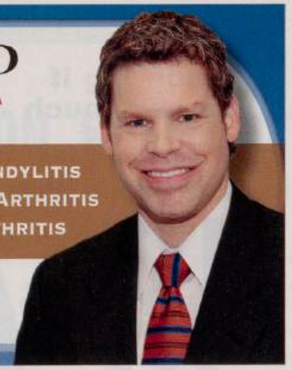




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AIDS Watch

continued from previous page

- **Resurrection MCC** maintains an HIV/AIDS Benevolence Fund that assists those affected by HIV/AIDS. 713/861-9149
- **SNAP Animal Aid Program** provides veterinary assistance for the companion animals of people affected by HIV/AIDS. 713/862-3863
- **The Department of Allergy and Immunology at Texas Children's Hospital** provides testing, treatment, clinical trials and social services to children, adolescents, and pregnant women living in Houston and surrounding cities. 832/824-1319

Join 10,000 of your friends and neighbors for the 21st AIDS Walk Houston on Sunday, March 14, at Sam Houston Park in downtown Houston. Registration starts at 8 a.m., opening ceremonies kick off at 9 a.m., and the walk begins at 10 a.m. To donate to AIDS Foundation Houston or another team, visit AIDSWalkHouston.org.

Show your support of those living with HIV/AIDS and help us put an end to this disease. It's the responsible thing to do.

Kelly McCann is the CEO of AIDS Foundation Houston. Read her blog at mccannicalmusings.wordpress.com.

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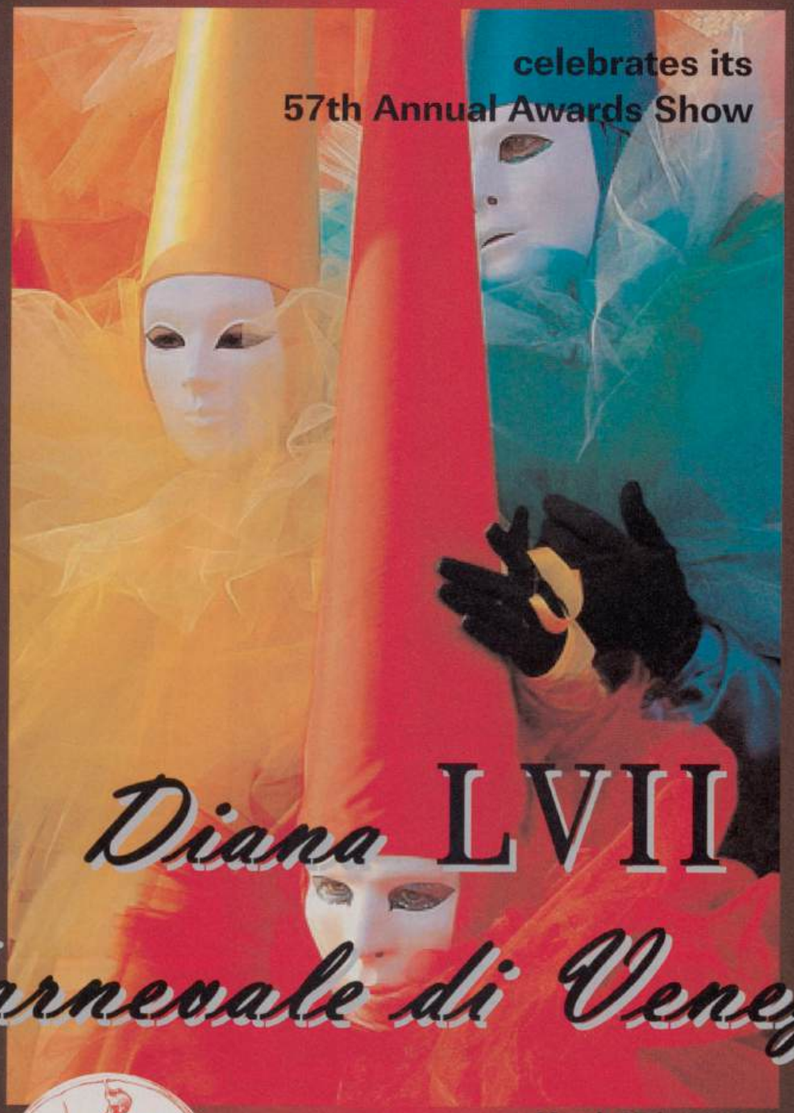
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PastOut

by Donalevan Maines

7 YEARS AGO IN 'OUTSMART'

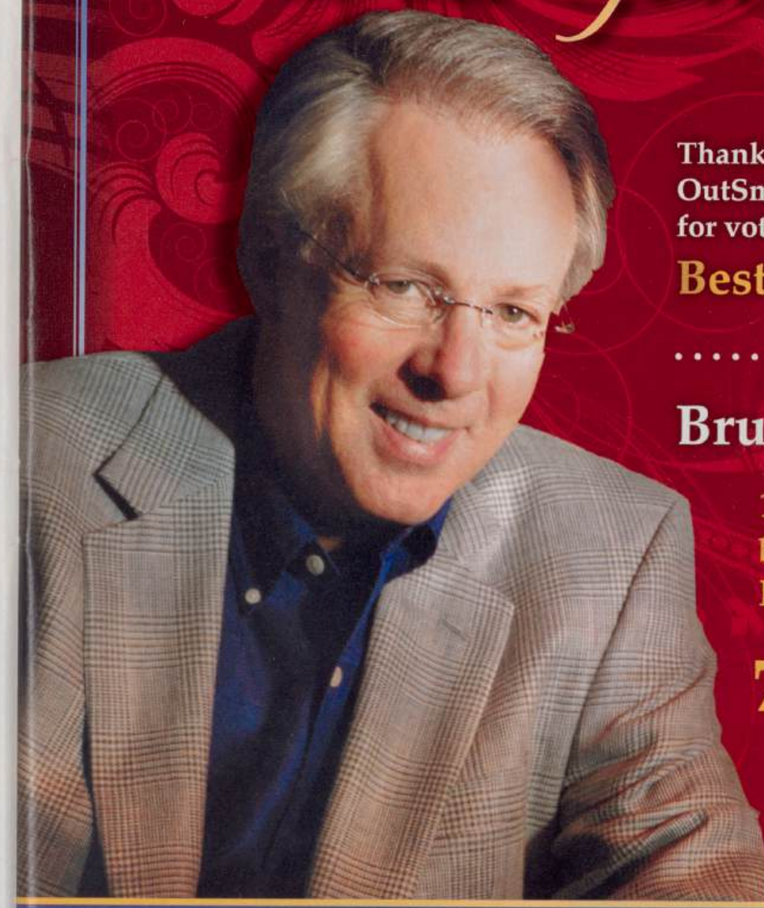
MARCH 2003



On March 26, 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in *Lawrence and Garner v. Texas*, by which they would decide whether the Texas sodomy statute violated gay citizens' constitutional rights of privacy and equal protection under the law. In *OutSmart*, **Mitchell Katine**, attorney for petitioners **John Lawrence** and **Tyron Garner**, explained the lower-court history of the landmark civil rights case and outlined important legal issues that would be decided by the Court. Katine wrote, "As a new father, I feel as if I'm doing my part in order to try to make the country and world a better place for my children and the children of other people." • The Houston chapter of the Human Rights Campaign honored U.S. Rep. Chris Bell at its sixth annual black-tie event at Houston Intercontinental Hotel. • **Leslie Townsend**, transgender model and performer, signed copies of her autobiography *Hidden in Plain Sight* at Borders River Oaks. • Mr. Gay Houston **Ricci Alan** and Miss Gay Houston **Kara Dion** crowned their successors in an unusual combined pageant at Rich's that honored the late Miss Gay Texas **Dyan Michaels**. • At its March 15 "reunion dance," **Mede Cardenas** remembered Kindred Spirits as "a magnificent bar that gave lesbians a sense of pride to call their own." • **Melanie Ashcraft**, **Randy Christian**, **Danny Gonzalez**, **Bryan Hopkins**, **Craig Stanfield**, and **Kevin Tobin** traveled to Fort Worth to represent Houston at the Cowtown Rodeo presented by Texas Gay Rodeo Association. • Kelly Rowland of Destiny's Child appeared at the 5-kilometer AIDS Walk Houston, which benefited 14 local HIV/AIDS service organizations. • Kingwood College's production of *The Laramie Project*, directed by **Ron Jones**, drew protests from Kansas preacher Fred Phelps and his following at Westboro Baptist Church. • **Randall White** portrayed a lesbian addressing an AA meeting, along with 10 other characters, in his one-man show *Normal* at DiverseWorks. • And behind the bar at Mary's, **John Benavides** helped play host to Friday-night registration for the Houston Council of Clubs' 30th anniversary LUEY (Let Us Entertain You) Weekend.

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

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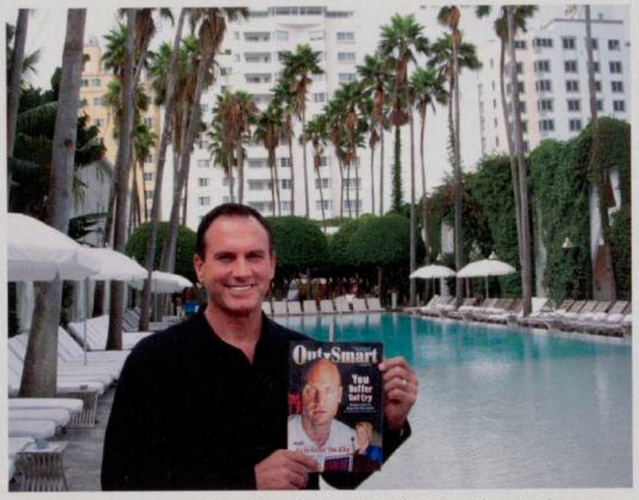
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Jai Fain, one of the owners of P-Jai's, Fashion for Modern Men, with underwear designer, Andrew Christian, at the MAGIC Fashion Show in Las Vegas, Nevada.



John Trujillo wrote to tells us that "my OutSmart traveled from Houston to Surfside, Texas, for a day on the beach and then went on a road trip to Santa Fe, New Mexico.



Richard Ray with his OutSmart in South Beach, Miami, Florida, at the Delano Hotel.



Sunday, March 14, 2010

8am – Check-In 9am – Opening Ceremonies 10am – Walk Begins!

It's the perfect low-impact workout before Sunday brunch! Join the OutSmart team and 10,000 other concerned Houstonians for the 21st AIDS Walk Houston, beginning Sunday, March 14, 8 a.m., at Sam Houston Park in downtown Houston. Your participation helps support those living with HIV/AIDS. aidswalkhouston.org

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

PROUD SPONSOR Out▾Smart HOUSTON'S GLBT MAGAZINE

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

March 11: **Out@TUTS Night with *South Pacific*.** After the performance mingle with the cast and listen to fabulous cabaret music with your LGBT friends at Artista. INFO: TUTS.com/Out

March 12: **Bringing in the Green** benefitting Montrose Counseling Center. 100% of the proceeds benefit client services. INFO: MontroseCounselingCenter.org

March 14: **AIDS Walk Houston**, benefitting AIDS Foundation Houston, as well as 14 other outstanding HIV/AIDS organizations. INFO: AIDSWalkHouston.org

March 23: Bayou City Performing Arts presents **We Can't Stop the Beat** benefitting BCPA. INFO: BCPA.org

SAVE THE DATE:

April 4: **31st Annual Bunnies on the Bayou** party on Fish Plaza. 100% proceeds benefit several Houston-area charities. INFO: BunniesontheBayou.org

April 29: **Out@TUTS Night with *Little House on the Prairie, The Musical.*** After the performance mingle with the cast and listen to fabulous cabaret music with your LGBT friends at Artista.

In Memorium



Michael J. Hatcher
April 18, 1961–February 16, 2010

If today was your last day
And tomorrow was too late,
Could you say goodbye to yesterday?
Would you live each moment like your last?
Leave old pictures in the past?
Donate every dime you have?
Would you call old friends you never see?
Reminisce of memories?
Would you forgive your enemies?
Would you find that one you're dreaming of?
Swear up and down to God above
That you'd finally fall in love
If today was your last day?

—NICKELBACK

Mike, your friends and coworkers at *OutSmart* miss you.

Join us for a celebration of Michael's life

March 25, 2010 from 5:30-7:30pm

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The DIANAS

At 57 years of age, the nation's oldest continually active gay organization is Houston's own Diana Foundation

by Brandon Wolf



COURTESY TOM OSBORN



When Houston florist David Moncrief threw an evening cocktail party in the spring of 1954, he was unaware he was in the process of making gay history. The small gathering in his living room was simply for the purpose of watching the Academy Awards on television with a group of gay friends.

A man with a spirited sense of humor, Moncrief bought a gag award to present to one of those friends. His casual joke struck a chord that led to the founding of Houston's Diana Foundation. Today, the Dianas are the oldest continually active gay organization in the United States.

It's a special cachet for Houston's gay community that an organization of national significance emerged from our midst. Amazingly, the Diana Foundation's 57-year history is a story that, until now, has not been told. To write this story, nearly 100 people were consulted: 55 Diana members, past and present; 30 people with knowledge of Houston's history and/or Houston's gay history; and 10 people familiar with national gay history. We reviewed some 4,000 photographs, 12 videotaped Diana Awards shows, 35 souvenir programs, and nearly 500 pages of documents currently housed at the Charles Botts Collection archive.

From this research comes a chronicle of the Dianas' 57-year evolution, the challenges they have overcome, and a perspective on their iconic importance. OutSmart *presents, for the first time, an overview of their story in this two-part series.* →

This earliest known photograph of Houston's Diana Awards was taken on April 14, 1969, when the 16th Annual Diana Awards were held at the Windmill Theater, in the Town & Country area. Pictured are (l–r) award recipient Tom "Ava" Osborn, founder David Moncrief, driving force Charles Hebert, and the legendary Diana statue.

Show biz is a gay tradition. No doubt we were there when Thespis wrote and staged his first dramas in ancient Greece. Fast-forward 2,500 years, and today we're among Hollywood's greatest artists and fans. Directorial legend D. W. Griffith is said to have discovered the pleasant little village of Hollywood in 1906, where he made his first feature-length film in 1913. Just 16 years later, in 1929, the elder Douglas Fairbanks hosted the budding film industry's very first Academy Awards ceremony at the Hotel Roosevelt in Hollywood. In 1930, a Los Angeles radio station began annual broadcasts of the event for local listeners, with the rest of the nation receiving the news through newspaper reports. But by 1944, interest in the awards ran so high that a national radio network broadcast the ceremony live. And then there was television . . .

The 1950s

The Dianas-to-Be Watch as the Academy Awards Come to Television

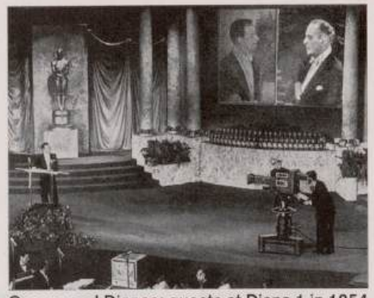
On March 19 in 1953, the country was buzzing—the Academy Awards, then 24 years old, were to be broadcast on television for the first time that evening; Americans would be able to see the winners accept their awards live.

In Houston, David Moncrief, a gay man who loved to entertain, was so excited about the upcoming broadcast, he purchased a new television set and invited a group of 10 friends to join him at his apartment for a pre-awards cocktail party and to watch the first televised Oscar broadcast.

Curtis Wright, the head of Sakowitz Department Store's window-trimming department, was Moncrief's roommate at the time and was responsible for the placement of a nearly life-size plaster model of Diana, the Roman goddess of the hunt, which stood in one corner of their living room. One of the guests that night, Johanna Lee Mueller, then in her early 20s and a model at Sakowitz, remembers it standing in Moncrief's beautiful New Orleans French Quarter-styled home.

The guests ate hors d'oeuvres and enjoyed cocktail chatter until the time of the awaited Oscar broadcast. When the anticipated moment arrived, Moncrief turned on the television set. Reception failed! While other Americans watched Shirley Booth's face break into delight at being named Best Actress for her role in *Come Back, Little Sheba,* the group at Moncrief's party listened to a radio announcer describe the event.

"We just laughed it off," remembers Mueller. The party had not proceeded as Moncrief had planned, but it served as the catalyst for the birth of Houston's Dianas one year later.



Oscars and Dianas: guests at Diana 1 in 1954 watched Donald O'Connor in Hollywood talk to Frederic March in New York City on a split-screen Oscar telecast.

The First Diana Award

Undaunted by the 1953 failure, Moncrief again organized a party to watch the 1954 television broadcast. Many of the same guests came, again dressed in cocktail attire. Just prior to the broadcast, Moncrief asked for everyone's attention and announced that he had an award for someone in Houston who had given an outstanding "performance"—most likely an amorous adventure—during the past year. As the guests laughed and applauded, Moncrief presented the very first Diana Award—a dildo—to Virginia "Hub" Lankford, who accepted it with mock surprise and amusement.

The guests' attention turned to the Oscar broadcast for the remainder of the evening, but Moncrief's mock award—a roast, really—was a rollicking element of the 1954 party. The roast idea was amusing enough to be repeated annually for the next 55 years.

Even Moncrief's choice of the evening's award was ironically appropriate. The annual Diana Awards would always be heavily tinged with overt sexual overtones and bawdy humor. They would appeal to people with quick wits, unrepressed sexuality, a lack of social conformity, and the ability to laugh at themselves.



COURTESY JOHN OHMS

Jack Bresnahan, shown at right in 1998, was at the Diana 1 party in 1954. He and Diana friend Johnna Mueller are the only two surviving guests from that party. In this photo with Bresnahan are (l–r) Diana friends Ellye Youmans, Glenn Smith, and Phyllis Lynn.

A Good Idea Grows

No one remembers exactly what direction the Diana Awards took after 1954, and it's not clear if they had taken on the name Diana yet. Perhaps Moncrief repeated his Oscar cocktail party in that same apartment on Louisiana Street, perhaps someone else's home was the site, or it's possible that Tom Adams rented a party room in Montrose and decided to expand on the idea with his friend, Charles Hebert. Tradition says that the awards were named in honor of the Diana statue that graced Moncrief's living room and presided over that first award presentation.

Jack Bresnahan, a guest in 1954, knows that in early 1956 the awards script for a "Diana 3" event was being eagerly written behind closed doors by Moncrief, Hebert, and Adams. The "Diana" name took on appropriate symbolic significance as the trio set out to emulate the Roman goddess by "hunting down" a new round of victims with their verbal "arrows."

From the very beginning, the Diana Awards parties presented a unique challenge for the host. They were not just cocktail parties where guests stood around and mixed. This party needed a theater-seating arrangement where 15 to 20 guests could gather for the local awards and then watch the Oscars together.

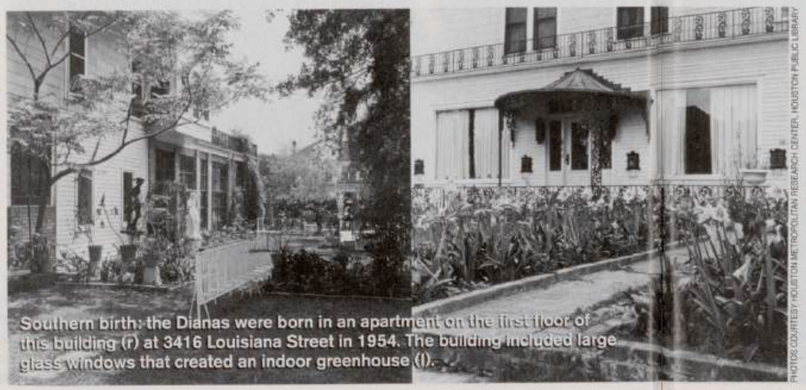
It may have been Diana 5 in 1958 when the event was held in the garage beneath Adams's apartment. The empty garage was set up with rows of chairs to resemble theater seating, with a television set at the front.

Dick Hollamon, Adams's cousin, was →

Where the Dianas Were Born . . . 3416 Louisiana Street

Dianas founder David Moncrief lived in an apartment building set on a magical block of land in the 3400 block of Louisiana, two blocks south of Elgin. The block had been developed by famed decorator Parker Edwards. Edwards's compound was just a block southeast from the Houston Junior League building, designed by architect John Staub. One block further southeast was the Alley Theater. Edwards had bought all the buildings on the block and created a wonderland of bricked pathways, pergolas, fountains, and colorful plantings, all accented by beautiful statuary.

The block had a French New Orleans feel to it with decorative wrought-iron work, hanging vines, and patios that opened onto a common courtyard. When the Junior League moved in 1968, Brennan's restaurant took over the building and renovated it in the New Orleans style that Edwards had established in the area.



PHOTOS COURTESY HOUSTON METROPOLITAN RESEARCH CENTER, HOUSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Southern birth: the Dianas were born in an apartment on the first floor of this building (r) at 3416 Louisiana Street in 1954. The building included large glass windows that created an indoor greenhouse (l).

The 59 Expressway did not exist in the 1950s, and residents of nearby Courtlandt Place and Montrose could easily access the area. Moncrief had wisely chosen as his flower shop a building on the same block where he lived. The area catered to those with wealth and taste—gift shops, bridal shops, antique dealers, and professional photographers.

Art Graeter was a boy of less than 10 at the time, but he remembers the area well because his father owned the House of Glass, a specialty store that sold chandeliers and other unique lighting. "People loved to be invited to Parker's cocktail parties," he remembers. "They were usually held in the courtyard. He would decorate the area beautifully. He often asked David Moncrief to affix flowers and small candles in the trees."

The House of Glass and Richard's Antiques and Statuary survive in the area today. Traces of the French News Orleans style are still sporadically evident. ■

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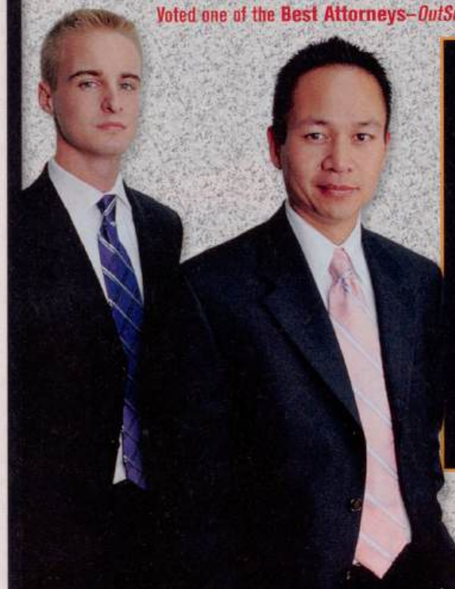
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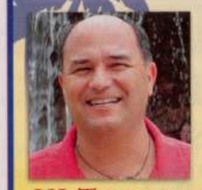
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a young boy then, but remembers the times. "There was a large influx of people coming to Houston to live, and there wasn't enough space to house them," Hollamon says, "so building garage apartments became a popular thing to do. It provided living space for those moving here, and it provided rental income for the owners."

The location of Diana 6 in 1959 was not recorded, but it was for this particular awards party that the most quoted Dianas line was written. Spoofing the Hollywood film *Some Came Running*, a lesbian guest was presented an award for *Some Ran Coming*. Fifty years later, Diana members from every era of the organization's existence still break into laughter remembering that line.

No one seems to remember what the early Diana Awards looked like, but they were probably typed pieces of paper, folded over and decorated with a colorful seal to mimic the sealed envelopes used at that time by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The Houston awards became known as the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Antics.

Hebert and Adams quickly emerged as the co-hosts for the awards. Moncrief probably began his long career as "Pricene Waterhouse" during those days and was responsible for handing the sealed envelopes to the award presenters. The awards were always roasts, teasing members of the group for awkward or careless incidents they had been involved in during the year. Swiping someone else's boyfriend or girlfriend was a pretty good way to ensure the winning of a Diana award.

The secret writing of the roast awards was a time-consuming process that tested the writers' perverse talents and creativity because the awards had to be plays on the real names of the movies nominated, combined with qualifying (presumably unintentional) scandalous behavior on the parts of members throughout the preceding year.

Before 1958, the actual Academy Awards were telecast from two locations,



COURTESY TOM OSBORN

Bathing beauties: Tom Osborn (l) shows off his athletic form in this beach picture with a friend.



COURTESY JOHN OHMS

Any friend of Diana is a friend of mine: Diana friends John Ohms (l) and Charles Hebert party in Acapulco in the mid-1960s.

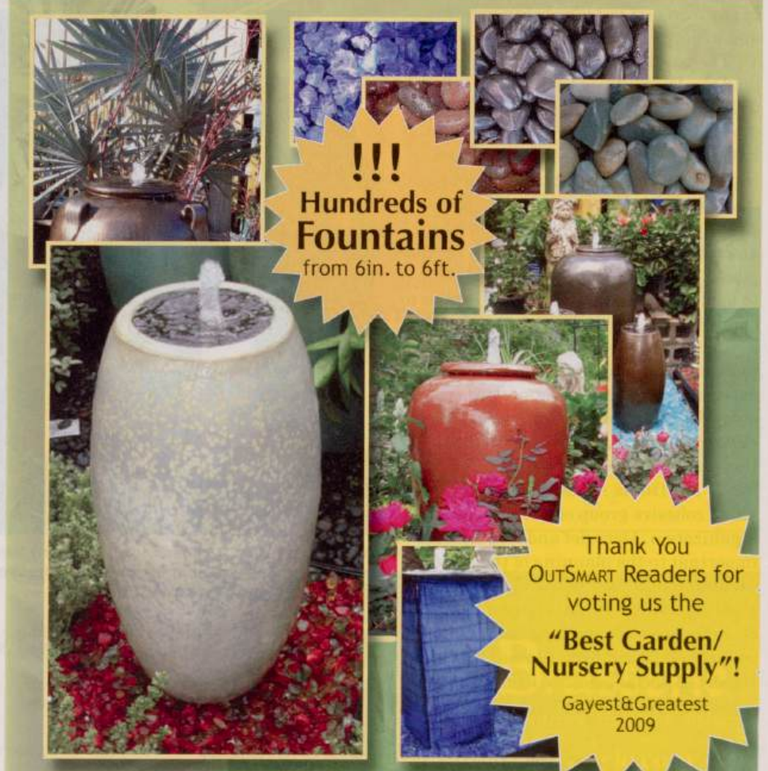
Los Angeles and New York. During those years, mocking the bi-coastal format, Hebert and Adams took turns presenting awards, as if from opposite coasts, pretending to be Louella Parsons and Hedda Hopper, the two most famous movie gossip columnists of the times.

Understanding the Times

In 1950s Houston, it was necessary for gays to be closeted because their careers were at stake. Police regularly drove by known gay bars and wrote down license plate numbers of cars parked in the area. The plates were cross-checked, and employers were notified that one of their employees had recently parked near a known gay establishment. That, in itself, could end a career.

Private homes were the center of gay life during those times. For professionals, this strategy was a necessity, because years of college and career experience could be wiped out by an employer's knowledge of their sexual orientation. Gay bars did exist in Houston, but for the most part they were small, dark, dingy, and offered little in the way of amusement. Police frequently raided them, rounding up patrons and busing them to police headquarters to be booked for indecent conduct. Overt homosexual behavior wasn't the only thing that police →

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looked for during a raid. Sometimes just being in a known gay establishment was enough to arrest a patron.

Private house parties usually included a mix of gay men and lesbians. Gays didn't want neighbors to see all men or all women arriving for parties next door. This resulted in gay men and lesbians becoming close, and lifelong friendships were formed.

The people who were invited to attend the Diana Awards were generally well educated, socially skilled, and well dressed. In order to appear heterosexual in public, most paired off into faux boyfriend-girlfriend relationships of gay men and lesbians. A classic irony of this situation is that these faux couples were among the most attractive seen in public places. The very people who forced them to appear straight used them as models to emulate.

For those who took part in Houston's gay social life, the Diana Awards emerged as one of the best parties of the year. Word continued to spread about the cleverness of the awards, and invitations to the annual party became a social prize. The Diana Awards, though, were still a cohesive group of friends, not an organization. Moncrief and Adams were important to the planning of the annual event and took part in the writing of the roasting awards, but it was becoming clear that the driving force behind the continuing Diana Awards was Charles Hebert. A social creature by nature, he relished his role as the leader.

The 1960s
Diana Madness

By 1960, the Diana Awards had become so popular with Hebert at the helm that he found it difficult to locate a home with a living room large enough to accommodate the guests. The parties had always been dressy, but Hebert decided to make them black-tie affairs, reflecting the look of the audience at the actual Academy Awards and giving the Houston events a look and feel of almost royal elegance. He also utilized the technical wizardry of his friend Bill Bridges, which made the awards more and more visually amusing.

In an ongoing search for space, the event skipped from a vacant storefront on Main to custom-frame designer Charles Knight's Montrose home on Graustark to a large tent on the grounds of Moncrief's new home on Yoakum Boulevard to a townhome on Mason Street specially designed by Hebert to satisfy his passion for entertaining. But even this space was soon outgrown, and the last Awards event in a home was held at Moncrief's newest address on Ferndale. By 1966, the Dianas finally had no other choice except to "go commercial." The "adult" Village Theater in Rice Village agreed to shut down the theater for an evening so that the Diana 13, 14, and 15 awards shows (1966–1968) could be held there. It was wonderfully appropriate to hold a party that spoofed movies in a real movie theater.



COURTESY VIRGINIA CALDWELL

The swinging '60s: Diana friends (l–r) Jimmy Valentine, Virginia Caldwell, and Clinton Quinn dressed up for a Roaring '20s party in 1961.

The Nature of the Awards

Those in the Diana Awards social circle continued to provide easy fodder for the annual events—passing out drunk in a public restaurant and falling face-first into food, lovers allowing personal differences to become squabbles at inappropriate social moments, or spending too much money for something without obvious merit. The sillier the antics, the louder the howls from the audience as award recipients accepted their prizes with embarrassment.

To describe the Diana Awards as "suggestive" would be a gross understatement. The language was risqué, ribald, crass, and lewd. Words such as *dyke*, *faggot*, and *queer* were used with impunity. Reveling in double entendres, puns, and other crafty word associations, the writers tried hard not to cross the line from humor to hurt. The awards were meant to be "all in fun," reminding guests who attended regularly that "if you play, you pay." This year may be your year to laugh, but next year may be your turn as target.

During the 1960s, police were still hassling patrons in gay bars. Required to appear heterosexual in their daily lives, the assembled group delighted in casting off society's forced roles once they were behind closed doors. Men received the actress awards and women received the actor awards. Perhaps because they constantly lived with a repression of their true selves, in the company of their own kind they laughed it all away.

A New Direction for the Awards

Up to this time, Hebert and his close friends paid all of the expenses involved in the shows. With the move to the Village Theater, they finally felt the need to charge an admission. The addition of a cover charge made no difference; people receiving an invitation were happy to pay the price.

In 1967, Tom Osborn, a former ice skater with the Sonja Henie troupe, provided the first drag entertainment to be featured at a Diana Awards show. He quickly became the Diana's resident diva, a role he played for nearly two decades.

Also during the Village Theater years, a group of men formed the KY Nymphonettes and performed mock TV commercials for the sex lubricant between awards. Another group, usually their partners, dressed in drag as the Micrin Oral Antiseptic Swallowettes. Winners now received a copy of the award, a huge bouquet of roses, a bottle of Micrin, and a tube of KY. The Diana Awards were becoming an institution in Houston's gay community.

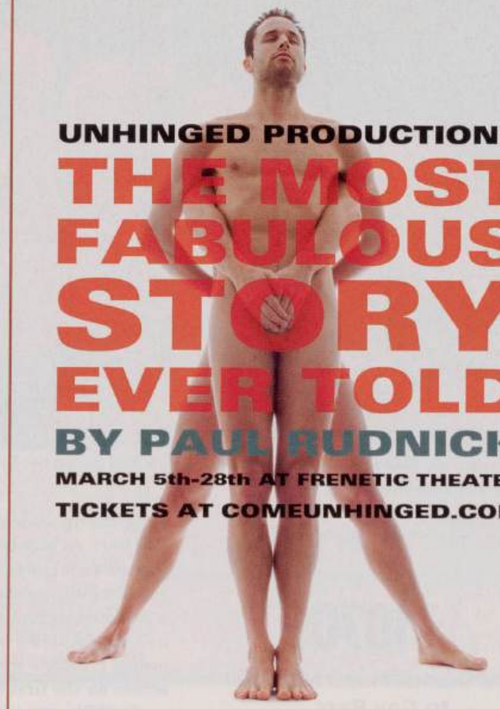
On the Cusp of a New World

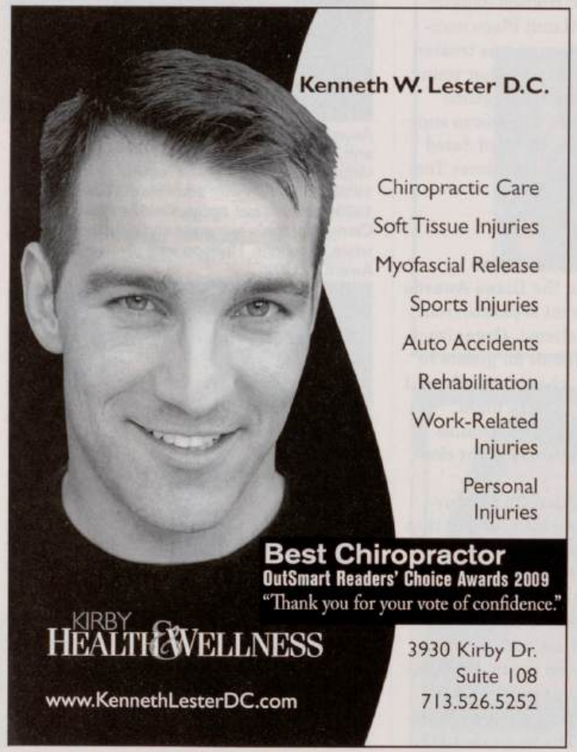
In 1968, Billy Moody, owner of the Village Theatre, died, leaving the inner circle of the Dianas group without a good friend and also without a venue in 1969. That year, they moved to the Windmill Dinner Theater in west Houston's Town & Country area.

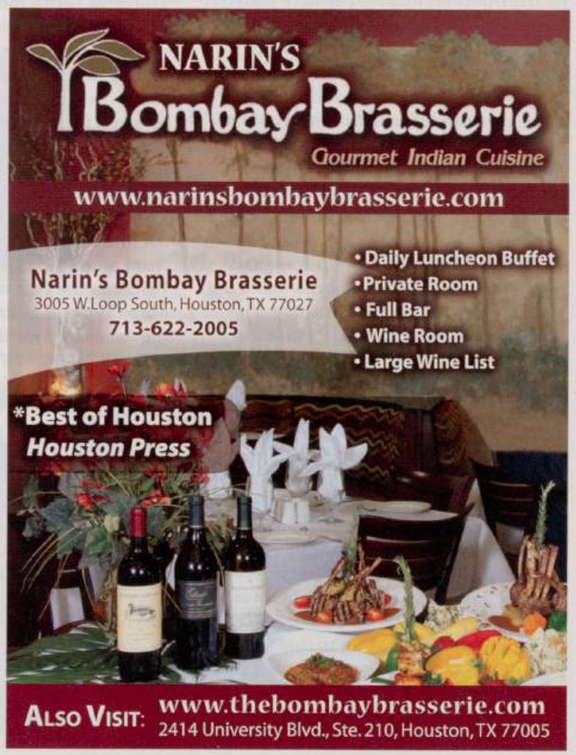
Hebert had become friends with Linda Mele and convinced her to join him and Bob Fields as a third emcee and part of the award-writing staff. With the 1969 awards, the Dianas entered a new era in their history, expanding their appeal to the lesbian community and playing to an audience of 80 to 90 guests.

What no one knew that evening was that they were only two months away from a major milestone in gay history—the Stonewall Riots of June 28, 1969, in New York City. →

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COURTESY DIANA FOUNDATION

Manly Annies: multiple Annies wave to the 1978 audience during the Silver Anniversary Diana 25 at the Sheraton Lincoln.

The Dianas *continued from page 32*

The 1970s

The Dianas Make a Move to Gay Bars

As the Diana organizers began to plan for Diana 17 in 1970, they found themselves, along with the rest of the nation's gay community, living in a new world. The previous summer's Stonewall Riots had galvanized gays throughout the country. Gays were news on page one of the *New York Times* and on the cover of *Time* magazine. It was clear that the gay community was going to fight back against repression and homophobia.

Whether or not Stonewall was the reason, the 1970 Diana Awards would be held in a gay bar for the first time. The chosen venue was the Club Romulus at 2151 Richmond Avenue (the site of Club Picasso in the 1990s). As usual, David Moncrief played the role of Pricene Waterhouse, handing the sealed awards to the trio of emcee/presenters—Charles Hebert, Bob Fields, and Linda Mele. Between awards, the KY Nymphonettes and the Swallowettes continued their musical commercials for KY lubricant and Micrin oral antiseptic mouthwash, and winners received roses and samples of the advertised products. Along with the awards, double entendres alluding to that year's Oscar-nominated movies dominated the evening's entertainment.

In 1971 and 1972, the Awards were held in the Palace Club, high atop 3400 Montrose (now the site of Scott Gertner's Sky Bar). As guests mingled for the pre-awards social hour, a slideshow of their activities during the past year flashed on a centrally located screen. Bill Bridges had also located a television projector, allowing guests to watch the Oscars on a big screen for the first time.

In 1971, even movie star Rock Hudson won a Diana award. A friend of Diana supporter Glenn Smith, Hudson usually stayed in Smith's Courtlandt Place mansion on visits to the city—and was treated to both Houston hospitality and hot young men from Montrose. Another longtime personal friend of Hudson was Diana supporter Virginia Caldwell, who had dated Hudson's publicist and one-time lover Tom Clark when they were in college.

An Important Departure from a Long-Standing Tradition

1973 was the year when the Diana Awards were first held as an event separate from the Academy Awards telecast. Organizers realized that it was difficult for guests to hurry home from work, change into formal wear, and party late on a work night. From now on, they decided, the Dianas would be held on the Saturday night closest to the Oscars.

Moving the awards show to a Saturday, with a later starting hour, meant that organizers no longer had to provide dinner for guests. Removing the Oscar telecast from the event also meant that the local awards entertainment could run longer.

Constantly outgrowing their previous venues, the Dianas moved again, this time to the Hi Kamp Klub, a unique gay bar that featured a raised runway and a stage at one end of the club. The response to the invitations was so overwhelming that the club was packed from wall to wall. This was to be the first and last awards show at this location.

Meanwhile, Hebert and Tim Weaver had begun living together as partners. Weaver was attractive and athletic, with a sweet disposition and an affable personality. When Moncrief fell sick at awards time and needed a replacement, Weaver was quickly pressed into service to fill in as Priscilla Waterhouse. Still new to the whole game, he tried to play his role straight as the emcees somberly said, "May I have the envelope please, Priscilla?" Weaver recalls with a laugh, "I kept cracking up, and they would glare at me." But the audience thought he was hilarious.

The '74 and '75 Dianas were held at Bayou Landing (later to become The Old Plantation). Sharon Lord remembers that



COURTESY DIANA FOUNDATION



COURTESY VIRGINIA CALDWELL

Above: In 1979, entertainer Wayland Flowers (r) and Madame talk with David Moncrief. *Below:* Virginia Caldwell, a Diana regular since the late 1950s, is shown with actor Rock Hudson at a 1970s party at her home. Caldwell dated Tom Clark, Hudson's manager and one-time lover, while in college. Hudson was given a Diana Award in 1972.

because there was no assigned seating, guests began lining up for the best tables hours before the event.

Weaver, having noted that the awards shows did not have souvenir programs, was appointed to produce one, complete with sponsors. The result was the first printed program at Diana 21—eight pages long, with a sketch of Moncrief's original Diana statue on the front, a page for autographs, and a little pencil secured on a golden cord.

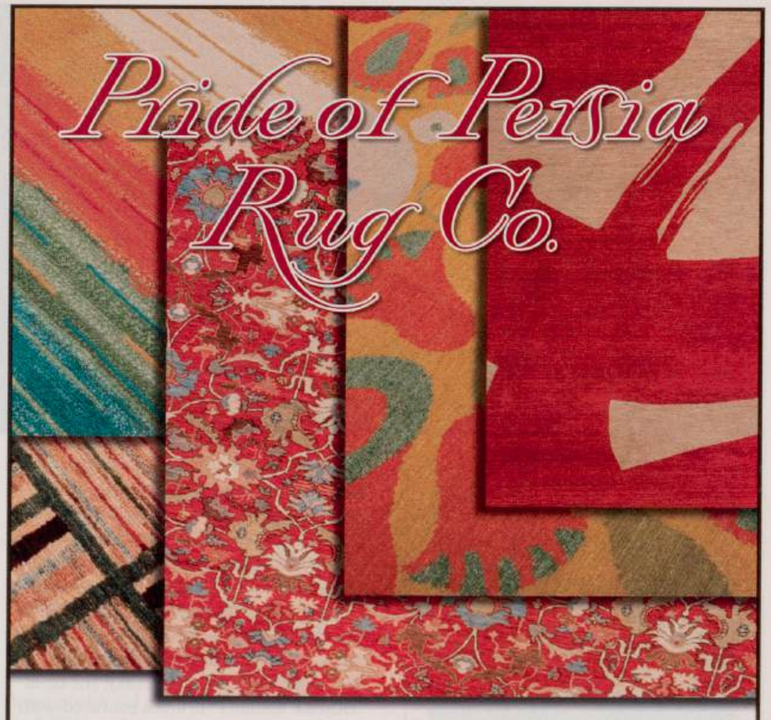
The original statue, situated on the stage and bedecked with flowers, was now a regular tradition at every Diana Awards show. It provided a sentimental link to that first Diana party in 1954. Made of plaster, and nearly life-size, the statue had to be moved on a dolly and required four people to get her into position. Above the stage, "Diana XXI" was spelled out in lights.

By 1976, Bayou Landing had closed its doors, and organizers chose Dance City in the old Windsor Plaza as the Diana 23 site. Each year the scope of the Diana Awards continued to expand, and a new musical group calling themselves the Dykettes was added to the entertainment list. Mele taught them how to make basic dance moves, and Sandi Bubbert was recruited for her vocal talents. When the group premiered with a rousing rendition of "Stout Hearted Men," the audience jumped to its feet and gave them a standing ovation.

Peter Forbes remembers being dressed to look like Mae West as the Statue of Liberty that year. "I was in a full-length, skin-tight dress with red, white, and blue diagonal stripes and held a torch with a blinking light," he laughs. The facility was closed down earlier than expected that night, and Forbes had to drive home still wearing the costume. "That dress was so tight I couldn't bend my knees, so I had to drive in a totally prone position. And just as I was about to leave the parking lot, someone opened the passenger door of my car and put in a six-foot-tall tube of KY used as a prop on the front seat. I got some strange looks at stop lights that evening."

The Dianas Formalize an Institution

Although the Dianas charged admission for their shows, the income was still insufficient to pay the expenses of the productions, and private individuals always provided donations to make up the difference. A decision to become a 501(c)(3) charitable organization opened up the possibility that benefactors could use their gifts as tax deductions. It also provided the Dianas with a motivation to make →



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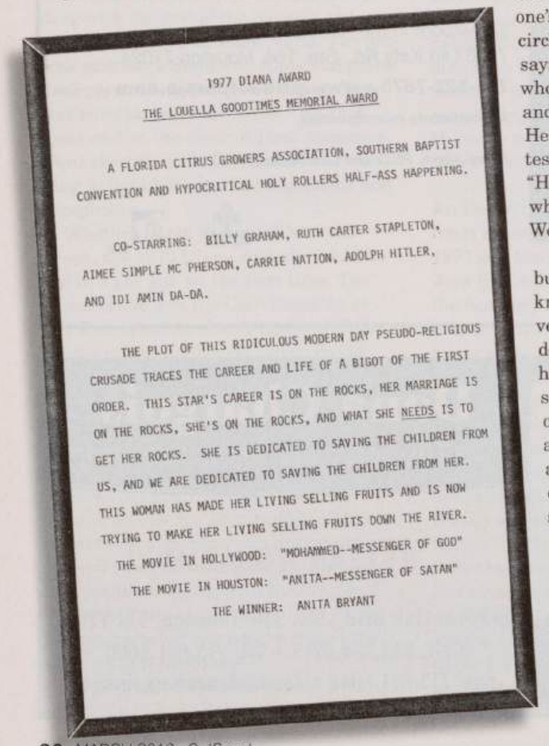
PHOTOS BOTH PAGES COURTESY DIANA FOUNDATION

Men in slips, women in raincoats, and dykes as fairies: the Micrin Swallowettes (far left) perform a commercial at the 1974 awards. In a rousing 1978 routine, the Dykettes (center) fail to attract pretty young things in their roles as dirty old women. A clever quick-change morph to fairy princesses (far right) brought gales of laughter.

continued from previous page

the events financially profitable. In late 1976, the Dianas' application for charitable status was approved by the IRS, and the Diana Foundation was officially born.

As a charitable foundation, the Dianas sought out worthy recipients for donations from the proceeds they made from their events. They gave four-year scholarships to deserving students at the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, made donations to the Houston Ballet, and helped out numerous other causes.



1977 DIANA AWARD

THE LOUELLA GOODTIMES MEMORIAL AWARD

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CO-STARRING: BILLY GRAHAM, RUTH CARTER STAPLETON, AIMEE SIMPLE MC PHERSON, CARRIE NATION, ADOLPH HITLER, AND IDI AMIN DA-DA.

THE PLOT OF THIS RIDICULOUS MODERN DAY PSEUDO-RELIGIOUS CRUSADE TRACES THE CAREER AND LIFE OF A BIGOT OF THE FIRST ORDER. THIS STAR'S CAREER IS ON THE ROCKS, HER MARRIAGE IS ON THE ROCKS, SHE'S ON THE ROCKS, AND WHAT SHE NEEDS IS TO GET HER ROCKS. SHE IS DEDICATED TO SAVING THE CHILDREN FROM US, AND WE ARE DEDICATED TO SAVING THE CHILDREN FROM HER. THIS WOMAN HAS MADE HER LIVING SELLING FRUITS AND IS NOW TRYING TO MAKE HER LIVING SELLING FRUITS DOWN THE RIVER.

THE MOVIE IN HOLLYWOOD: "MOHAMMED--MESSENGER OF GOD"

THE MOVIE IN HOUSTON: "ANITA--MESSENGER OF SATAN"

THE WINNER: ANITA BRYANT

The orange juice queen: in 1978, the Louella Goodtimes Memorial Award was presented to an absent Anita Bryant.

Charles Hebert—Driving Force Behind the Dianas

Before becoming a foundation, the group had never felt a need for officers and memberships. Hebert was clearly the driving force, and everyone involved was happy to let him coordinate all of the work. When the foundation was first organized in 1976, a list of "charter members" came into existence. But even today, the term "charter member" is often confused with "original participant."

Some of the people close to Hebert were wealthy, and some were professionals, but neither money nor status bought one's way into Hebert's social circle. His partner, Tim Weaver, says that Hebert enjoyed people who were creative, industrious, and mixed well with others. He also felt that social courtesies should be reciprocated. "He enjoyed attending parties where he could just be a guest," Weaver says.

Hebert had an acid tongue, but according to many who knew him, he didn't initiate verbal volleys. But if someone decided to get started with him, they usually found themselves demolished in a matter of seconds. Hebert was seen as "a true gentleman," but not a prude; when he chose, he could turn the air blue with sexual jokes.

All of these qualities drew people to Hebert. Many of his acquaintances showed up regularly in the Houston society columns, as did the events they sponsored. To the society columnists, the group in which Hebert was active was referred to as "café society." Getting your name on the society page usually was a result of one of two things—being wealthy or being fun. An eternal teenager, Hebert never lost his zest for enjoying life.

Even after the formation of the Diana Foundation, the Dianas continued as just one facet of Hebert's busy life. But as president of the foundation, he discovered that the Dianas were now becoming a year-round activity.

The Dianas Expand Exponentially

While plans were under way for Diana 24 in 1977, the group booked a ballroom at the Sheraton Lincoln. No previous venue came close to the size of this facility or the opportunities it afforded.

Hebert realized he had a complex event to run and set to work organizing committees to handle all of the necessary duties: band, choreography, costumes, decorations, hotel arrangements, invitations and tables, programs, sets, sound and technical, and raffle—just for starters! When it became obvious that a focused effort was needed in a particular area, Hebert created another committee.

Harry Guyton, who volunteered to work with the Sheraton sets, recalls, "For the first time we had a large stage to perform on. We decided to include more lavish musical numbers in the show, and we built the sets in my driveway."

Sandi Bubbert remembers the astonishment on the faces of the Sheraton staff as the Diana crew arrived to set up for the show. "We wheeled in the portable stage, lights, sound equipment, sets, props, and costumes." The sewing committee had gathered enough tulle to run the length of two football fields.

Michael Kemper remembers that first year attending the Diana Awards at the Sheraton. "I felt so proud riding up that escalator to the ballroom. Finally gays had become part of the country club set. And we were out in the open, and we were with our own."

The Dianas packed the ballroom with a sell-out performance, and decided to continue their relationship with the Sheraton through four more shows, 1978 through 1981. By this time, the Micrin bottles and KY tubes had been replaced by small plaster statuettes spray painted a tacky gold color. Although Moncrief's original Diana, Roman goddess of the hunt, continued as a regular prop on the stage, the statuettes actually looked like Juno, wife of the Roman god Jupiter. In an attempt to find a statuette with generally the same form as an Oscar, mythological purity was abandoned.

Diana Awards dress code continued to be black tie. Forbes remembers that Jim "Fannie" Farmer, the original owner of Mary's Naturally Bar, showed up with his little dog also wearing a black tie. "That dog sat quietly in a chair and acted so polite the whole evening. He and his owner were later presented with an award for *Animal Spouse*." Pets were near and dear to Dianas members, and in 1978 the printed program instituted a listing of "Diamond Dogs," "Cuddly Cats," and "Assorted Dianimals."

Members tried out for dancing and singing roles and rehearsed endlessly. Song lyrics were altered to be both humorous and downright lewd. But awards for bad behavior had always been the Dianas' signature feature, and award writers continued to identify baddies and reward the guilty.

Bob King joined the award-writing efforts in the late 1970s and continued for nearly two decades. He remembers those years: "Some awards took four to six hours to write those 200 or so words. Hard to believe, but we wrote 14 of them every year. Charles and I had a rule that if the award did not make us laugh, then scrap it. The next day we scrapped many. We tried to go as far as we could and not go too far and hurt someone. Being non-professionals, we managed to do that most of the time. I would have never intentionally hurt someone. Delivery made a difference. I worked with presenters over and over."

Popular entertainer Wayland Flowers was flown in for the 1978 and 1979 shows to entertain with his puppets, Madame and Jiffy. In 1978, Jiffy presented the Louella Goodtimes Memorial Award to singer and antigay crusader Anita Bryant (who did not attend to accept). It read, "This star's career is on the rocks, her marriage is on the rocks, she's on the rocks, and what she needs is to get her rocks. She is dedicated to saving the children from us, and we are dedicated to saving the children from her. This woman has made her living selling fruits and is now trying to make her living selling fruits down the river." The award was met with loud, aggressive approval.

Seemingly no one and nothing was exempt from the Diana Awards arrows—even the Houston Gay Political Caucus. Having reached a silver anniversary, they had clearly become a community institution. Sold-out performances were a given. Demand for tickets always exceeded the supply available. Facing the dawn of the 1980s, they were unstoppable.

Next month, OutSmart *continues its exclusive history of the Dianas with the second part of this two-part series. Coming up: the Dianas hit the big time at the Tower Theater, exceed all expectations, begin to feel the impact of AIDS, endure a loss that cuts deep into the core of their collective soul, and move to the Wortham Center.*

For a detailed year-by-year look and history of the Diana Awards, search for "The Diana Foundation" on Facebook.

Brandon Wolf profiled Mayor Annise Parker in the January issue of OutSmart *magazine.*

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New Blood

The South's oldest LGBT civil rights organization draws criticism under its youthful leadership

by Josef Molnar
Photo by Dalton DeHart

As the March primaries close and attention turns to this fall's general election, Houston's LGBT community looks to the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Political Caucus for non-partisan endorsements of candidates who believe in equal rights for all citizens, regardless of sexual orientation.

But recent divisions within the leadership of this influential organization, and a few of their candidate endorsements, have some long-time members wondering where the nonprofit is headed.

Central to the controversy is two-term board president Kris Banks, who some members say is causing the 35-year-old organization to stray from its original mission—political support of gay-friendly candidates—and toward his own interests. Others stand behind Banks and agree the caucus should broaden its mission.

There's an obvious rift in the caucus. At stake is the future of an organization that should be playing a vital role in supporting and electing politicians who are sensitive to Houston's LGBT community.

Politics vs. Advocacy

One side says Banks has strengthened the caucus by putting more of its resources into community advocacy. Others point to these very actions as weakening the group and diluting its original goal of fostering gay-friendly politics.



Follow the leader?: Kris Banks, president of the board of the Houston GLBT Caucus, believes the organization should broaden its mission through community advocacy.

President Barack Obama personally sought and received the endorsement of the caucus during his 2008 campaign.

"There has been so much talk about 'It's time for a new generation to take over,' but they've put off people," says Jack Valinski, a longtime caucus member who was also a former director of the organization. He believes that some of the older retired members, who often have the most time available to volunteer, have been particularly alienated by caucus politics.

But not all board members feel that way, especially the younger ones.

"You never had the numbers and the action and the ability to get voters to turn out that you do now," says caucus member Ryan Leach.

A Political Force in Houston

Since its beginning 35 years ago, the GLBT Political Caucus has fueled political action and support for gay-friendly politicians of all kinds, from lower-profile positions like precinct chairs and school board members to high-profile seats like Houston mayor. The caucus's reach also extends to the state and national level: President Barack Obama personally sought and received the endorsement of the caucus during his 2008 campaign, and past gubernatorial candidates have also received caucus support.

The caucus awards gay and gay-friendly political candidates an endorsement, which is coveted by many, based on a screening of the individual's credentials and viewpoints that is performed by caucus panels. The endorsement gives candidates access to the caucus's extensive contact list through mail-outs, a pool of potential campaign volunteers, and a place on the group's endorsement cards that bring many faithful voters to the booths.

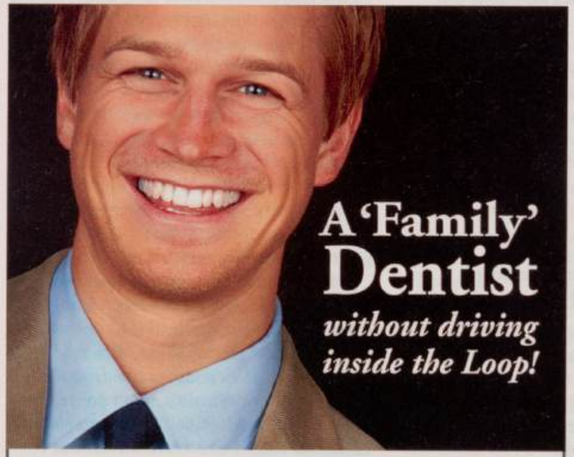
The caucus has also historically supported gay and gay-friendly politicians and helped in their ascent up the political ladder. This was the case with familiar names like Houston Mayor Annise Parker and Council Member Sue Lovell. But critics of Banks say he's shifting the caucus's focus and, in the process, using his own set of rules to promote an agenda not in the caucus's best interests.

"The caucus was set up to promote equality for LGBT people," says board member Randall Ellis. "But more and more people are coming to the organization with their own political agendas, and driving those through instead."

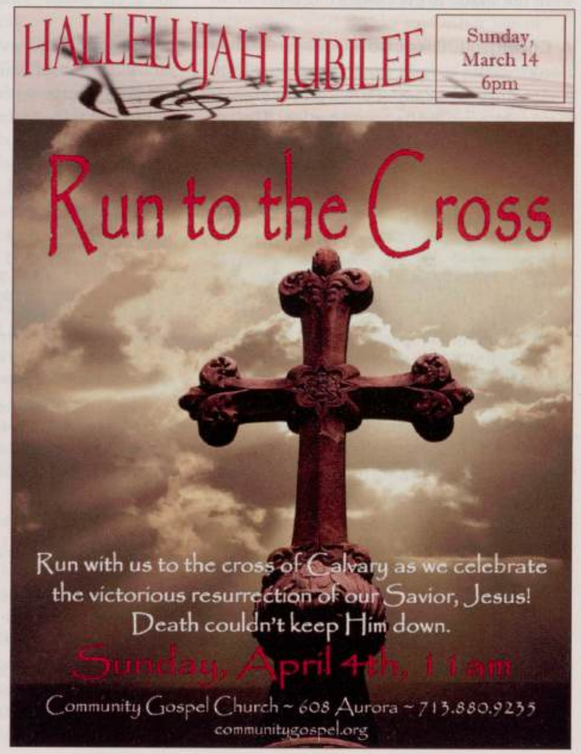
A Growing Divide

Acknowledging the divide and its potential lasting effects on this vital organization, a group of past presidents recently met with the current leadership to discuss the issues at hand. "This shows progress," says caucus board member Kevin Hoffman. "I think we're a little bit more on the road to having both sides coming to an understanding. That desperately needed to happen." →

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New Blood *continued from page 38*

But the current fissure still deeply divides the caucus.

A member since the caucus started, Ray Hill takes the "long view" over the current contention and how it reflects on the gay community.

"We've always been an argumentative and cantankerous lot, and that's been part of our charm," he says. "What's going on should be important to all of us; if not, we don't bother with it, but it is."

Hill encourages any and all people with an interest in equal rights for the LGBT community to join the caucus and vote for board members and recommendations that support the traditional goals of the group. This will strengthen and increase unity in the organization, he says.

Banks, however, says his actions are designed to improve the caucus. He says the membership elected him and the board to lead the organization and they will continue with their current direction, despite the criticisms of detractors.

"A lot of folks don't know what happened," Hoffman says. "I didn't vote for his re-election as president. I felt that Kris had not served the organization well [during his] previous term. A lot of our candidates were not elected, and efforts were not made to get people elected."

A Change in Direction

Banks wants to help move the caucus into community advocacy efforts, and make major changes in the organization. The caucus has endorsed fewer candidates this year than it did two years ago, and that reduced focus on endorsements frees up resources for special projects and the changes Banks wants to make.

This has left out candidates running for lower-profile offices. C. Patrick McIlvain, an openly gay caucus member who is currently running for the Precinct 1 chair, sought the caucus's endorsement. Although he won that endorsement when running for office in previous years, the board denied his request this year.

McIlvain says the move breaks a traditional commitment to help its members who are moving into public office. "The caucus wants us to be more involved and politically active, and they should go through and continue what has been started," he says.

McIlvain claims he was targeted because he didn't support Banks in his December bid for caucus president, but Banks says the caucus didn't have enough resources to support McIlvain.

"We can't endorse him and not endorse other precinct chairs," Banks says. "There's more than a hundred precinct chairs in Harris County, and we can't screen every one of them.

"It's a fair process," he adds. "We don't open the process for one office and then close it for another because we don't like one of the people running for one of the offices."

Banks also believes caucus resources shouldn't be used this year to support a candidate running for a precinct with few voters when there are so many important judicial candidates.

Many members feel the caucus, under Banks's leadership, also left a handful of its endorsed candidates out in the cold last year, while putting most of its energy and resources into the election of Mayor Parker.

The decision to focus those resources was unanimous, says board member Lindsey Dionne. "Everybody made that clear. Everybody that was running for office this time, that we were volunteering with, that was on the slate, was a big fan of Annise Parker, and wanted that to happen."

Meanwhile, viable candidates that the caucus endorsed were nearly forgotten, if not mistreated, some members claim.

Waning Support for Candidates

Take Lane Lewis, an openly gay candidate last year for the Houston City Council District A seat. Lewis cemented his place in history by being one of the first to bring attention to the arrest of two men who were having sex in a private residence. That landmark *Lawrence v. Texas* case overruled anti-sodomy laws across the nation and decriminalized homosexual behavior.

Lewis is a "good example" of the inexperience of the current leadership, Valinski says, "because the people who took over the caucus were too naïve, or so focused on the mayoral race that they didn't know who else was there in the race."

As the caucus meeting director, Banks is also accused of unfairness toward Karen Derr, a past city council candidate and longtime supporter of the gay community. Among other complaints, Banks allegedly failed to provide Derr, who was endorsed by the caucus, with an equal opportunity to speak with caucus members last year when she ran for an at-large city council position against Stephen Costello.

"I think Karen may have been confused about what I was asking," Banks says. "But when I realized that she wanted to address the group, I said, 'Oh, hold on,' and she did get to address the group."

But that opportunity didn't occur until people were leaving, said caucus member Ellis, the former executive director of Equality Texas who also supported Derr.

"The endorsement card was not put out in a timely manner," he says, adding that the caucus failed Derr in multiple ways. "It was a matter of how she was treated." [EDITOR'S NOTE: *OutSmart* magazine's publisher, Greg Jeu, also supported Derr's candidacy.]

It Was and Wasn't a Good Year

Banks admits that he chose to put the bulk of his efforts as caucus president last year toward helping to get Annise Parker elected as Houston's mayor.

Responding to claims that some of the other caucus-endorsed candidates suffered because of his narrow focus, Banks says "it was and it wasn't a good year for gay candidates.

"When I ran for president, the first thing I said is, 'We're going to focus this year on Annise Parker's campaign.' And that's what I did."

While Parker acknowledges she is grateful for the work of the caucus on her campaign, it was never her intent to monopolize caucus resources. Her spokesperson, Janet Evans, tells *OutSmart* that the mayor realizes her high-profile campaign and subsequent runoff election inadvertently left fewer resources for other candidates.

In fact, Parker directly apologized for this unintended consequence.

"That may have been their decision, but she did not order them to head in that direction," Evans adds. "She also had the same conversation [with the other candidates on the slate] personally in terms of that happening."

Friends and Enemies

This year, Banks is confident that the caucus should be able to support many more candidates. "It's not like I have to completely focus on one campaign like I did last year," he says.

"The reason I'm happy I got re-elected," he adds, "is because we were focused so much on Annise's campaign that we didn't get to do some of the bigger changes that I wanted for the organization."

These changes are what unnerve many caucus members. They allege Banks has already used questionable tactics to get his way, and are concerned that this will continue. Critics of Banks also say cronyism is at the heart of his presidency, creating a small group that makes decisions and further widens the organizational chasm he's helped create.

"What happens is that a relatively small group of people get the numbers, and they start excluding the people who are not in the 'in group.' That's what is happening now," Hill says.

He says the caucus has had its share of unpopular presidents and others who have tightly held the reins of power, but the current leadership is using its political muscle to silence its opponents.

"We previously had lot of volunteers who were locked out last year from being able to continue doing their volunteer work with the caucus," says board member Kevin Hoffman. "Those folks are not there anymore, and we lost those skill sets. No one has stepped up to the plate, and there's no plan to replace [those who are not there anymore]."

He adds that some of the members who were forced out have since quit working with the caucus, although they still retain their memberships.

"We've always been an argumentative and cantankerous lot, and that's been part of our charm." *—Ray Hill*

Banks was quick to recruit new caucus members from among his associates and friends, some of whom are now board members who support his agenda. Some members say this makes their votes and opinions moot. Banks also removed one of the dissidents who didn't agree with his vision for the caucus.

Hoffman was allegedly forced out of his position as screening chair by his colleagues. Banks requested Hoffman's resignation, and after Hoffman refused to step down, replaced him during a board meeting that Banks called on January 8, one month before the board's term began. Neal Falgoust, a new board member and a Banks supporter, took Hoffman's place.

Hoffman says his removal was in retaliation for not supporting Banks in his bid for president of the board, but Banks disagrees.

"They're not lifetime appointments," Banks says. "I wanted a new screening chair, it was the beginning of my new term, and I wanted to make some changes to my leadership team. [I had hoped that Kevin] would help me out with that, but he chose not to, so we had to do what we had to do to get the work done."

Still an Open Process

Caucus member Ryan Leach believes that the criticisms against the leadership are not realistic, and that the board and the caucus have remained transparent.

"It's a very open process," he says. "Every time we do screenings, every time we do a vote, every time we do a discussion, it's an open process. So I don't understand how anybody can say they were being left out or taken off of anything without cause."

However, Hill says the current board manipulates procedural rules to silence dissent. He says he fruitlessly sought permission to address the caucus at the group's December meeting, when he wished to request that Sue Lovell be censured for mailing out negative campaign literature that targeted Jolanda Jones, a fellow city council member endorsed by the caucus. Banks, a friend and political pupil of Lovell, made a motion to close the meeting after the agenda had been concluded and before members could introduce any motions or make comments.

Hill says the move violated the rules of order that the caucus traditionally follows.

"When the president hears only what he wants to hear, then anyone else who speaks is considered out of order," Hill says. "They are now using created rules."

Banks says it was a simple matter of concluding the meeting, and says Hill failed to convince the membership that what he had to say was important.

"There was a motion to adjourn and a majority of people voted for it," he says. "That's what it's for: it's for, 'We want to go home.'"

The Heart of the Matter

Some have criticized Lovell's close relationship with Banks and other board members, saying that Lovell's political preferences may have worked their way into Banks's choices. Banks defends Lovell's influence in determining the direction of the caucus and says she is a valuable mentor for him.

"Sue Lovell has been elected three times citywide in this city," Banks says. "She is chair of two very important city council committees, she has been elected statewide by the Democratic Party to serve on the Democratic National Committee, and she is nationally the vice chair of the DNC's LGBT Caucus, so I am more than happy to have advice from Sue, and I value that advice."

While members allege that Banks acts in the interest of himself and his cohorts, they also say he's dropped the ball on efforts that are fundamental to the caucus, such as maintenance of its extensive contact list. That list of members and supporters is sought after by politicians and other organizations who want to reach gay-friendly voters.

Hill says the list hasn't been updated since Banks became president. Jack Valinski maintained the database until he was removed from that duty last year.

continued on page 101

What is the Houston Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Caucus?

The Houston GLBT Political Caucus (HGLBTPC), founded in 1975, is the South's oldest LGBT civil rights organization. The HGLBTPC is member-based and serves as the political arm of the Houston LGBT community.

The HGLBTPC's primary role is to screen and endorse local, state, and federal candidates. The HGLBTPC screens candidates to ensure they meet the criteria set forth by the membership, including full support of LGBT civil rights.

Members participate in the screening of candidates as well as vote in the endorsement meeting. The HGLBTPC endorsement card is a voting tool highly sought after by many LGBT and straight voters.

The HGLBTPC participates in numerous activities including:

- Screen and endorse candidates
- Legislator accountability (lobbying and community mobilization)
- Field work/voter identification
- Political actions (e.g., door-to-door, letter-writing campaigns)
- Voter registration
- Get-out-the-vote drives
- Collaboration with local organizations to strengthen the power of the LGBT vote

The HGLBTPC has numerous volunteer opportunities in the following areas:

- Candidate development
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- Field work
- Finance
- Fundraising
- Lobbying/government affairs
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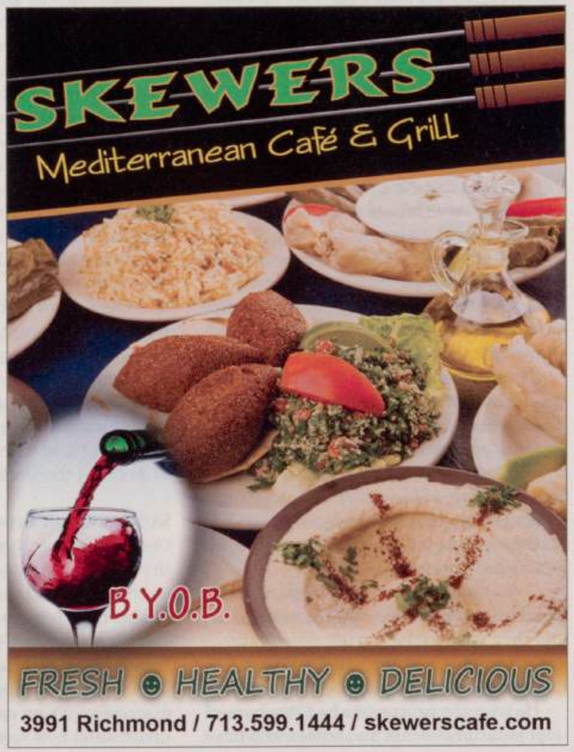


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Film Fest Feast: **Sundance 2010**

The Sundance Film Festival serves up tasty fare

by Lawrence Ferber



Sharing the love: in Lisa Cholodenko's *The Kids Are All Right*, Annette Bening (l) and Juilianne Moore play a lesbian couple whose children, Josh Hutcherson and Mia Wasikowska, are reunited with their sperm-donor father, Mark Ruffalo.

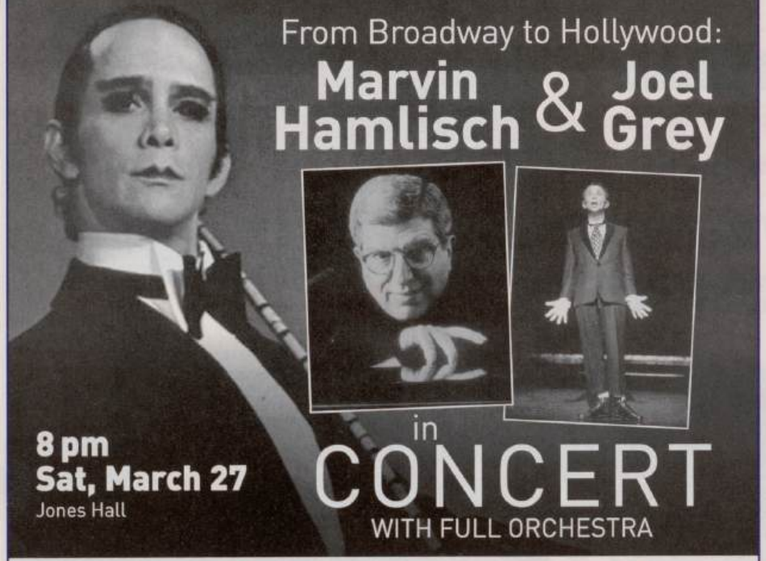
Park City, Utah: Despite this year's theme of "Rebel," there was little rocking of the boat at the Sundance Film Festival.

The first edition headed by openly gay fest director John Cooper, a 20-plus-year Sundance staff vet, 2010 saw only subtle tweaks in programming and structure—for instance, three opening-night programs and the inaugural sections NEXT, for micro/no-budget entries, and the international-inclusive Spotlight—and, barring *Twilight*'s Kristen Stewart, who starred in two entries, a slight toning down in the celeb factor and return to more anti-Hollywood-minded roots. The year's biggest game-changing shake-ups occurred off-screen: Queer Lounge was gone, Miramax closed shop, and many familiar industry faces were absent—all casualties of the economy.

Film-wise it was a year of girl power (and gayer!), with females behind some of the most buzz-garnering titles. Picked up by Focus Features for, reportedly, somewhere in the region of $5 million, Lisa Cholodenko's *The Kids Are All Right* stars Annette Bening and Julianne Moore as Nic and Jules, a lesbian couple whose teenage son and daughter track down their sperm donor father (Mark Ruffalo).

Funny and complicated, yet quintessentially Sundance with its family-on-the-edge plot/theme and well-drawn, meticulously acted characters, Cholodenko's fourth feature (*High Art*, *Laurel* →

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continued from previous page

Canyon) is a cinematic watershed in its outstanding, fully developed post-gay representation of an LGBT family unit.

Natural and flawed, Bening's prickly Nic and Moore's confused Jules face all the same challenges and foibles of a "normal" heterosexual couple, and are painted as such. Their parenting discussions ring true and are frequently riotous, like when son Laser asks them to explain their hidden stash of gay male porno videos (which they caught Laser watching with another boy, leading to an awkward birds-and-bees chat about his sexuality). It's an absolute must-see.

Buzzed about well in advance of the festival, *The Runaways*, directed by Floria Sigismondi, dramatizes the story of Joan Jett's legendary all-teenage-girl band (best known for their hit single, "Cherry Bomb"). Star Kristen Stewart is a dead-ringer for Jett, while Dakota Fanning—she's all growed up!—portrays exploited jailbait vocalist Cherie Currie.

Yet for a film about rocking with your (figurative) c--k out, the film suffers from an ironic prudishness. Jett is painted as almost asexual, barring a brief onscreen acknowledgement of intimate relations with Currie, and guitarist Lita Ford barely registers (FYI, Jett served as an exec producer and performed at a packed Harry O's party during the fest). Yet character actor Michael Shannon, as Kim Fowley, the band's flamboyant Eddie Izzard-esque creator/manager, adds scenery-chewing spice.

A lilting folk ditty compared to *Runaways*' rock ballad, writer/director Adriana Maggs' *Grown Up Movie Star* stars *Big Love*'s Shawn Doyle as a Newfoundland father whose life is shaken up by his daughter's (Tatiana Maslany, winner of a Special Jury Prize for Breakout Performance) sexual rebellion, as well as his own gay awakening.

Directors Ricki Stern and Annie Sundberg document Joan Rivers' tireless efforts to stay relevant over the course of a year in the supremely entertaining *Joan Rivers—A Piece of Work*. On hand for several screenings, Rivers, 76, kept audiences in stitches during Q&As, and offstage partook of a de facto Sundance tradition—*swagging*. "I got a lot of swag," she admitted once back in Manhattan. "You get it home and you go, 'who needs this,' but that's not the point. It's still fun to take at the moment."



Make punk, not jihad: queers find acceptance in the Muslim/punk world of Eyad Zahra's *The Taqwacores*.

I ran into Juliette Lewis in swag mode at the Lia Sophia Lounge, where Diesel handed out new watches, fragrances, and "Be Stupid" T-shirts. Naomi Watts swung by the Art & Soul Center, where ConAir provided hairstyling and goodies. Village at The Yard proved a treasure trove as usual, a Fred Segal gifting lounge plump with brands like Dockers, Parish Nation, and Affliction. I ran into Elijah Wood at the Swagg Media/Gibson Lounge, while House of Hype—where Bill Gates (!) threw a party—boasted pretty darned sassy Sean John jackets, possibly the fest's coolest get.

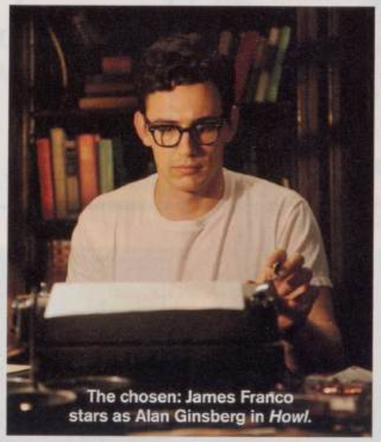
But back to the films and girl power. Slamdance's *The Four-Faced Liar*, written by and starring Marja-Lewis Ryan, charts a rocky love triangle between a heterosexual couple and a lesbian. Even one of the year's most highly anticipated gay male titles in Park City, Sundance opener *Howl*, was produced by a female team, Elizabeth Redleaf and Christine Kunewa Walker.



LAWRENCE FERBER

Chilly reception: Prop 8 counter-protesters at the Sundance Film Festival's *8: The Mormon Proposition*. The film is narrated by Dustin Lance Black (screenwriter, *Milk*).

A stylized, experimental biopic directed by gay Oscar-winning documentarians Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman (*Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt*), *Howl* focuses on the youthful years of queer Beat poet Allen Ginsberg—portrayed by James Franco—while amalgamating a recreation of the landmark 1957 obscenity trial against his published poem, "Howl," and a vibrantly animated interpretation.



The chosen: James Franco stars as Alan Ginsberg in *Howl*.

Franco was present at the film's January 23 screening, where he shared that he'd been a fan of the Beat Generation since high school. "They've always been with me, and now that I'm in grad school [at Columbia University], where Ginsberg went, he's constantly in my life." He also admitted that he was surprised to be cast as Ginsberg. "If I ever played a Beat, I thought it would be Neal Cassady or Jack Kerouac. I'm not sure why they chose me!"

Director Yony Leyser's Slamdance documentary, *William S. Burroughs: A Man Within*, entailed a fantastic *Howl* companion piece—an interviews-loaded look back at the Beat elder and the banning of his tome, *Naked Lunch*.

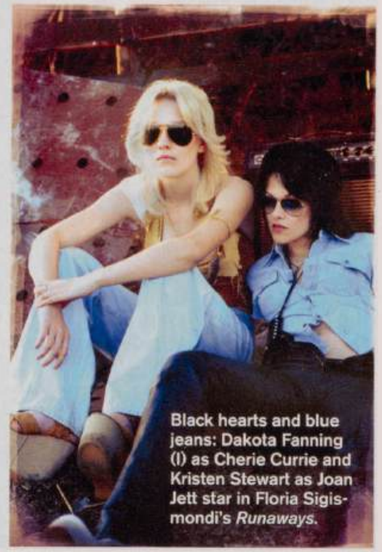
Speaking of bans, Reed Cowan and Steven Greenstreet's *8: The Mormon Proposition* exposes the Mormon Church's substantial involvement in California's successful Proposition 8 campaign, the extremes it has taken to persecute its gay members and families, and the heart-breaking casualties.

At the film's world premiere at Park City's Racquet Club, the directors were joined onstage by narrator Dustin Lance Black and interview subject/San Francisco mayor Gavin Newsom. During the lively Q&A, a practicing Mormon female expressed her support for same-sex marriage. "There is not one Mormon mind," she shared, "and I've seen change come to my church." Newsom reminded the audience that the narrative of the same-sex marriage struggle is similar to that of interracial marriage and, ultimately, "history bends towards justice."

Some queer-interest works were screened, and performed live, in the festival's New Frontier On Main contempo/multimedia art space, including Kalup Linzy's southern-gay-black-drag hotpot, *Sweet, Sampled and LeftOva*, and Nao Bustamante's Jack Smith-meets-Maria Montez trip-out, *Silver & Gold*.

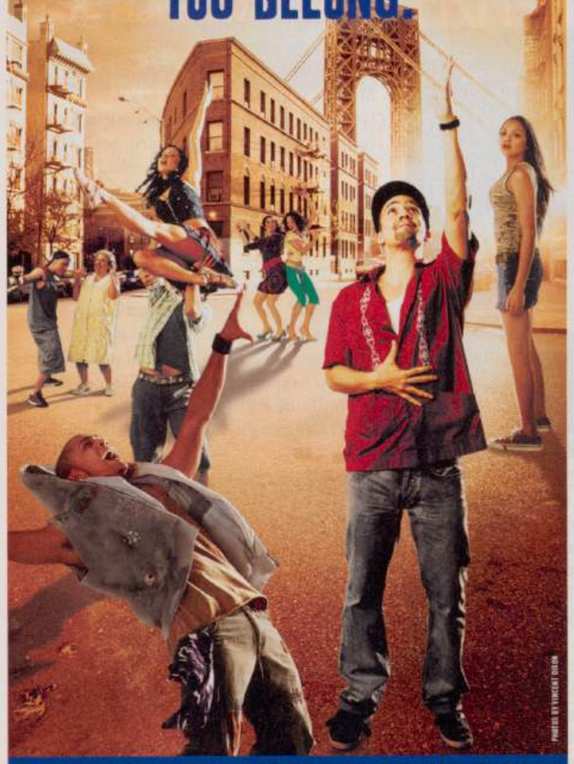
Many grieved about the lack of a fulltime Queer Lounge space, yet LGBTs did get to converge at the annual Outfest Queer Brunch for gossip and networking (to wit: filmmaker Phillip Bartell informed me that *Eating Out 4 & 5* have been greenlit by Ariztical, and he's also set to work on a sequel to Jason Bushman's *Hollywood Je T'aime*, entitled *Hollywood Te Amo*) as well as a handful of GLAAD and Queer Lounge-sponsored panels, cocktail parties, and the annual Homos Away From Home shindig.

The closing weekend's Sundance →



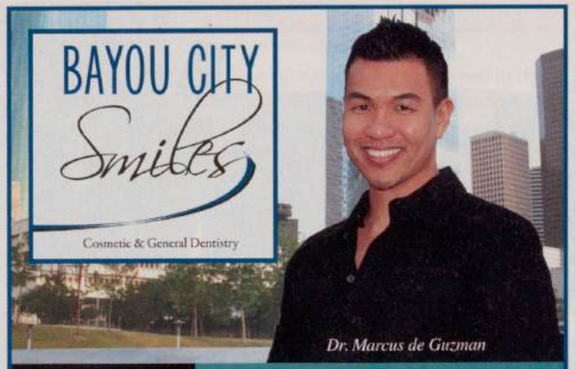
Black hearts and blue jeans: Dakota Fanning (l) as Cherie Currie and Kristen Stewart as Joan Jett star in Floria Sigismondi's *Runaways*.

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Film Fest Feast: Sundance 2010

continued from page 45

Awards proved celebratory for writer/director Javier Fuentes-León, whose *Contracorriente* (aka *Undertow*) won the World Cinema Audience Award for Dramatic Feature honor. The affecting tale of a deeply closeted Peruvian who carries on an affair with the ghost of his recently deceased gay lover, *Contracorriente* was picked up by distributor Wolfe Releasing. Coming up empty but worth mention are director Eyad Zahra's *The Taqwacores*, set in the emerging Islamic punk music scene and featuring a queer Muslim character; Jamie Travis' visionary, colorful-whilst-dark short about a little boy repressing a dark secret, *The Armoire*; Ira Sachs' profound *Last Address*; and Jonathan Lisecki's fun gay-guy-and-straight-woman-want-a-child short, *Gayby*.

Perhaps, and in fact most likely, no *Precious* will emerge this year as the dust settles, but keep eyes peeled at your local festivals and theaters for a taste of rebellion.

Lawrence Ferber is a freelance writer and a frequent contributor to OutSmart *magazine.*

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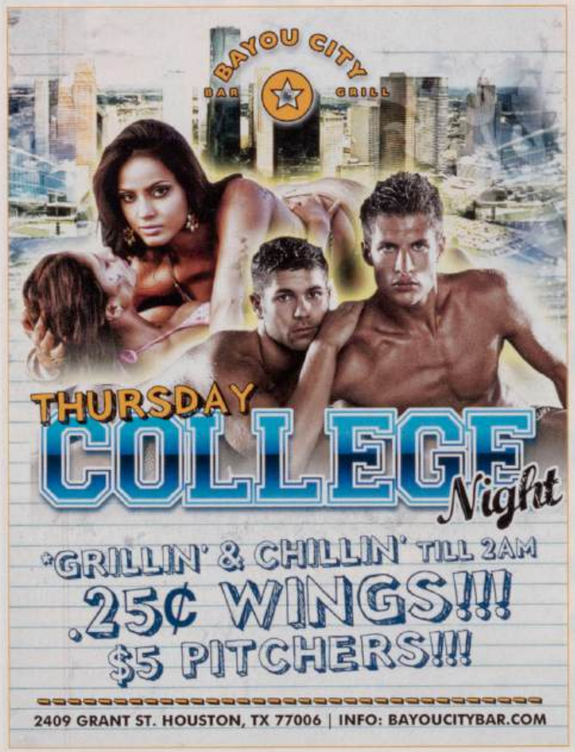
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Batwoman, the Military, and Rock 'n' Roll

Her sexuality isn't the only thing 'alternative' about Kate Kane

by Neil Ellis Orts

Illustrations by JH Williams III

Once upon a time—1956, to be precise—there was Kathy (Batwoman) Kane, a character created as a romantic interest for Bruce (Batman) Wayne because some psychologists were writing about the homosexual undertones of a single man like Bruce being the sole guardian of young Dick (Robin) Grayson. Kathy Kane appeared in Batman comics for nearly a decade and, save for a smattering of appearances in the 1970s and early '80s, pretty well disappeared after 1964.

Fast-forward to March of 2006, when the *New York Times* runs a story on diversity in mainstream comics. Although a new Batwoman character had been rumored for months, the *NYT* article revealed that this new Kate Kane would definitely *not* be a romantic interest for Bruce Wayne, but would instead be a "lipstick lesbian."

Fast-forward again to June of 2009. *Detective Comics* #854 debuts, headlining a new Batwoman series by novelist and comics writer Greg Rucka and acclaimed comics artist JH Williams III. In the intervening three years, Batwoman made a few appearances in comics published by DC Comics, but her origins remained a mystery, and her personal life—not to mention her personality—remained fairly undeveloped. Rucka and Williams have shown there is much more to Kate Kane than the initial "lipstick lesbian" description. Fan and critical response has been overwhelmingly positive.

JH Williams III makes an appearance this month at Houston's Comicpalooza (see sidebar next page). His artwork has gone a long way toward creating a distinct look and style for the Batwoman character, →



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continued from previous page

not only through his atmospheric artwork, but also with his unique sense of layout and design. In anticipation of his first visit to Houston, we caught up with him and discussed his involvement with this landmark character.

Neil Ellis Orts: In what way would you say you've influenced the Batwoman character?

JH Williams III: I'd say one of the biggest influences I've brought to the table is my general visual aesthetic, the attitude of the art in terms of what things look like when she's Batwoman and what things look like when she's Kate Kane—some of her personal style in terms of how she dresses and some of the things she's interested in. There are little visual cues in the background of some of the pages that give people an idea of who she is as a person. A lot of that came out of my discussions with Greg, I think, and he was really open-minded about what little tidbits we could give her to round out her personality.

Many superheroines have more T&A appeal. This Batwoman is less sexy, despite the tight leather. I assume that's a conscious decision.

Yeah, pretty much. I guess it's how one views the term "sexy." For me, a lot of female characters in the superhero genre, for lack of a better term, are treated as eye candy. Lots of writers certainly give them personalities and so forth, but in the visual context, a lot of times they don't come across as somebody you can believe in. That's my goal any time I deal with female characters in superhero stories or other fantasy comics. I want them to be people. It's relying less on eye candy and more on the sexiness of the person you might get to meet standing next to you.



Holy devil: well known in comics circles for his art deco style, Batwoman artist JH Williams III also worked on the 32-issue run of *Promethea*, another graphic novel superheroine. *Below:* Williams' cover illustration on issue 857 of the *Batwoman Detective Comics*.

She is definitely still wearing a tight suit and there are shots where she has slightly bullet breasts.

Yeah, there is definitely a fetish-ness to her look as Batwoman. One of the things I wanted to do is to have this sexiness, but not the sexiness that people come to expect, particularly out of superhero comics. I was looking for something a little darker, a little bit more on edge. That comes from Greg really wanting her, when she's Batwoman, to seem relatively vampiric in the way she moves. In her personal life, she's into alternative music and rock 'n' roll, so those aesthetics kind of made their way into how she presents herself as Batwoman.

In the Kate Kane scenes, her use of makeup is rather extreme.

Her appeal is definitely counter-cultural and definitely urban, and that's where the rock 'n' roll attitude comes from. A lot of the edgier rock 'n' roll artists will use makeup, or they'll have the smoky eyes and more of a graphic appearance. There are plenty of people in reality who run around with that kind of look, but you don't see a heck of a lot of it in mainstream superhero characters.

But her look, besides the edginess of it, you can tell she's not shopping at second-hand shops. She's got some cash flow. It's like high-end punk.

It's kind of a rich girl with funky tastes. That's one of the cool things about rock 'n' roll fashion. There's this mishmash of different sensibilities thrown together. A good example of that is Gwen Stefani. Some of the things she wears or designs herself are a fusion of many different things. Someone like Kate, who has money but is interested in rock 'n' roll and art, she's going to dress fitting her personality, but it's not like she's going to necessarily shop at the cheapest places.

I read an interview with Greg Rucka where he said no one really knew Kate Kane but him and you, and maybe you were in for →



Comicpalooza

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In three short years, Comicpalooza, Houston's comics, science fiction, and gaming convention, has grown from a small gathering of local comics fans and creators into an event that needs the George R. Brown Convention Center to contain it. Gaining support from such Houston institutions as NASA, The Museum of Fine Arts Houston, and the Houston Museum of Natural Science, among others, Comicpalooza promises to be one of the more unique and varied conventions of the 2010 season.

Appearing at the convention are such media stars as Brea Grant of TV's *Heroes* and Tyrese Gibson of both *Transformers* movies. Comics fans will have a chance to meet such legendary creators as Bernie Wrightson, the artist who co-created the Swamp Thing, and current hot artist Ethan Van Sciver, who is currently best known for his work on *Green Lantern*.

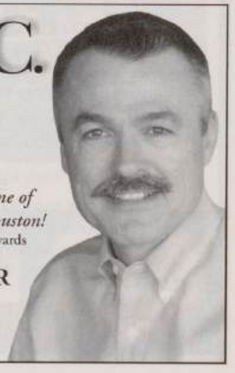
Of particular interest to *OutSmart* readers is the screening of *The Variants*, a web sitcom set in a comics shop, created by the owners of Dallas's Zeus Comics. The clever webisodes feature more than one gay character and has great fun with the comics subculture. The screening is followed by a Q&A with the creators of *The Variants*. Watch all of the currently available webisodes at thevariants.com.

For a full listing of artists, writers, actors, and other creators of science fiction and fantasy, visit comicpalooza.com. ■

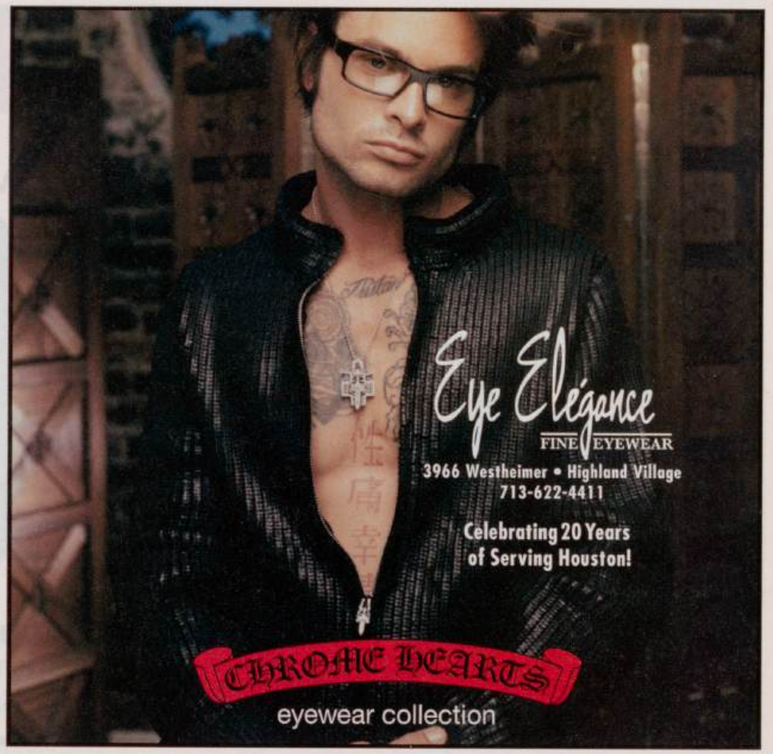


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Batwoman

continued from page 51

some surprises. What sort of surprises has he thrown at you?
Probably the best thing is the fact that here's this, for lack of a better term, rock 'n' roll superhero chick who lives on the edge, but she comes from wanting to live this rigid military life. She grew up in this military family and saw herself being in the military, and that's a very rigid life. I think that's a very interesting surprise in terms of where she was before she became Batwoman and where she is now, and it shows how people can change.

There's been this sort of apologetics about her being a Bat-character who just happens to be lesbian, but at the same time, being lesbian is pretty essential to the original story. If I'm reading it right, had she been straight, she would still be serving in the military.
That's right. Or if she felt that she could lie, she would still be in the military.

It definitely puts her in the real world where people are discharged from the military for kissing someone of the same sex.
Right. We are pointing fingers at the utter ridiculousness of that. I'm proud of the fact that we did it in a way that didn't sound like we're on a podium spouting off, and I think that makes the message stronger. We're not sitting here trying to make a political diatribe.

What kind of response have you had from the LGBT community?
Everything I've heard has been extremely positive. Through my website, I get quite a few posts and messages and e-mails from fans who are gay and they're really enthused about the work.

Do you have gay and lesbian friends looking over your shoulder?
[*Laughing*] A little bit. But they know me well enough that they know I wouldn't involve myself in anything that would paint them in a negative light.

There have certainly been other gay and lesbian characters in comics, but you slap a bat on the chest and it sort of ups the ante. Do you feel the weight of that?
I think Greg thinks about it more than I do. I don't think about it because for me I think it should be a non-issue. It's just another facet of what it means to be a human being.

Neil Ellis Orts interviewed choreographer Trey McIntyre for the November 2009 issue of OutSmart *magazine.*

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by Karen Derr

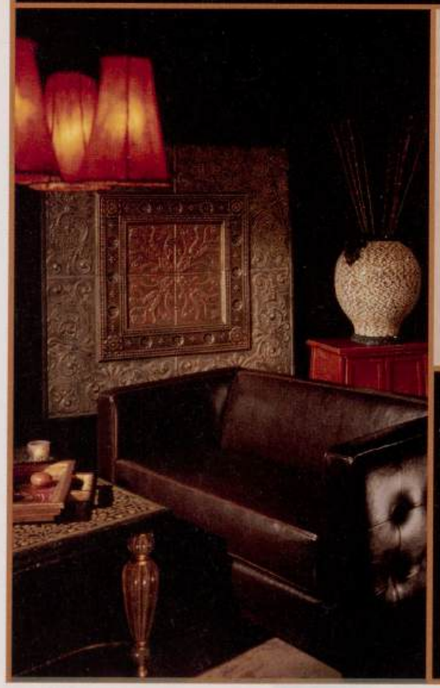


Color is key: your choice of hue can define the feel of a room, as these two different looks bring dramatic changes to the same boudoir.

While everyone else is talking of belt-tightening and austerity plans, Mitchell Gold and Bob Williams are giving us permission to buy beautiful furniture. The design experts and upscale furniture manufacturers have written their second book, *The Comfortable Home*, expounding on the benefits, and the sound investment strategy, of creating a comfortable home.

At a recent book signing at the Upper Kirby location of the furniture store that bears both of their names, they explained their reasons for doing a follow-up to their 2007 book *Let's Get Comfortable*. Williams and Gold insist that making your home more beautiful adds value to your home and can be done on any budget in any economy. Thankfully not a collection of →

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do-it-yourself projects, this book is a guide to using color and furnishings to create rooms that are more beautiful and livable.

Visiting the Houston location of Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams Furniture is a coming home for Bob Williams. He grew up in the Conroe area and still has family here. When asked about the Houston market in particular, Williams said he draws inspiration from mid-century modern homes, abundant in Houston's close-in 1950s- and '60s-era neighborhoods. He is a fan of modern, clean lines, and many of his furniture designs have the perfect scale for the moderate ceiling heights of Houston's ranch-style homes.

Mitchell Gold pointed out that their furniture's lack of bulkiness and fussy detail makes it very gender-neutral and comfortable for any family or household. The book is packed with artfully photographed homes that are favorites of the authors, including a small cottage that is much like a Houston Heights or Montrose bungalow. A ranch-style home that might be found in Meyerland or Afton Village, but happens to be in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, is presented by the duo to illustrate blending furniture pieces from different eras.

The Comfortable Home can be used as a road map for everything from finding the money for purchases to deciding when to buy the best you can afford—or when to bargain shop or use what you already own in a different way.

Gold admits that the key to their elegantly comfortable look is their unique way of using color. The book goes into the use of color in detail, enabling the reader to immediately enhance the comfort and beauty of their rooms by applying Mitchell and Gold's simple but powerful advice.

Karen Derr, a Houston-area Realtor for over 20 years, writes and speaks about home and small-business topics.

5 tips from the book to get you started investing in your own nest

1) **Planning saves money.** Before you buy anything, do two things. Think about how you want to live in each room and make a list of activities that will go on there. Then get familiar with each room's best features, views, and traffic flow. Measure it thoroughly so you have a full list of dimensions. Knowing what you need and why, plus what will fit, makes decorating decisions easier and helps you get it right the first time—which saves you money.

2) **Re-prioritize your spending.** Be conscious of what things like a new pocketbook, a watch, or even a car cost, and consider the benefits of reallocating those funds to making your home more comfortable. One way to furnish a whole room is trying a "staycation" instead of a vacation. Make it the family room and get the kids involved. Create a new kind of family memory while getting a space that will give you years of enjoyment.



3) **Use color to get a great look affordably.** When people tell us they "want our look," a big part of what they're responding to is our sense of color. To make a room feel calm and warm without being the least bit bland, we use soft, subtle, solid-colored hues and then enliven with accessories in patterns and stronger colors. We also limit the number of colors in a room to no more than four, with two used as accents.

4) **Invest in a few good pieces.** Some things not only "say" quality, but also help ensure quality of life. For you, it might be a beautiful dining table that will let you entertain the way you've always wanted, or a rug with colors to set the theme of the whole room. It might be window coverings—beautiful linen draperies that add warmth and texture. Or it could be an antique chest you buy for one room knowing you can repurpose it by moving it to other rooms over the years—an environmentally intelligent way to decorate.

5) **Get finished (at least for now).** We often see people invest in decorating a room, but then stop short of the finishing touches that will give them the look they want. Adding accessories, pillows, throws, flowers, photos, and collectibles—without cluttering things up—can be done affordably, giving rooms that "finished" look you see in magazines and making them easy to update by regularly switching out and rearranging items.



Book learning: Partners in business and in life, Mitchell Gold (l) and Bob Williams have documented their unique style in *The Comfortable Home* (Clarkson Potter/Melcher Media). Written by Mindy Drucker, the 224-page book contains 200 full-color photographs and celebrates the 20th anniversary of Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams. The book is available from fine booksellers everywhere (as well as from the couple's retail stores).



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Bunnies on the Bayou 31

Enjoy the Ride

It's time for OutSmart's annual review of the best new cars for 2010–2011

by James T. Hurst

Today's cars are truly getting better with each passing year—something I couldn't say just a decade ago. It seems that every new vehicle we drive is more powerful, more fuel-efficient, and has more high-tech gadgetry than its predecessor. This year's lineup is certainly more comfortable, more refined, and more fun! Choosing a good car is easier than ever, but choosing the best car can still be tricky.



Volvo C70

This set of wheels from Sweden is arguably one of the most beautiful cars ever built. Combining a dashing coupe and a dazzling convertible into one dream car, this Volvo makes the drive a whole lot of fun. With the push of a button, the retractable hardtop slides effortlessly into the trunk so the wind can blow you away. The newly redesigned C70 comes with Volvo's advanced safety technology, fuel efficiency, and a green design that facilitates recycling at the end of its useful life. →

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Volkwagen GTI

Volkswagen introduced the concept of the hatchback to the world, and with the all-new 2010 GTI they are still setting the standards for people who want speed, handling and big-time performance. The new GTI is certainly fun to drive, thanks to its excellent German-tuned suspension and speedy Volkswagen DNA. Its $24,000 price tag includes three years of free maintenance, and buyers will also appreciate the steadily improving quality and workmanship.



Ford Fusion Hybrid

The Fusion Hybrid has been a long time coming. It gets the best fuel economy of any mid-size hybrid sedan—up to 41 mpg in the city, beating out the Toyota Camry Hybrid and the Nissan Altima Hybrid by a sizable margin. The hybrid drivetrain yields superior drivability, and the customized dash display will literally entertain you "green," being the first in its class to show growing leaves as you drive more efficiently. With options like SYNC voice control for your iPod, navigation, and phone, it's clear that Ford has created a fine hybrid car for 2010.

Audi S4

For 2010, the all-new S4 has lost a couple of cylinders and now packs a 333 hp-supercharged V-6, just seven fewer horses than the previous V-8. This new engine has better low-end grunt and 27 percent better fuel economy. According to Audi, the 3,850-pound S4 will scoot to 62 mph in 5.1 seconds—even quicker than the V-8 model. Inside, Audi has designed a quality driver-oriented cockpit including sport seats to keep you firmly planted as you cruise the road. →



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Mercedes Benz S400 Hybrid

The first hybrid from the German automaker has emerged in the form of this S-class sedan. It downsizes the S550's 382 hp V-8 to a combined output of 295 hp, supplied by the corporate 3.5 liter V-6 and an electric motor. The S-class is transformed into a mild hybrid with the addition of a 65-pound 0.9-kilowatt-hour lithium battery pack hidden under the hood, a 50-pound electric motor sandwiched between the engine, and a seven-speed automatic transmission. Despite the additional weight, the S-400 is the lightest ninth-generation S-class to come out of Germany. Fuel economy jumps from 15 mpg city and 23 highway to 19 and 26, respectively. Of course, it remains the luxo-barge with all the amenities that Mercedes Benz has come to be known for—a great car with an even better ride.





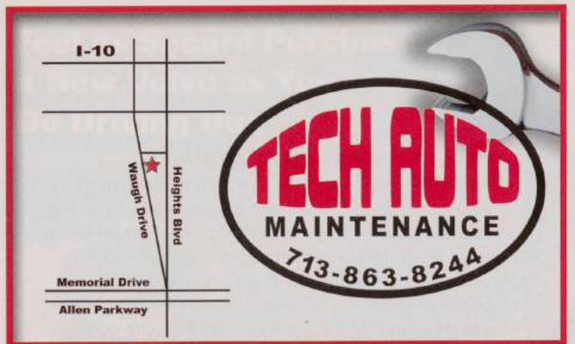
Buick Regal

New for 2011, Buick has introduced an all-new midsize sport sedan, scheduled to be in dealerships this May. The Euro-inspired Regal shares a platform with the European Opel Insignia, which is the best-selling sedan in Europe. Power comes from a 220hp dual-scroll turbocharged 2.4l SIDI VVT engine—in other words, the power of a V6, but with only four cylinders. From the sculpted aerodynamic styling to the ergonomically designed driver's cockpit, you will really enjoy being seen in a Buick—who would have thought?

Chevrolet Camaro

Let's cut to the chase: 300 hp for $23,000, or 426 hp (from a proper Corvette-sourced V8, no less) for $31,000, translates to a lot of fun and bang-for-the-buck. Camaro has returned from the '70s, and is proving that awe-inspiring design, performance, and efficiency can coexist. The classic muscle car has been resurrected at a price that is within reach. I think Chevy's message here is that it's possible to have a Camaro as your computer's screen saver and one parked in your driveway. →





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Porsche Boxster/Cayman

The Porsche Boxster began its life more than 10 years ago. The 2010 version effectively bridges the gaps between utility, hardcore sports performance, and luxury. The powerful engine options and German-engineered handling provide a complete package that's fun to drive. Exterior design is sleek, eye-catching, and grounded. This Porsche comes in two forms—the droptop Boxster and the metaltop Cayman. Both deliver unparalleled driving experiences no matter where you might find yourself driving. These unique Porsche models come with two cargo trunks, leather seating, mid-engine stability, and loads of livable fun.

Jaguar XF

Now in the second year of production, the Jaguar XF receives some noteworthy changes for 2010. This XF establishes a new stylistic direction for Jaguar. The base model remains the same, but is now joined by the XF Premium and its new 5.0 liter V-8, an XF Supercharged blown version of that 5.0-liter engine, and the ultra-high performance XFR, which adds another 40 hp to that supercharged V-8. This midsize luxury sedan delivers the "refined Jaguar ride" we have come to expect: sporty handling, seductive design, and a well-crafted interior featuring "Jaguardrive selector" that rises out of the center console, surrounding you with beautiful phosphor blue lighting.





Hyundai Genesis

The Hyundai Genesis is an extraordinary car. Kudos to the Korean automaker for creating a luxurious rear-wheel-drive sedan in the $30,000 price range. Hyundai offers the longest warranty of any upscale midsize car, and a cabin that wouldn't be out of place in a Lexus or Cadillac. The Genesis has the size, features, and engine power to compete in the large luxury car class. For 2010, Genesis carries significant upgrades such as re-tuned suspension to improve handling, an improved touch-screen navigation system, and intelligent cruise control. The Genesis should be seriously considered by anyone looking for an entry-level luxury sport sedan. →

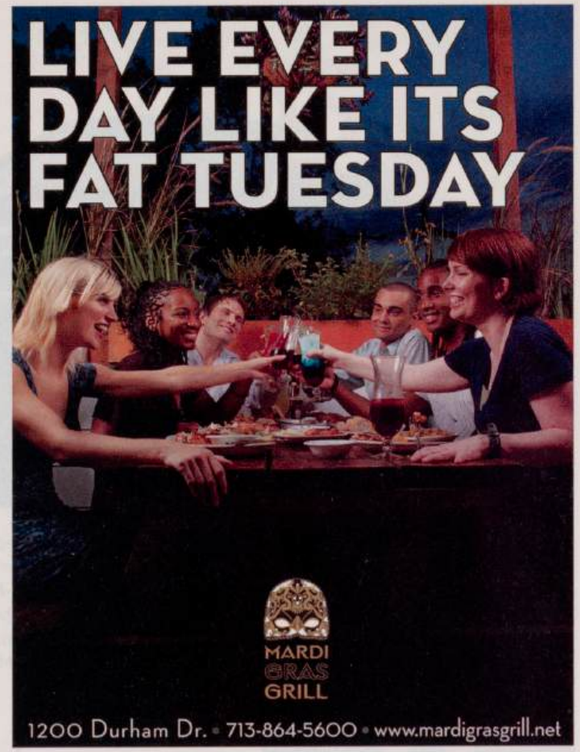


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BMW335is

BMW has introduced the 335is coupe for 2010 to fill a gap between the 300 hp 335i and the 414 hp M3. Although conceptually similar to the previous generation's 330 performance package, this new model ups the sportiness quotient by producing 320 hp and 332 lb-ft of torque from the twin-turbo 3.0 liter inline-six engine, and an overboost turbo providing a seven-second blast of 370 lb-ft of additional torque. This new 335is has a noticeable hum from the revamped exhaust system, which is now less restrictive. The $50,525 starting price makes the 335is coupe $8,750 less than the BMW M3 coupe. The convertible version starts at $59,075 and arrives in April.

Honda Element

The Honda Element is known for its versatility—allowing you to flip, fold, or take out the rear seats to create up to 64 different space options. There is no need to worry about dirt, sand, food, or even pet spills because the seat fabric is water-resistant and the floor is scratch-resistant—all completely "wipe-downable." Honda has also introduced the "Pet Friendly Element" for 2010. This unique package includes a kennel behind the rear-seat, pet bed, spill-resistant water bowl, leash, tote bag, and even an electric fan to help keep Fido cool on those hot summer days. By the way, the Element SC was named a "Top Safety Pick" by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. ■



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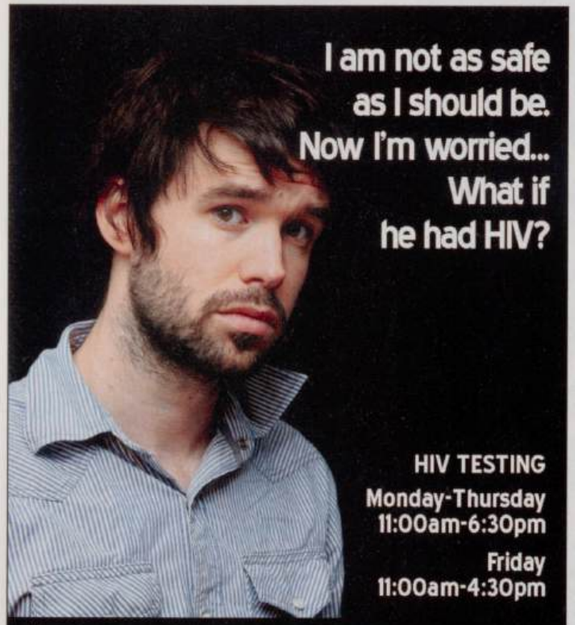
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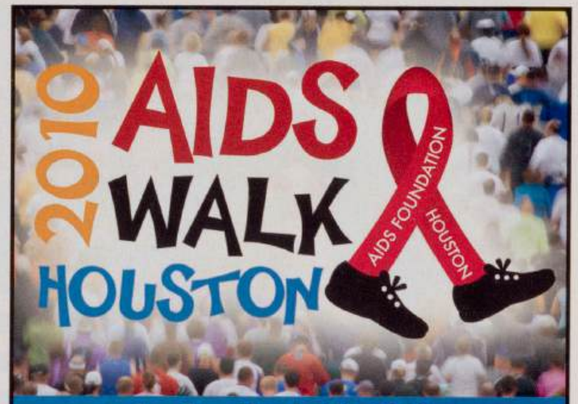
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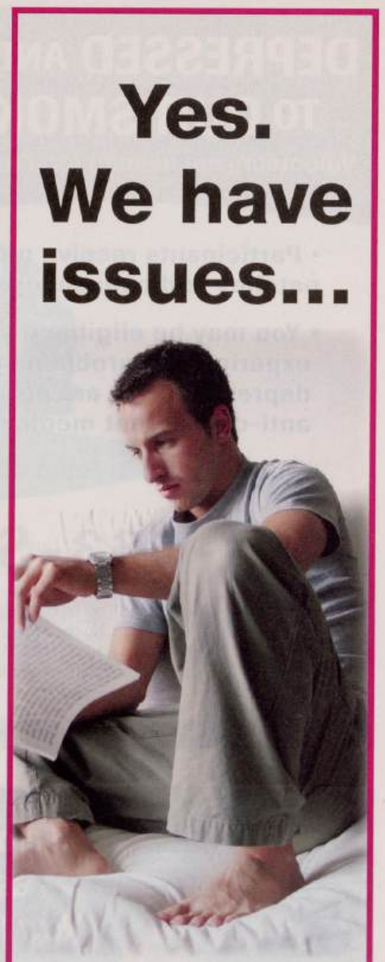
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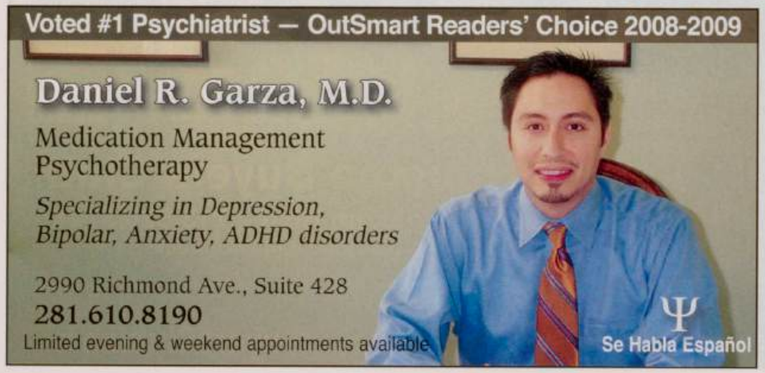
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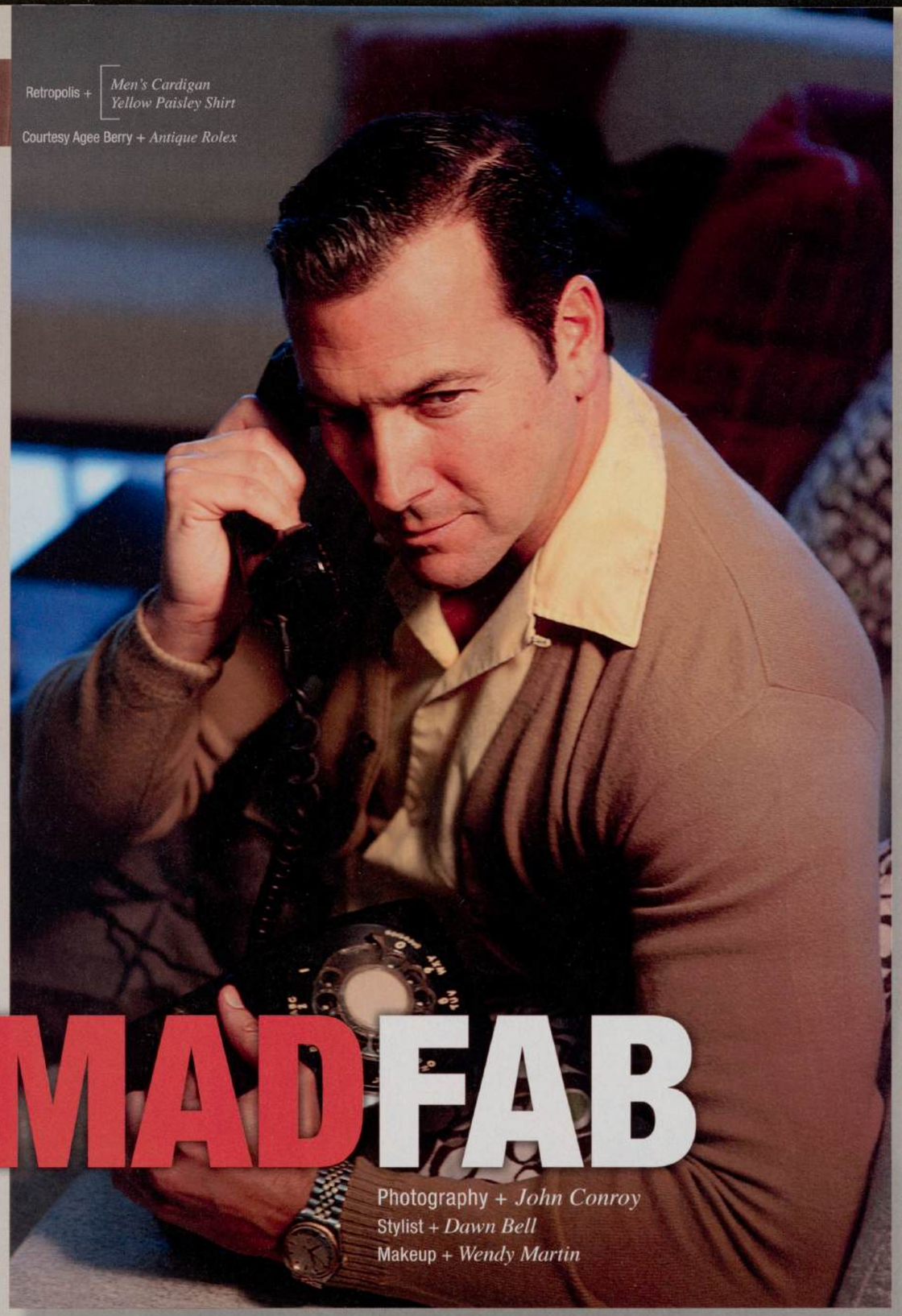
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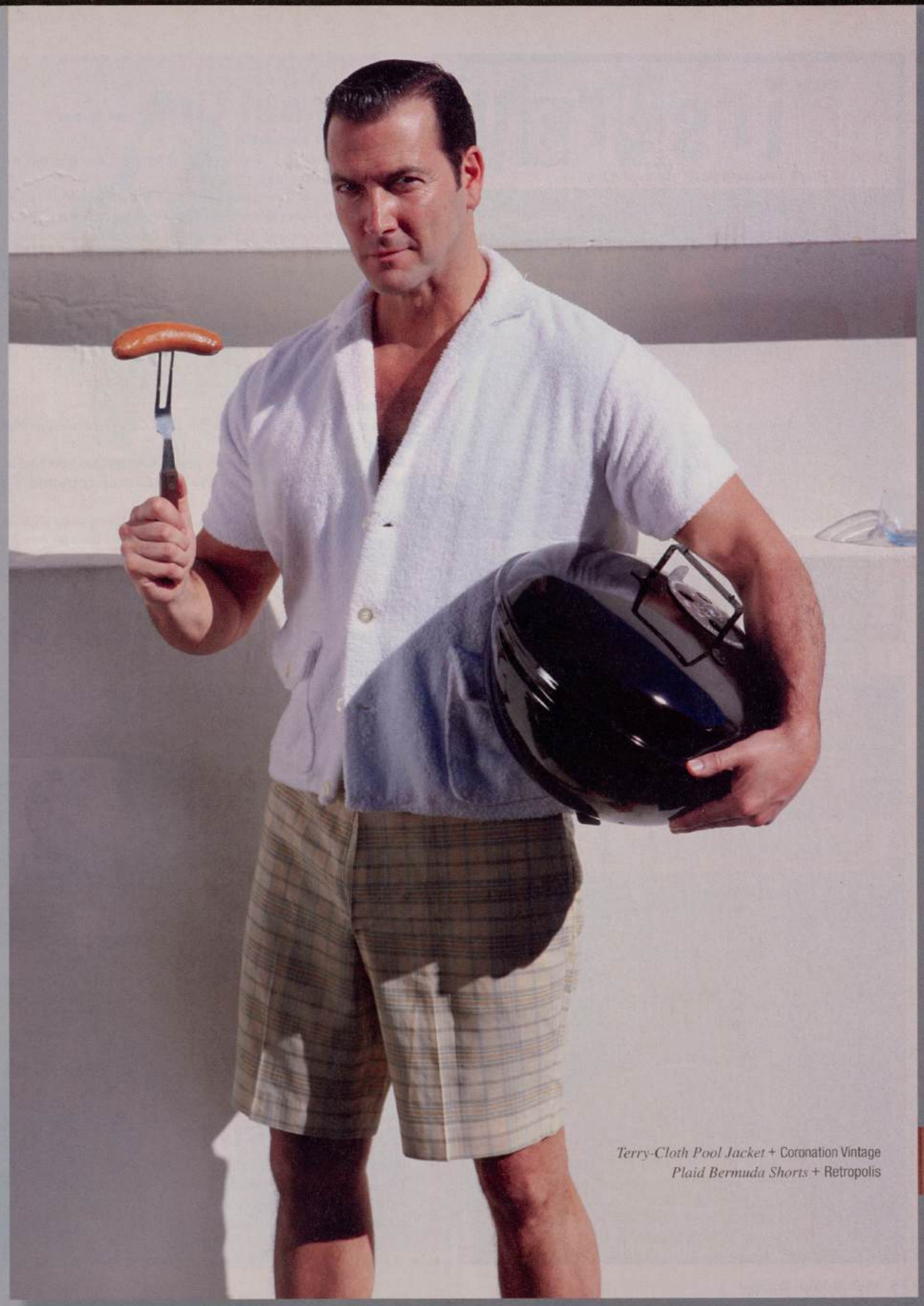


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Michael Urie (actor, *Ugly Betty*)

(*The Advocate*, 2/10, Jason Lamphier)

When asked what letter in LGBTQ he identifies himself with, Urie says Q, for *queer*.

"I've been in a relationship for a while now, and if you just met the two of us together we'd be 'gay,'" he explains. "But that somehow means anything that happened before [we met] didn't count—and I don't feel that way. I know that some people feel that way. They were with women, but it always felt wrong. But it didn't for me. It felt right at the time. It didn't work out, but it also didn't work out with other men—many times. That's why 'gay' never seemed right."

Julianne Moore

(*The Advocate*, 2/10, Brandon Voss)

Re: her upcoming role in director Lisa Cholodenko's The Kids Are All Right.

Brandon Voss: . . . When you play a lesbian, do you feel a responsibility to represent the gay community truthfully and respectfully?

Julianne Moore: Lisa Cholodenko and I talked about that a lot with *The Kids Are All Right*. It was important for her not to make a politically correct movie. She's a lesbian, she has a family, and she's always been out, but that idea of being PC about everything is no longer appealing to her. Thankfully, I really do believe that we're past all that. You don't want to be so careful about sexuality that it becomes precious.

Any hot action between you and Annette Bening?

[*Laughs*] Well, yeah, there's some stuff, I guess. You'll have to wait and see. [The film is scheduled for a July release.]

Brothers & Sisters

(1/31/10, ABC)

Kitty (Calista Flockhart) defends her gay brother, Kevin (Matthew Rhys), at his high-school reunion, where he is once again berated by the class bully, Brent (David Denman):


Rhys (l) and Flockhart

Brent [to Kevin]: Oh, c'mon, don't be such a fag. . . .

Kitty: Do you think this is funny? Making yourself feel good while making everybody else feel bad. Is that funny to you? Because all my brother ever wanted was for you to like him. And he thought that your little gang was cool, for some stupid reason, and he just wanted to be a part of it. But you know what you did? You made him grovel. . . . I think you should look around and see what's really going on here, because this is not funny. . . .

Oh, oh, I have one more thing to say to you: you ever again call my brother a fag . . . I will have you killed.

Spartacus

(*Entertainment Weekly*, 1/29/10, Ken Tucker)

I've seen four episodes [of *Spartacus* on Starz], and the fighting is a fizzy, unique mix of martial arts, S&M, gay and straight soft porn, and soap operatics.


No joke: Sarah Silverman (pictured here from Comedy Central's *The Sarah Silverman Program*) isn't getting married anytime soon.

Modern Family

(2/3/10, ABC)

Cameron (Eric Stonestreet) gives his "father-in-law," Jay (Ed O'Neill), a lesson in locker-room lingo when the two men accidentally brush bare butts after their racquetball match:

Jay: What the hell was that?!

Cameron: Our butts pressed against each other.

They didn't press, it was glancing. Stop talking about it.

Oh, come on, all the time you've spent in the locker room, this can't be your first moon landing.

You got a name for it?

It's very common. You got off easy. At least it didn't happen after a shower.

Enough.

We call that a splash down.


O'Neill (l) and Stonestreet

Queer Quotes

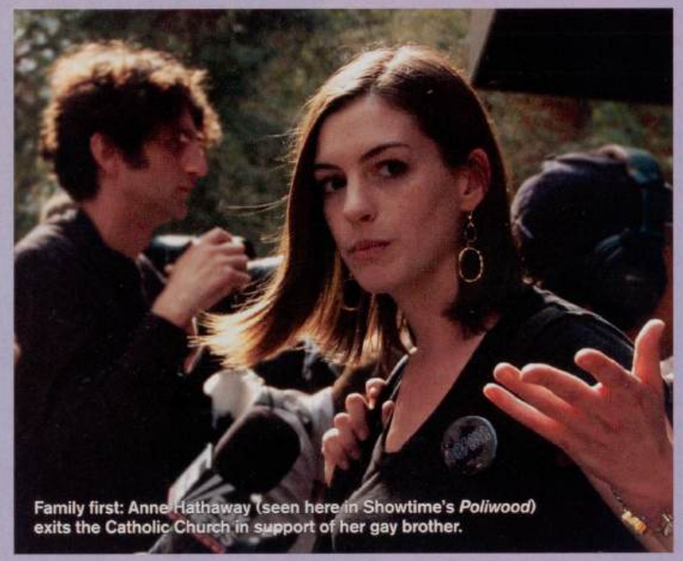
Compiled by Blase DiStefano

Sarah Silverman (comedian/actress, *The Sarah Silverman Program*)

(*The View*, 2/5/10)

Re: gay marriage.

I cannot imagine wanting to get married right now at this time in America. . . . If you're for equal rights, why would you get married right now? . . . It's like joining a country club that doesn't allow blacks or Jews. There's no difference. Why would I wanna join that club? It's gross.


Family first: Anne Hathaway (seen here in Showtime's *Poliwood*) exits the Catholic Church in support of her gay brother.

Anne Hathaway (actress, *The Devil Wears Prada, Brokeback Mountain*)

(annehathawaydaily.blogspot.com, 2/8/10)

Actress Anne Hathaway . . . appears on the cover of the latest issue of *British GQ* magazine scantily clad in lingerie. And an in-depth interview inside the magazine reveals that Hathaway and her entire family left the Catholic Church after her older brother announced that he was gay. Hathaway was not about to continue worshiping at a church that does not accept homosexuality.

Hathaway told GQ that she and her family converted to [the Episcopal Church] after her older brother came out:

"The whole family converted to [Anglicanism] after my elder brother came out," she said. "Why should I support an organization that has a limited view of my beloved brother?"

Although Hathaway says she doesn't yet feel completely at home in the Episcopal Church, she is working on it:

"So I'm ... nothing [no denomination]. F--k it, I'm forming. I'm a work in progress," said Hathaway.

SILVERMAN - ROBYN VAN SWANK/COMEDY CENTRAL; HATHAWAY - COURTESY SHOWTIME. MODERN FAMILY/BROTHERS & SISTERS - ABC

by Steven Foster

HURT SO GOOD

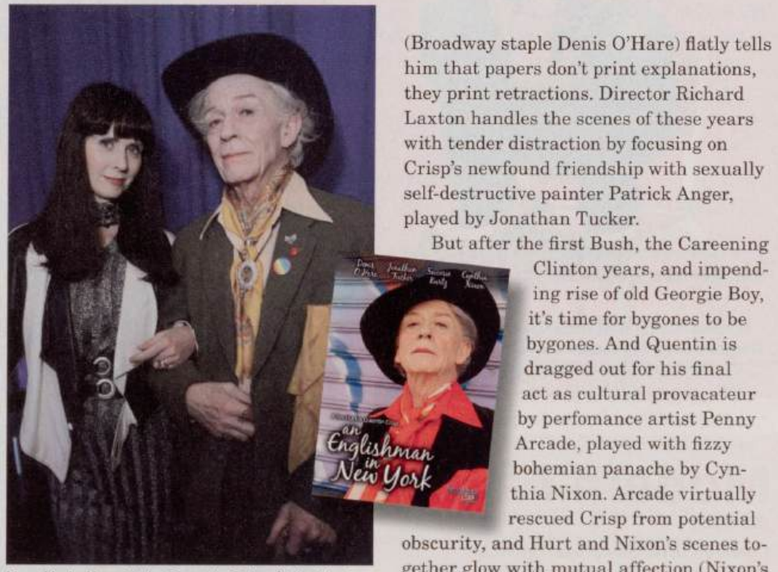
Years after his acclaimed portrayal of Quentin Crisp, John Hurt revisits his cinematic alter ego in 'An Englishman in New York'

Whether unrecognizable beneath layers of prosthetics in David Lynch's elegantly heartbreaking *The Elephant Man*, or dandified with fedora, scarf, and makeup in *The Naked Civil Servant*, John Hurt is an unsung master at disappearance. His portrayals of famous outsiders-turned-interlopers are the kind of tour de force so delicate they could shame the nominated Streep-and-Sandra combo of this year's Oscars (worthy performances though they both may be).

Now Hurt has revisited his *Servant* portrayal of flaming firebrand Quentin Crisp some 25 years later, in *An Englishman in New York* (Breaking Glass Pictures, breakingglasspictures.com), and the results are thoughtfully rewarding.

The film breezily begins with Crisp summoned stateside to take a bite of the Big Apple with those acerbic, crooked English teeth of his. Once an outcast in his own land, his now-graying, foppish persona charms and impresses the oh-so-mod New Yorkers. Quickly, his agent (the splendid Swoosie Kurtz) scorches the phone lines, setting pages and airwaves ablaze, pitching her new pet author's pithy bon mots. And for the most part, Crisp's cleverly honest but skewed view finds a willing audience, whether he's dishing dirt to a black caller on a reggae radio show, or chatting to a crowd of urbanites who, with a few vocal exceptions, hail and praise him for his non-Eric Sevareid-style newsspeak. His comments on the times are elder-statesmanlike, but also ersatz.

This off-Broadway banter brought stellar success for years—that is, until AIDS hit town and Crisp most famously let loose the quote heard 'round the world: "AIDS is nothing more than a fad." The backlash against the limpwristed darling was swift and immediate, incessant and incendiary. After feeling the heat, Crisp relents weakly that he would "explain" what he meant by the remark, but his editor (Broadway staple Denis O'Hare) flatly tells him that papers don't print explanations, they print retractions. Director Richard Laxton handles the scenes of these years with tender distraction by focusing on Crisp's newfound friendship with sexually self-destructive painter Patrick Anger, played by Jonathan Tucker.



New York, New York: Quentin Crisp (John Hurt, r) poses with performance artist Penny Arcade (Cynthia Nixon) in *An Englishman in New York*, a Logo film nominated for a GLAAD Media Award for outstanding TV movie. FYI: Nixon will be honored with the Vito Russo Award at the awards ceremony to be held March 13 in New York.

But after the first Bush, the Careening Clinton years, and impending rise of old Georgie Boy, it's time for bygones to be bygones. And Quentin is dragged out for his final act as cultural provacateur by perfomance artist Penny Arcade, played with fizzy bohemian panache by Cynthia Nixon. Arcade virtually rescued Crisp from potential obscurity, and Hurt and Nixon's scenes together glow with mutual affection (Nixon's dialog on gay consumerism is written with wonderful shame-shame-on-us smarts, and she delivers with relish).

The picture doesn't flinch from Crisp's missteps, nor does it dwell unnecessarily on his strange stubbornness. But its real success is showing how a boy who wore makeup and got his ass kicked, with the right fortitude and spirit, can land smack dab in the middle of the cultural zeitgeist well into his golden years. Hurt's performance definitely achieves that.

Steven Foster interviewed Henry Rollins for the February issue of OutSmart *magazine.*

DVD Shorts

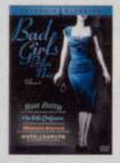
Marathon



Former U.S. poet laureate William Meredith suffered a debilitating stroke 17 years into his relationship with his partner Richard Harteis, who was also a poet. Their unwavering commitment to each other, despite seemingly insurmountable hardship, is truly poetic in this visually stunning primer of why same-sex couples need the protection of marriage. Biju Viswanath directs. 2009. QC Cinema (marathonthemovie.com). *—Preview: Nancy Ford*

Bad Girls of Film Noir

Given a suggestive title like *Bad Girls of Film Noir*, one has good reason to expect some fun girls-gone-wild action (if not exactly girls-*with*-girls action), and this new two-volume collection won't disappoint those who have a taste for femme fatales of the B-movie kind, namely Gloria Grahame, Cleo Moore, Terry Moore, and



Audrey Totter, among others. The standouts of Vol. 1 may be a couple of Lizabeth Scott titles: 1951's *Two of a Kind* and 1953's *Bad for Each Other*, the latter also starring known heterosexual Charlton Heston. But go directly to Vol. 2 for Ida Lupino's turn as a tough prison warden in 1955's silly *Women's Prison*. Interestingly, this film doesn't even hint at lesbianism-behind-bars, whereas the five-years-older *Caged* →

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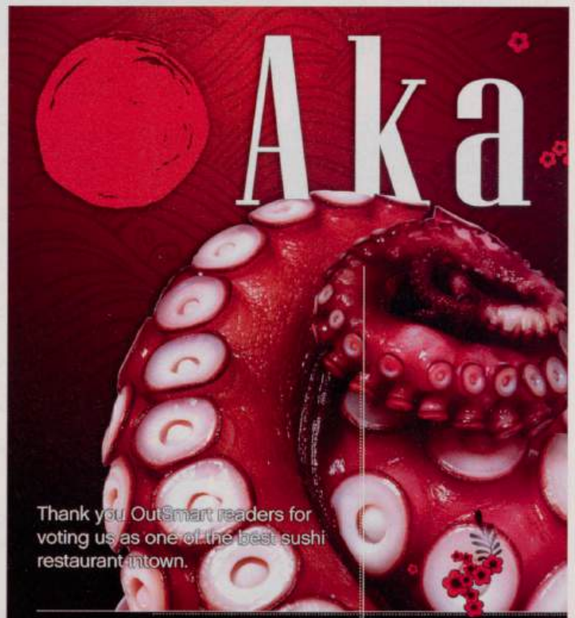
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DVD Shorts

continued from page 78

(not included here) remains something of a landmark in the area. One gal in this *Women's Prison* even gets pregnant after hitting the big house—but then haven't we all? Sony Pictures Home Entertainment (sonypictures.com/homevideo). *—Review: Jack Varsi*

Blood on the Flat Track: The Rise of the Rat City Roller Girls



Roller derby has made a big comeback, as told in this rock-infused doc focusing on Seattle's notorious all-female league. With players like Ida Slapter, Sybil Unrest, Ann Munition, Georgia O'Grief, Sara Problem, and other cleverly hysterical monikers, it takes a strong woman to roll on these fast lanes. Lainy Bagwell and Lacey Leavitt direct. 2007. Strand Releasing (strandreleasing.com). *—Preview: N.F.*

Person of Interest



When three women disappear from a small New England town, the local sheriff, Nickie (Elise Rovinsky), turns to the local psychic, James (Cuyle Carvin), for help. But Sheriff Nickie's girlfriend, Detective Sandra (Julie Bell), has other intuitions about the women's fate in this suspenseful mystery. Christopher Ward directs. 2007. Ariztical Entertainment (ariztical.com). *—Preview: N.F.* ■

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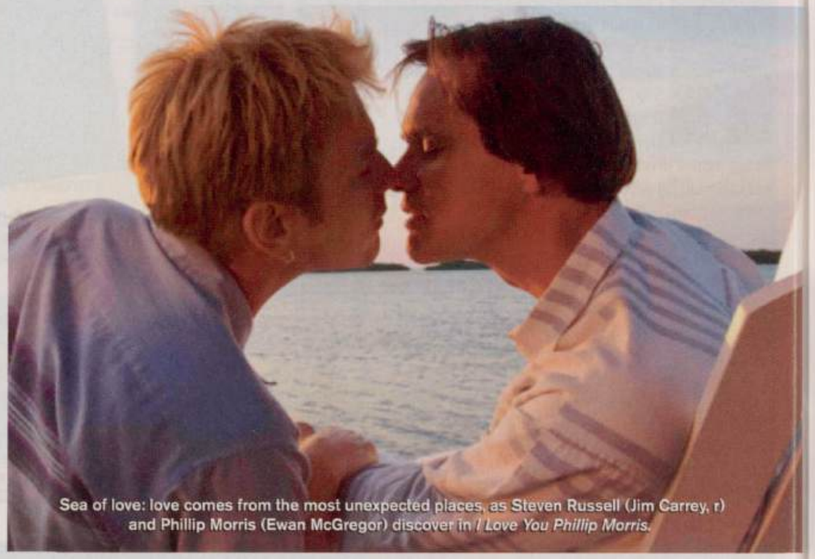
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Movies

by Donalevan Maines

PRISONERS OF LOVE

'I Love You Phillip Morris' smokes up the big screen



Sea of love: love comes from the most unexpected places, as Steven Russell (Jim Carrey, r) and Phillip Morris (Ewan McGregor) discover in *I Love You Phillip Morris*.

LIVE THE DREAM. DO THE TIME. FIND THE ONE. That's the tag line for the upcoming release of *I Love You Phillip Morris*, the Jim Carrey/Ewan McGregor gay romance with a "spectacular, ride-'em-cowboy sex scene" that *Variety*, the show-biz bible, predicted "will give some fans of *Ace Ventura* heart attacks."

Bring it on!

And keep your fingers crossed that producers haven't excised graphic sex scenes and brazen references to gay sex in order to keep the film from going straight to DVD.



The movie, which apparently has finally found a U.S. distributor after scandalizing the January 2009 Sundance Film Festival, is based on a book by Houstonian Steve McVicker, who wrote about former police officer-turned-con man Steven Russell (Carrey), who meets and falls in love with "Phillip Morris" (the cigarette maker spells it with only one 'L') while serving time in a Texas prison. As McVicker reported in a series of articles in the *Houston Press*, Russell escaped from jail four times to reunite with Morris (played by McGregor).

The book was adapted for the screen—and directed—by Glenn Ficarra and John Requa, whose writing credits include the naughty *Bad Santa*, starring Billy Bob Thornton, and Richard Linklater's 2005 remake of *Bad News Bears*. Executive producer is Luc Besson, the French director of *Subway* and *La Femme Nikita*, who recently accepted a big Hollywood paycheck for writing the John Travolta action movie *From Paris With Love*.

In trailers on the Internet—some in foreign languages—you can see how the movie begins with Carrey as a church organist, married to Leslie Mann, who decides to "come out" after miraculously surviving a car crash. He moves from Georgia to Florida, takes up with Rodrigo Santoro, and starts passing bad checks to finance his flamboyant lifestyle.

My favorite line: his excuse that "being gay is *really* expensive."

The movie is scheduled for worldwide release on March 26.

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

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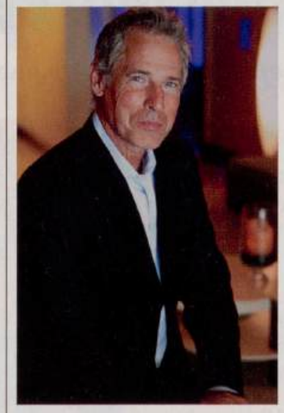
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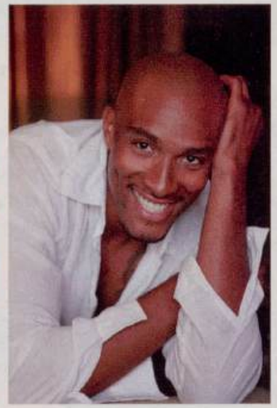
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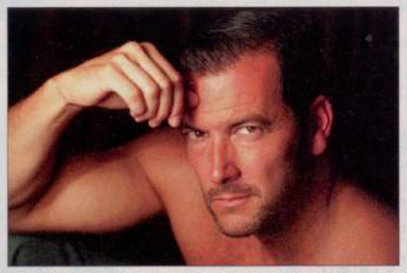
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by Donalevan Maines

PUSHING HOLLYWOOD'S ENVELOPE

Gay men and straight women may dominate 'Oscar' night

The first time Steve Martin hosted the Academy Awards (in 2001, when Julia Roberts won for *Erin Brockovich*), he joked that everybody across the globe was thinking the same thing: that everyone in Hollywood is gay.

They were right, he added.

On March 7, Martin returns, along with Alec Baldwin, as co-host of the annual ceremony that honors the year's best work in film as decided by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Out directors helmed three of this year's nominees: Lee Daniels' *Precious: Based on the Novel Push by Sapphire*, fashion designer Tom Ford's *A Single Man*, and Rob Marshall's *Nine*.

In addition, Daniels is nominated for best director, the first time an openly gay African-American director has been nominated. *Precious* is the first best-picture nominee to be directed by an African-American, period. It's also nominated for best actress (newcomer Gabourney Sidibe), supporting actress (comedienne Mo'Nique), screenplay, and film editing.

In the script by Geoffrey Fletcher, teenage title character Precious—overweight, illiterate, and pregnant for the second time—is surprised when she's befriended by a pair of "homos." The emotional support of her lesbian teacher, Ms. Rain, helps and inspires Precious, who also meets Ms. Rain's partner and hears of the rejection that the loving couple faces from their families.



Hosts toast: Alec Baldwin (l) and Steve Martin host the 82nd annual Academy Awards ceremony on March 7 on ABC.

BALDWIN&MARTIN - BOB D'AMICO/ABC; LAUPER - MITCH HAASETH/NBC; FALCO - COURTESY SHOWTIME; GILCHRIST - JORDIN ALTHAUS/SHOWTIME

A Single Man won a best-actor nomination for Colin Firth for his portrait of George, a gay college professor who is banned from attending the funeral of his longtime partner who is killed in a car accident. Based on a novel by Christopher Isherwood, the film takes place in the homophobic world of the early 1960s, with George forced to present himself one way to the world, while living a different life in private.

Both *Precious* and *A Single Man* are also nominated for outstanding film (wide release) at the 21st annual GLAAD Media Awards, which recognize media for outstanding images of the LGBT community and complement the work of the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) to publicize LGBT images and stories.

"These films tell inclusive and diverse stories of our community which grow awareness and understanding of the lives of gay and transgender people," said Jarrett Barrios, GLAAD president.

"Images like the love and commitment of Ms. Rain and her partner in *Precious* and the isolation felt by George in *A Single Man* spark conversations that help Americans embrace their gay and transgender friends, family →

Television Shorts

Previews by Nancy Ford



Project Runway

Auf wiedersehen, Grand Theft Autos, I-IV. The official game version of the hit Lifetime television show that introduced catchphrases like "hot trannie mess" and "That's fierce!" into our lexicon teaches players to design duds, apply makeup, and work the runway from the comfort of their own living rooms. March 2. Wii (wii.com).



The Celebrity Apprentice

One of these things is not like the others. Philanthropist/activist (oh yes, and musician) Cyndi Lauper competes with lower-tier stars like Brett Michaels and Sinbad to be a Donald Trump employee. We suspect she's seeking the big paycheck to pass along to her True Colors equality project or M.A.C. Cosmetics' AIDS fund. March 14. NBC (nbc.com).



Nurse Jackie

Harvey Fierstein (*Torch Song Trilogy*) is on the ward, playing the husband of an incoming patient, in the second-season return of the medical dramedy starring Emmy Award winner Edie Falco. You'll just have to tune in to see if Harvey's ailing spouse is of the same gender. March 22. Showtime (sho.com).



United States of Tara

As if our heroine (Toni Colette) didn't have enough to occupy her already very busy mind, her son, Marshall (Keir Gilchrist) begins to question his sexuality in the sophomore season of the schizophrenic hit series. (Oops—the voices in my head just said that calling this show "the hit series about dissociative identity disorder" is more palatable.) March 22. Showtime (sho.com). ■

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Television

continued from page 84

members, and neighbors," said Barrios. "We need to advocate for more gay-inclusive stories to be shared with mainstream audiences, because as more people see these images, they realize that we have the same aspirations and hopes, and deserve the same chances to take care of our loved ones and families."

In January, the Producers Guild of America awarded Daniels the prestigious Stanley Kramer Award for work that dramatically illuminates provocative social issues. His competition for best director includes tomboy Kathryn Bigelow (*The Hurt Locker*), who would become the first female to win the Oscar in that category; her ex-husband James Cameron, whose *Avatar* has eclipsed his Oscar-winning blockbuster *Titanic* as Hollywood's biggest all-time moneymaker; Jason Reitman (*Up in the Air*); and Quentin Tarantino (*Inglourious Basterds*).

Their films are nominated for best picture along with the animated *Up*, sci-fi *District 9*, football flick *The Blind Side*, acting ensemble *An Education*, and black comedy *A Serious Man*.

This year's slate isn't as great a showing for LGBT films as 2006, when *Brokeback Mountain* and *Capote* led the Oscar derby, but it could go down in history as a banner year for women as best picture and best director seem to be shaping up as David vs. Goliath races to the finish for *The Hurt Locker* and *Avatar*. (I loved *The Hurt Locker*, with its nail-biting bomb-defusion scenes and strong characterizations of three male soldiers. I haven't seen *Avatar* and don't plan to.)

Instead of Phillip Seymour Hoffman as Truman Capote or Heath Ledger as Ennis Del Mar, this year's best-actor frontrunner is Jeff Bridges as an alcoholic country-western singer in *Crazy Heart*. (Didn't Robert Duvall already win for that role in *Tender Mercies*? Wasn't Joaquin Phoenix nominated for the same thing in *Walk the Line*?)

Other nominees, besides Firth, include George Clooney (*Up in the Air*), Morgan Freeman (*Invictus*), and Jeremy Renner (*The Hurt Locker*).

Without the likes of Felicity Huffman as a pre-operative transsexual in *Transamerica*, we find ourselves on the best-actress sidelines with Julia Roberts, while her successor as America's sweetheart, Sandra Bullock, is poised to win an Oscar for a role Roberts reportedly turned down in *The Blind Side* (another title that's not on my must-see list). Meanwhile, more discerning academy members can cast their votes for Sidibe or choose from among Meryl Streep's ebullient Julia Child in *Julie & Julia*, Carey Mulligan's 16-year-old schoolgirl in *An Education*, and Helen Mirren's Countess Sofya in *The Last Station*.

Last year's best supporting actress, Penelope Cruz, says she patterned her seductive moves in the musical number "A Call from the Vatican" in *Nine* after Pink Panther cartoons. The strategy paid off with another nomination in that category, where Mo'Nique seems to be the prohibitive favorite over Maggie Gyllenhaal (*Crazy Heart*) and *Up in the Air* co-stars Vera Farmiga and Anna Kendrick.

Matt Damon (*Invictus*), Woody Harrelson (*The Messenger*), Christopher Plummer (*The Last Station*), and Stanley Tucci (*The Lovely Bones*) are nominated for best supporting actor along with Christoph Waltz, who seems a lock for his role as Hans Landa in *Inglourious Basterds*.

As I write this the first week of February when Oscar nominations were announced and a full month before the awards, it seems almost certain that Bridges, Bullock, Waltz, and Mo'Nique will win this year's acting laurels.

But things can change. The last time a Winter Olympics was held between the nominations and the awards was 2006 when Hollywood homophobes spent the time rallying around *Crash* as an alternative to the odds-on favorite for best picture, *Brokeback Mountain*.

I don't know if that means that everyone in Hollywood isn't gay, but I learned to never discount a March surprise.

The 82nd Academy Awards ceremony will be broadcast live beginning at 6 p.m. on ABC-TV from the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood.

What good is sitting alone in your room . . . while watching the awards telecast? Come to Oscars Unhinged, the annual Unhinged Productions Bash, where there's food, fashion, and prizes. Red carpet arrival is at 6 p.m., showtime at 7, at Montrose Counseling Center, 401 Branard, 2nd floor.Tickets: $25 general admission, $40 VIP. For more information, visit comeunhinged.com.

Donalevan Maines also writes about the film I Love You Phillip Morris *in this issue of* OutSmart *magazine.*

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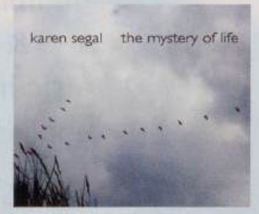


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GrooveOut
by Gregg Shapiro

LYRICAL LESBIANS

Queer women's history month has a soundtrack



We may not be able to legally marry in most states, but we can still start our own families. For some that includes children, biological or adopted. *Warm Sun* (The Next Family) by Susan Howard glowingly rejoices in that fact with a set of songs for all kinds of families, including those with same-sex parents. "Hanging Out with My Moms" is a delightful celebration of the fun and fabulous things you can do with two mommies. "Daddy Papa and Me" has a similarly festive spirit, while "I'm Adopting a Brother" adds a slightly more serious, although no less joyful tone to the proceedings.







Mal Blum made a splash on Logo's "Click List" with the cuddly video for her "Ode to Ukulele" track. Her latest EP, *For Making Art* (malblum.com), is another acoustically driven collection of songs, albeit with a darker perspective. "Baltimore" and "New Year's Eve," for instance, establish a somewhat less than upbeat mood. The title track, with its typewriter percussion, is a little more gleeful and is a unique expression of gratitude. Two live tracks, including an Old Crow Medicine Show cover, and the heartbreaking "I Could Tell You" round out the disc.





Clear across the spectrum, Otep, the namesake of the metal band, declares, "I'm one of the/freaks, the faggots,/the geeks, the savages,/rogues, rebels, dissident devils,/artists, martyrs, infidels . . ." on "Rise Rebel Resist," the opening track of the visceral *Smash the Control Machine* (Victory) album. The politically oriented title track successfully gets its point across with a minimum of damage. Otep spits the rhymes on "Run for Cover" like a slam poet, while "Ur a Wmn Now" is an unexpectedly effective ballad.

Traversing the spectrum again, we arrive at the *The Mystery of Life* (karensegal.com) by Karen Segal Trio. Jazz guitarist Segal does her influences, including Wes Montgomery, Pat Metheny, and John McLaughlin, proud, twisting and bending the sounds from her guitar into new and compelling shapes. Standout cuts include "After the Storm," "Lilah Rose," "Epiphany (Aha!)," "I Believe," and the luminescent "Moonrise."

Worth the wait, the self-titled debut disc by The Powwows, led by Lauretta Tagli, is a good old-fashioned pop/rock record at a time when those are in short supply. The Powwows rock like nobody's business on "All I See," "Atlanta," and "Gimme." But Tagli and company are not →

GrooveOut Shorts

Reviews/previews by Nancy Ford

k.d. lang
Recollection



This remarkable collection spans a quarter-century of lang's honey-throated career, including rarities like "Barefoot" (from *Salmonberries*), the previously unreleased "Beautifully Combined," and 20 more tunes. Bonus DVDs including 22 videos, highlighted by her duets with Tony Bennett and Roy Orbison, complete the package. Oddly, though, lang's ultimate throbber, "Pulling Back the Reigns," is missing here. Nonesuch Records (kdlang.com).

V.V. Brown
Travelling Like the Light



Thanks to Logo, gay audiences found this inventive British artist early on, with little wonder. The light, airy title tune on her debut pop album is alluringly addictive, with its almost Lennon/Ono vibe. If "Everybody" sounds familiar, maybe you recognize it from a recent *Desperate Housewives* promo. Capitol Records (capitolrecords.com).

Vampire Weekend
Contra



This ultra-quirky alt band's sound is described by Logo as "Upper West Side Soweto." The extraordinarily original tunes on this handsome quartet's second release are punctuated by imbalanced and unexpected rhythms, especially on "Cousins." Listen carefully—and quickly—to "California English." XL Recordings (xlrecordings.com).

Selena Gomez & The Scene
Kiss & Tell



Move over, Miley Cyrus: the Disney Channel is pushing a new darling. The Dallas native rocks hard with her debut CD, especially on the first breakout single and on "As a Blonde." Gomez and Justin Bieber close the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, March 21. Hollywood Records (hollywoodrecords.com).

Peggy Lee
Let's Love



In 1974, Lee's dinner guest, Paul McCartney, presented her with a most unusual hostess gift: "Let's Love," a song he wrote especially for her. Includes other '70s-era hits, like "You Make Me Feel Brand New" and James Taylor's "Don't Let Me Be Lonely Tonight"; McCartney produced and played piano on the title track, remastered here. Collectors Choice Music (peggylee.com).

Peggy Lee
Two Shows Nightly



Known as the ultimate perfectionist, Lee blocked this live album recorded in 1968 at New York City's Copacabana from being released. More than 40 years later, her estate has opened the vault for →



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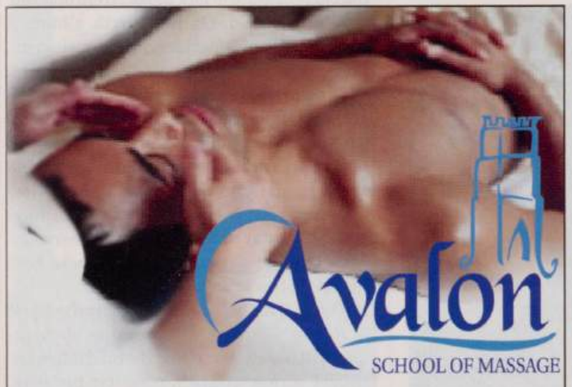
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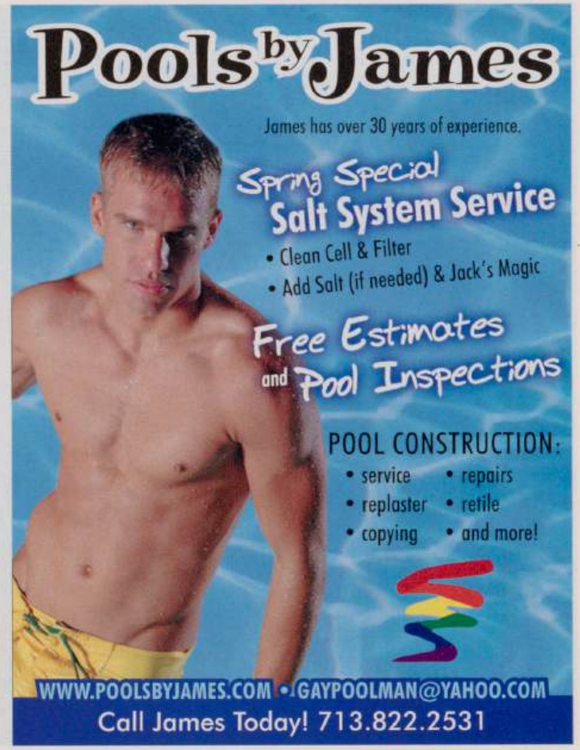
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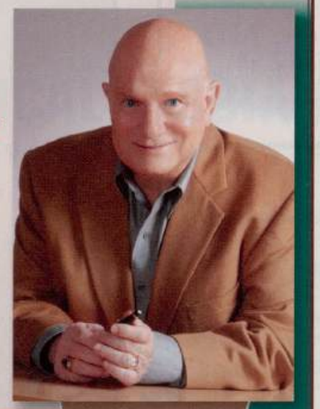
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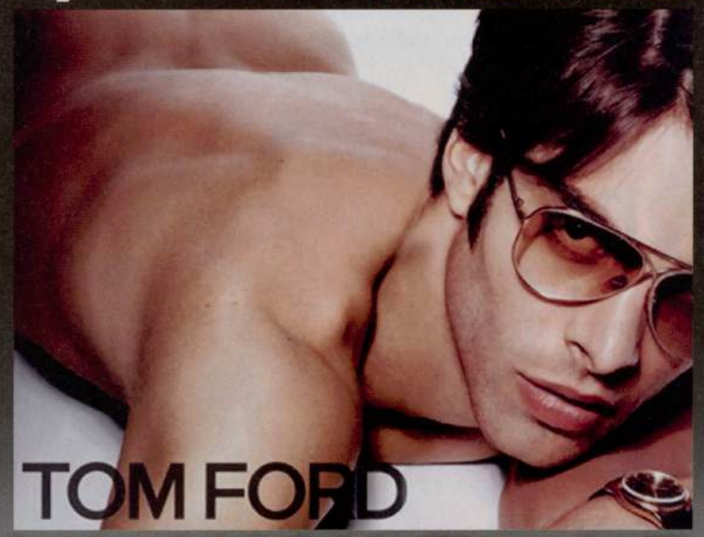
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GrooveOut *continued from page 88*

afraid to flash their mellower side on songs such as "My Whole Life," "Hey," "Everything's Alright," and "How Much More."

The trio known as Girlyman (Doris Muramatsu, Ty Greenstein, and Nate Borofsky) is virtually unstoppable. A popular live act, Girlyman has managed to make their trademark harmonies transfer easily to their studio recordings, and their latest release, *Everything's Easy* (girlyman.com), is another fine example of their individual and collective talents. Taking a personal turn on tracks including the title tune and "Easy Bake Ovens," "Could Have Guessed," "Home Song," the jaunty "My Eyes Get Misty," "Somewhere Different Now," and the geographical "True Enough," Girlyman continues its development as one of the most original and captivating queer bands.

From trios to duos, Sugarbeach (Marlee Walchuk and Nathalie Callender) gets listeners up and dancing on the first track of their *Not Deserted* (sugarbeachmusic.com) album. "Mama I Love Her" is a dance track with a powerful queer message, and "Living Out Proud" has dance anthem written all over it. Of course, there's more to Sugarbeach than dance beats, as you can hear on "Run with Me," "If I'd Known," and "Nathalie."

Nicole Reynolds and Ann Reed represent the current state of folk music, from opposite ends of the field. On her fourth album, *A Fine Set of Fools* (nicolereynoldsmusic.com), Pittsburgh native Reynolds sets things off with the devastatingly powerful coming-of-age tune "Like the Ocean." "Crazy Like You" adds an infectious rhythm to the album, and "Earthworms" is a delightful number about gender and queerness. The timeless "Joseph Brown" sounds like it could have been yesterday or more than 100 years ago, and "For Christmas" manages to be both thought-provoking and humorous.

Minnesota-based Reed's *Where the Earth Is Round* (Turtle Cub) contains elements that will be familiar to her devoted followers. Humor, an essential component in her work, is here in abundance on tracks including "Coffee Tasted Better When You Were Here" (composed for the 2008 final broadcast of *The Morning Show* on Minneapolis Public Radio), "Pink Guitar," "How Did I?" and "Good Thing I Bounce." The addition of the First Universalist Unitarian Choir on "We Will" elevates the tune to political hymn status, while "A Song for the End of the Day" sets the comfort of domesticity to music.

Gregg Shapiro is a regular contributor to OutSmart *magazine and 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 88*

the remastering of the sessions. Includes Lee's smoky versions of "Do I Hear a Waltz," Come Back to Me," and 22 other show-stopping tunes. Collectors Choice Music (peggylee.com).

Le Kat
Boudoir Rouge



Perhaps best recognized from her role as the Lady in Lavendar in the *Phantasm* film franchise, the slinky femme fatale gets jazzy and bluesy on her debut album. She wrote nine of the '30s-infused tunes here, also including swingy covers like Madonna's "Hanky Panky" and Lennox/Stewart's "I Need a Man." Le Kat Meow (lekatmusic.com).

Corrine Bailey Rae
The Sea



This British singer/songwriter's first album garnered three Grammy nominations, and this release, her sophomore rhythm-and-blues effort, is likely to follow suit. "I'd Do It All Again" builds with elegant simplicity, and "Paper Dolls," with its slightly sinister flavor, is just plain fun. Capitol Records (capitolrecords.com). ■

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by Terri Schlichenmeyer

NEW FRONTIER

The wild, wild west gets even wilder in 'Forgetting the Alamo'



Cross-dressing, lesbian love, and revenge: what's not to love about Emma Perez' novel set during the time of the battle of the Alamo?

Your first introduction to hiding was a game called Peek-a-Boo. Then there was Hide-and-Seek, and after that, you learned to hide milk money from playground bullies and your diary from your mother. Through the years, you covered up your ignorance of school lessons (don't want to seem too smart), your lack of dates on Saturday night (don't want to seem too unpopular), and your growing body (don't want to seem too appealing).

But that's small stuff. Hiding can be a life-saving necessity. It can be life-or-death. It can be a means of revenge, as you'll see in the new novel *Forgetting the Alamo, or, Blood Memory* by Emma Perez (University of Texas Press, utexas.edu/utpress).

From the time that she was a very small girl, Michaela Campos knew that she was more like her father than she was like her mother. Because of that, Michaela went everywhere with Agustin—even to Miss Elsie's, where little girls weren't supposed to see what big people were doing.

So it was no surprise that, in the days after the battle at the Alamo, Michaela was with her father when he found Tio Lorenzo, his brother. In anguish, he buried Lorenzo, and in anguish, he rode off for revenge and battle, leaving Michaela to watch over the ranch, along with her mami and her twin siblings, Rusty and Ifigenia.

Michaela couldn't let her papi fight without her, so she went after him, but she was too late. Carnage met her at the battle site, and she found her papi dead. Grief-stricken, she returned to the ranch, where she found the twins murdered and Mami raped.

So Michaela ran.

Wrapping her body tightly and wearing her papi's buckskin coat, carrying his rifle and the knife that killed him, she ran, hiding her femaleness and looking for the men who started it all: a man named Rove, a colonel who was no colonel, and her cousin, Jedidiah Jones, who somehow always managed to make Michaela smaller.

She aimed to find them and kill them.

She never aimed to fall in love.

Clara was beautiful, with hair to her waist and a bright smile. Michaela loved her, but couldn't tell her so. Instead, she watched the woman she loved fall for one of the men Michaela chased.

Filled with lush beauty, harshness, and horrifying brutality, *Forgetting the Alamo* is one of those books in which you just *know* what's going to happen at the end.

And you'd be wrong.

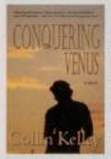
Author Emma Perez says in her acknowledgements that she traveled through her settings, letting her imagination go while she did her research. That shows in this story of a young woman who is forced to come of age as the new state of Texas is born and settled.

Be aware that although this novel is as chaste as any western, it might not be the kind of material Grandpa would read . . . and that's too bad. I loved this oater, and when you read *Forgetting the Alamo*, you'll have a hard time hiding your appreciation, too.

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.

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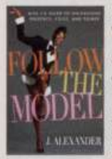
Martin is a young man not only trying to recover from his lover's suicide, but trying to understand his strange dreams of an older woman. In an effort to distract himself, he agrees to chaperone an anything-but-ordinary high school trip to Paris, where he meets and falls in love with David, a young student. He also meets the "woman of his dreams," an aging agoraphobic, and discovers they both have the same odd tattoo. His best friend, Diane, provides a wry commentary on both affairs. This stunning debut novel is everything—a poetic page-turner, a wonderful mystery, and a compelling story of self-realization. Bravo to Collin Kelly, an established poet whose prose sets a new standard. *—Review: Angel Curtis*

The Professor and Other Writings
Terry Castle
HarperCollins (harpercollins.com)



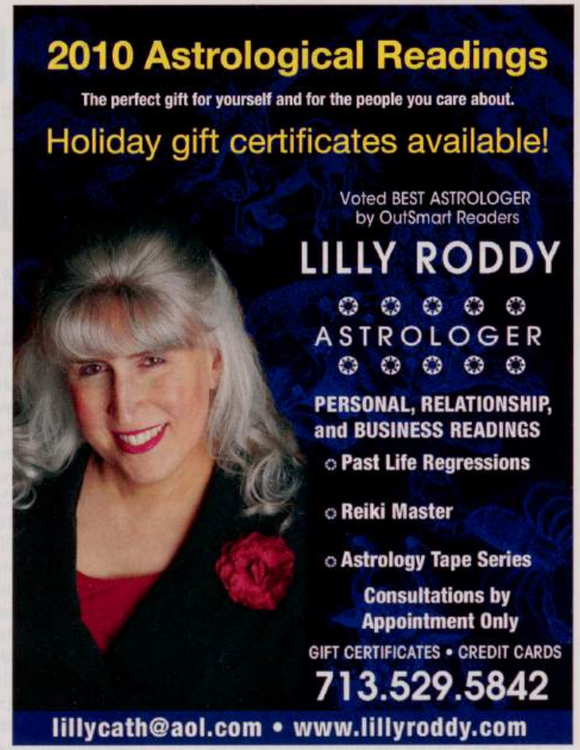
Terry Castle has entertained us for years with her thoughtful, funny, and self-revealing essays. In *The Professor*, all of her best work is finally collected in one volume. Detailing everything from an affair with a female college professor to "My Heroin Christmas," Castle's unapologetic look at her own life is sure to amuse, entertain, and edify. Even if you're "not an essay reader," you won't want to miss this. Few of us can look at our own lives with such honest self-reflection. *—Review: A.C.*

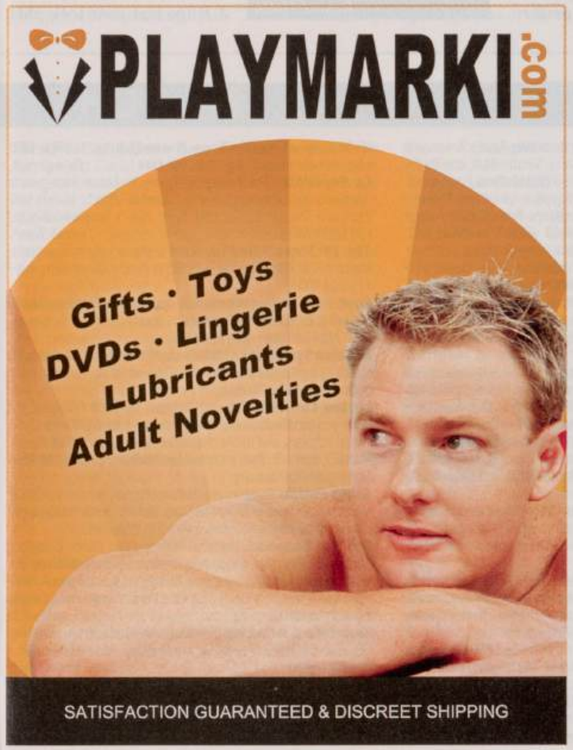
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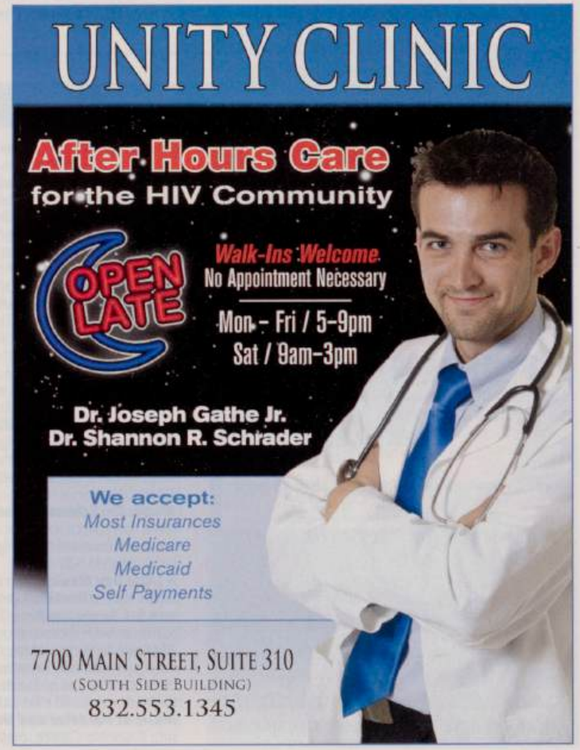


Breathe first. Dare to be different. Watch and learn. "This is deep, philosophical stuff here," jokes the runway coach and *America's Next Top Model* judge about advice in his spirited, informative, and empowering guidebook to achieving your goals. When the 6'4" gay cross-dresser advises that you've got to want it, work it, and *walk* it, who can argue with Miss J's success? *—Review: Donalevan Maines* ■









Calendar of Events

Compiled by Nancy Ford

You'll Have a Gay Old Time

Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo 2010 has some unexpected surprises under its hat

There's been a lot of talk lately about Houston shaking off its redneck dust and becoming better known as an internationally sophisticated, diversity-embracing city. And why not? With more than two million residents, if the City of Houston were a state, it would rank 36th in population. One of only five U.S. cities with permanent professional resident companies in all of the major performing arts disciplines (opera, ballet, music, and theater), Houston is second only to New York City for the total number of theater seats in a concentrated downtown area (more than 14,000).

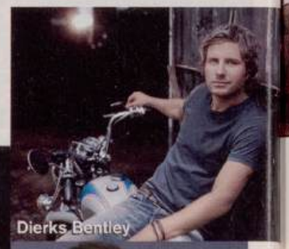
And, as you may have heard, the Bayou City recently joined Berlin and Paris as a major metropolis mayored by openly gay folk.

But you'd think the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo (rodeohouston.com) would likely be one steadfastly loyal bastion opposing diversity and open-mindedness, clinging to our city's traditional redneck rep by the tips of its mulched-undercoated fingernails.

Think again. In the lineup of 20 performances capping each of the rodeo's ridin' and ropin' evenings, as many as five acts are actively and outspokenly supportive of their gay brethren and lesbian sisterfolk. And that's not counting the ones rumored to be gay who were formerly married to actress Renee Zellweger for just four months.

I got a feeling that it's going to be a good, good night when Black Eyed Peas perform


Mary J. Blige


Dierks Bentley


Keith Urban


Rascal Flatts

March 18, with the self-proclaimed bisexual Fergie strutting out and proudly on those impossibly high spiked heels.

Headlining Black Heritage Day (March 5), Mary J. Blige last year took part


Black Eyed Peas

in a fundraising concert that brought in $3.9 million in the fight against California's Proposition 8. The Queen of Hip-Hop Soul also shook up her own often deeply homophobic industry when she told the *Advocate* in a 2007 cover story: "The real hip-hop . . . people don't even care about [someone being gay]. They'll love you and accept you no matter what because they know who they are."

A respectable representation of the rodeo's actual *country* music stars has also gone on record to promote diversity. In 2009, Keith Urban (March 16) and Dierks Bentley (March 3) released a remake of the Eagles hit, "Take It to the Limit," confidently adding a key lyric change: "It's a bromance to believe in."

Rascal Flatts' Gary LeVox and Joe Don Rooney are likely to include in their set (March 10) their 2009 hit, "Love Who You Love," which some fans interpret as an endorsement of same-sex relationships, a notion which is just fine with the rascally artists.

"We actually have some gay people that work with us, and we have a lot of friends that are gay, too, and I know that this song has inspired them," LeVox told Country Music Television network in a 2009 interview. "I know that coming out was tough on their parents and on them and the whole entire family. For a long time, some of them didn't get to hear 'I love you' from their dads or be accepted in that way. . . . It's helped a lot of our friends."

Rooney added: "That's what's cool about our music . . . If you are someone who's gay or someone who's straight, you still feel something from the song, and that's what we want."

Even that über-patriotic darling of "real Americans," Toby Keith (March 12), says he "could care less" if gay people married each other. Not exactly an endorsement of equality, but then again he's not threatening to put his boot up our asses. —*Nancy Ford*

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MARCH

FILM

South Pacific is the 1958 screen version of the World War II tropical love story starring Mitzi Gaynor and Rossano Brazzi. March 3, 7pm. Presented by Theatre Under The Stars at Angelika Film Center, 510 Texas St. • tuts.com • 713/225-1470.

Mon Oncle d'Amérique (*My American Uncle*). Alain Resnais directs the whimsical tale that compares three ordinary people with laboratory mice. 1980, French with English subtitles. March 27, 7pm. Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Brown Auditorium Theater, 1001 Bissonnet St. • mfah.org • 713/639-7515.

PERFORMING ARTS

The Sunshine Boys. UpStage Theatre celebrates its 10th anniversary with the Neil Simon comedy. Through March 6. Historic Lambert Hall, 1703 Heights Blvd. • upstagetheatre.org • 713/838-7191.

Cirque Dreams Illumination. Neil Goldberg's journey of nighttime dreamers, towering buildings, and infinite possibilities. Through Mar. 7. Presented by Broadway Across America at Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, Sarofim Hall, 800 Bagby St. • broadwayacrossamerica.com • 713/315-2500.

Aida. Elton John and Tim Rice's Egyptian love story. Through March 14. Stage Door Inc., 284 Pasadena Town Square • stagedoorinc.com • 832/582-7606.

True Love Lies. Brad Fraser's dark comedy about past love. Through March 16. Theater LaB Houston, 1706 Alamo St. • theaterlabhouston.com • 713/868-7516.

A Number by Caryl Churchill and ***Machinal*** by Sophie Treadwell, two one-acts. Through March 18. Main Street Theater–Rice Village, 2540 Times Blvd. • mainstreettheater.com • 713/524-6706.

Waiting to Be Mended, by Gwen Flager. Judy Reeves directs the world premiere drama exploring the darkness of hate. Through Mar 27. Theatre Suburbia, 4106 Way Out West Dr. • theatresuburbia.com • 713/682-3525.

Birthday from Hell. The gang celebrates the death of Ned and almost forgets Bridgette's birthday. Through May 8. Radio Music Theatre, 2623 Colquitt St.• radiomusictheatre.com • 713/522-7722.

Magic: The Science of Wonder. Artifacts and performances reveal how science and magic are intertwined. Through Sept. 6. Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Dr. • hmns.org • 713/639-4629.

A Little Day Music, a free concert by Da Camera of Houston, features bassist Ben Allison. Bring your lunch. March 3, noon, and each first Wednesday through May. Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas Ave. • dacamera.com • 713/524-5050.

Big Love. Leslie Swackhamer directs Charles L. Mee's musical stage play about 50 runaway brides. March 4–7. University of Houston School of Theatre & Dance, Wortham Theatre • theatredance.uh.edu • 713-743-2929.

Music of Paradise and Hell. 17th-century Baroque music with Ensemble Caprice, presented by Houston Early Music. March 5, 8pm. Christ the King Lutheran Church, 2353 Rice Blvd. • houstonearlymusic.org • 713/432-1744.

La Bayadère (*The Temple Dancer*). Houston Ballet world premiere with choreography by Stanton Welch. March 5–6. Wortham Theater Center, 501 Texas Ave. • houstonballet.org • 713/227-ARTS.

The 39 Steps, Alfred Hitchcock's clever spy masterpiece. March 5–28. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. • alleytheatre.org • 713/228-8421.

Rent. Jonathan Larson's musical update of *La Boheme*. March 5–April 3. Etc/East-End Theater Co., 2001 Postoffice St., Galveston • islandetc.org • 409/762-3556.

Houston Symphony's Hans Graf conducts Mozart's *Requiem*. March 7, 2:30pm. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana St. • houstonsymphony.org • 713/224-7575.

Lenten Concert, featuring *Triptych* by Tarik O'Regan and *Requiem* by Maurice Duruflé performed by St. Paul's choir, choral scholars, and treble choir accompanied by the orchestra. March 7, 6pm. St. Paul's United Methodist Church, 5501 Main St. • stpaulshouston.org.

South Pacific. Rodgers and Hammerstein's timeless musical. March 9–21. Theatre Under The Stars. Hobby Center for Performing Arts, 800 Bagby St. • tuts.com • 713/558-8887.

The Met Unbound. Houston Metropolitan Dance Company performs ballet, jazz, modern, and contemporary dance to five works created for the company. March 11, 8pm. Texas A International University's Center for Fine Performing Arts in Laredo • houstonmetdance.org.

Moreland & Arbuckle play blues-rock tunes from their new CD, *Flood*. March 11, 8pm. House of Blues, 1204 Caroline St. • 888/402-5837.

American at Heart. Houston Ballet performs Leonard Bernstein's *Fancy Free*, George Balanchine's *Apollo*, and Christopher Bruce's *Hush*. March 11–21. Wortham Center's Brown Theater, 501 Texas Ave. • houstonballet.org • 713/227-2787.

The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds. Daniel Polk directs Paul Zindel's drama about transgenerational family dysfunction. March 12–27. The Country Playhouse, 12802 Queensbury Ln. • countryplayhouse.org • 713/467-4497.

Fault Lines by Stephen Belber. Two friends discuss their relationship in a bar, complete with live music. Presented by Horse Head Theatre. March 11–27, 8pm. Brewery Tap, 717 Franklin St. • horseheadtheatre.org.

Coming Back to Jersey. Carl L. Williams' comedy about a daydreaming tailor. March 12–April 17. Company OnStage, 536 Westbury Square • companyonstage.org • 713/726-1219.

Shanti: A Journey of Peace. UNAIC choir and composer Kanniks Kannikeswaran present local singers showcasing multi-genre Indian classical and folk dances through visual imagery. March 13, 5:30 and 8:30pm. $30–$100. Benefits All India Movement For Seva. University of Houston's Cullen Performance Hall • shantichoir.com • 832/303-2461.

Guitar Shorty performs blues tunes from his new CD, *Bare Knuckle*. March 13, 10pm. $5. Big Easy Social & Pleasure Club, 5731 Kirby Dr. • thebigeasyblues.com • 713/523-9999.

Hypnotist Dan Perez and his magician friends. March 14, 7pm. Frenetic Theater, 5102 Navigation Blvd. • freneticore.net • 832/426-4624.

Coles Whalen. The folk-rock artist plays a special St Patrick's Day show. March 17, 9pm. Chances, 1100 Westheimer Rd. • chancesbar.com • 713/523-9667.

Sibelius. Hannu Lintu conducts the Houston Symphony with guest cellist, Alban Gerhardt. March 18–21, 8pm. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana St. • houstonsymphony.org • 713/224-7575.

The Beach Boys perform with the Houston Symphony. March 19, 7:30pm. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana St. • houstonsymphony.org • 713/224-7575.

Our Late Night, Wallace Shawn's scathing play set at a cocktail party. March 19–April 3, 8pm. Presented by Catastrophic Theatre at DiverseWorks, 1117 East Frwy. • diverseworks.org • 713/335-3445.

Brandon Lee Quintet, led by the native Houstonian/jazz trumpeter. March 20, 8pm. Da Camera of Houston. Wortham Theater Center, 500 Texas Ave. • dacamera.com • 713/524-5050.

The Guthrie Family Rides Again, with folk musician, Arlo Guthrie. March 23, 8pm. Miller Outdoor Theatre in Hermann Park, 100 Concert Dr. • milleroutdoortheatre.com • 281/373-3386.

In the Sufi Tradition: Poetry and Music Celebrating a Face that Does Not Bear the Footprints of the World with poet Usha Akella and flautist Steve Gorn. March 25, 7pm. Rothko Chapel, 1409 Sul Ross St. • rothkochapel.org • 713/524-9839.

Barefoot in the Park. Newlyweds adjust to married life in a tiny Greenwich Village apartment. March 25–April 11. Texas Repertory Theatre Company, 14243 Stuebner Airline Rd. • texreptheatre.org • 281/583-7573.

Steven Isserlis: The Romantic Cello. March 26, 8pm. Presented by Da Camera at Hobby Center for the Performing Arts' Zilkha Hall, 800 Bagby St. • dacamera.com • 713/524-5050.

The Notables: Gilberto Gil. Society for the Performing Arts presents the guitarist/vocalist (and former Minister of Culture of Brazil). March 26, 8pm. Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana St. • spahouston.org • 713/227-4SPA.

La Boheme. Opera in the Heights presents Puccini's ultimate love story. March 26–April 10, 7:30pm. 1703 Heights Blvd. • operaintheheights.org • 713/861-5303.

Marvin Hamlisch and Joel Grey in Concert. The Broadway stars perform their hits from *A Chorus Line*, *Cabaret*, and more. March 27, 8pm. Presented by Society for the Performing Arts at Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana St. • spahouston.org • 713/227-4SPA.

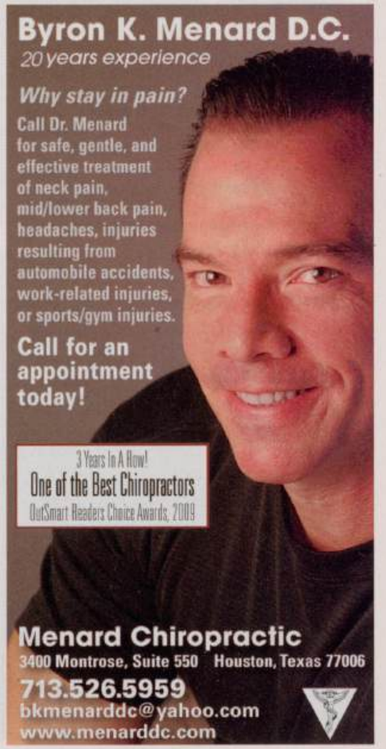
L'Estro Armonico: The Genius of Harmony. Mercury Baroque's core strings perform six concertos by Vivaldi. March 27, 8pm, with a pre-concert lecture with Dr. Yvonne Kendall at 7:15pm. Wortham Theatre Center's Cullen Theater, 501 Texas Ave. • mercurybaroque.org • 832/251-0706. →

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LookOut *(It's like Calendar, only gayer)*

by Nancy Ford

Verdi Revisited. In *Aida*, Elton John and Tim Rice's Egyptian musical love story, two women love the same man. **Through March 14.** Stage Door Inc., 284 Pasadena Town Square • stagedoorinc.com • 832/582-7606.

Local Thespians. Gulf Coast Museum & Archives maven Judy Reeves directs the world premiere of *Waiting to Be Mended*, Houston playwright Gwen Flager's drama exploring the darkness of hate. **Through Mar 27.** Theatre Suburbia, 4106 Way Out West Dr. • theatresuburbia.com • 713/682-3525.

Modern Times. Theatre New West's Joe Watts directs *The New Century*, in which Paul Rudnick's cleverly woven and diversely comedic characters land in a New York City hospital under surprising and comical circumstances. **March 3–April 3.** Sirrom Studios, 5570 Weslayan • theatrenewwest.com • 713/522-2204.

Meet Adam and Steve. "Paul Rudnick Month" continues as Joe Babb directs Rudnick's *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told*, in which the Old Testament is played for laughs. **March 5–28**, 8 p.m. The opening night performance benefits the Transgender Foundation of America. Presented by Unhinged Productions at Frenetic Theater, 5102 Navigation Blvd. • comeunhinged.com • 832/426-4624.

Balls and Bats. Men's and women's teams alike hit the field for AssistHers' fifth annual Softball Tournament, sponsored by Hospital Corporation of America. Picnics and coolers are welcomed, but leave the glass at home. **March 6**, 7:30 a.m. Memorial Park Fields 4 and 5. Benefits AssistHers. pamelacallahan@sbcglobal.net • assisthers.org.

Beat It. Drummers and dancers of all skill levels are welcome to participate in the Imani Vida Drum Circle which, translated from Swahili and Spanish, means *faith life*. **March 6**, and every first Saturday, 3 p.m. Resurrection MCC Gathering Place, 2025 W. 11th • meetup.com/DrummingCircle • 713/861-9149.

Who Are You Wearing? View the Academy Awards with Unhinged Productions' Oscars Unhinged party, featuring a red carpet, food, and prizes. **March 7**, 6 p.m. $25–$40. Montrose Counseling Center, 401 Branard, 2nd floor • comeunhinged.com.

Three Thursdays with Ray. Prison/LGBT activist and playwright Ray Hill performs his trio of autobiographical solo shows, *Whatever Happened to Anita Bryant?*, *Confessions of a Recovering Baptist Evangelist*, and *Ray Hill Revisits the Sex Police*, on three consecutive Thursdays. **March 11, 18, and 25**, 8:30 p.m. Guava Lamp, 570 Waugh Dr. • guavalamphouston.com • 713/524-3359.

You Don't Have to Be Irish. Montrose Counseling Center's annual shamrock-inspired fundraiser, Bringing in The Green, once again takes place in the Montrose-area home of John Danielson. The $30 suggested donation benefits programs of MCC, including their new support groups for transgenders and partners of transgenders. **March 12.** RSVP: 713/529-0037 • montrosecounselingcenter.org.

Lunch and a Movie. Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church's Welcome M.A.T. (Movies And Things) program presents *Transamerica*, in which a conservative transsexual (Felicity Huffman) finds she has a 17-year-old son. A discussion follows the film. Free; lunch is available for $6, or bring your own. **March 14**, 12:30 p.m. and each second Sunday. Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church, 1900 Bering Dr. • emersonhouston.org.



Judy Reeves (r) directs Houston playwright Gwen Flager's (l) *Waiting to Be Mended* at Theatre Suburbia.



COURTESY THEATRE NEW WEST

L–r: Julie Oliver, Rachel Moore, Taavi Mark, Lance Marshall, and Josephine John star in Theatre New West's production of Paul Rudnick's *The New Century*.

Teen Talk. In Stephen Karam's dark comedy, *Speech and Debate*, three teenagers on the high school debate team wrangle with issues like teen pregnancy, online predators, gay/straight school programs, and who should be the lead in the school play. **March 17–April 11.** Stages Repertory Theatre, 3201 Allen Parkway • stagestheatre.com • 713/527-0123.

Good Eeeeevening. Gay and lesbian theater fans meet before the show for ActOUT, conversation, and cocktails before viewing the Alley Theatre's production of *The 39 Steps*, Alfred Hitchcock's clever spy masterpiece. **March 18**, 6 p.m. Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. • alleytheatre.org • 713/228-8421.

Renaissance Author. Kite surfing instructor, carpenter, holistic healing minister, and hog farmer Mikaya Heart (l) also designed and installed a unit on her car that converts urine to hydrogen. Oh yes—she also writes books. The author of *With the Sun in My Eyes*, *The Straight Woman's Guide To Lesbianism*, and *A Different Rhythm: Thailand and Indonesia*, Heart reads from her autobiography, *My Sweet Wild Dance* (Dog Ear Publishing), which has been nominated for a Lambda Literary Award. **March 18**, 6:30 p.m. Presented by Houston GLBT Community Center's Community Center Reading Series at Montrose-Freed Library, 4100 Montrose Blvd. • mikayaheart.org • 713/524-3818.



Heart

Top This. Transgender Foundation of America presents drag king performances by Nu Cweer Bombs, Vanity Wilde, Houston's Gendermyn, Austin's Kings 'n' Things, and burlesque. **March 20**, 10:30 p.m. A $7–$10 donation benefits TFA's top surgery fund for female-to-male trangenders. The Usual Pub, 5519 Allen St. • theusualpub.com.

Legendary Legal Leadership. When AMICUS, the LGBT student organization at downtown's South Texas College of Law, was founded 15 years ago by a group of gay law students, including John Nechman, its establishment was welcomed by bomb threats. Fifteen years later, the group celebrates its anniversary by honoring "Legal Legends of Houston's LGBT Community." Honorees include Ray Hill, Phyllis Randolph Frye, Mitchell Katine, Texas State Rep. Garnet Coleman, former Rep. Debra Danburg, and Mayor Annise Parker, who delivers the evening's keynote address. The event, complete with auction items, delicious hors d'oeuvres, and entertainment, raises funds for AMICUS Achievement Grant, which provides scholarships for law students who distinguish themselves on LGBT issues. **March 25**, 6 p.m. South Texas College of Law, 1602 San Jacinto St. • lawkn.com • 713/808-1000.

Pretty in Pumps. Members of Montrose Softball League don high heels and wigs for Pranksters in Pumps, featuring a drag pageant, a "Best Chest" contest, and live performances. The evening also offers "The Contemporary Woman," an art show. Benefits AIDS Foundation Houston–Camp Hope, Bering Omega Community Services, and Live Consortium. **March 27**, 6 p.m. South Beach, 808 Pacific St. • montrosesoftballleague.com.

Softball Season. Montrose Softball League celebrates its 31st anniversary with its opening day ceremonies, with Mayor Annise Parker throwing out the first pitch. **March 28**; games at 8 a.m., with opening ceremonies at noon. Houston Sportsplex, 12631 Main St. An opening day social follows the games at 7 p.m. at Meteor, 2306 Genesee • montrosesoftballleague.com.

Cougartown Designers Sought. GLOBAL, the GLBT group for University of Houston students, is currently seeking submissions for a new logo to be displayed on GLOBAL's office, website, and other materials. The top design will be unveiled at the group's third annual drag show, scheduled April 8. *Send entries to queercoogs@gmail.com by March 31.* All submissions become the property of GLOBAL. uh.edu/global.

Tick Tock. It's Time, a free LGBT conference held on the campus of Texas A&M University, commemorates the 25th anniversary of the United States Supreme Court decision that forced Texas A&M University to recognize the Gay Student Services as an official student organization. **March 31** offers an academic critique and exploration of "Queer of Color" scholarly and literary endeavors. **April 1** offers "25 Years After: LGBT in Higher Education–The Case of Texas A&M" addressing the progress of LGBT individuals, interests, and intellectual endeavors in higher education. Presented by the Texas A&M GLBT Professional Network at Texas A&M University. Registration: itstime.tamu.edu.

Planning Ahead

Kindred Duffers. The women of Kindred Spirits Foundation kick off the 30th anniversary of the opening of that legendary lesbian nightclub with the group's second annual Charity Golf Tournament. With its accompanying barbecue awards dinner, the tournament benefits AssistHers, Bering Support Network, Houston Buyers Club, and Lesbian Health Initiative–Houston. Players of all skill levels are welcomed. **April 25**, 1:30 p.m. Bear Creek Masters Golf Course, 16001 Clay Rd. $100 per player. To register teams or individual players, log on to kindredspiritshouston.org. ■

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Junie B. Jones and a Little Monkey Business, a musical by Barbara Park. March 6, 20, and 27, 1 and 4pm. Main St. Theater–Chelsea Market, 4617 Montrose Blvd. • mainstreettheater.com • 713-524-6706.

Young Performers Program's Spring Break Session. Youth ages 7 through 17 explore their creative and artistic talents. March 15–19, 8am–4pm. $225. Ensemble Theatre, 3535 Main St. • ensemblehouston.com • 713/520-0055.

RADIO

After Hours: Queer Radio with Attitude features the QMZ (Queer Music Zone) with Jimmy Carper. Sunday mornings, 1–4am. KPFT 90.1 FM • kpft.org • 713/526-5738.

Queer Voices. Features, news, music, interviews, reviews, and commentary. Monday nights, 9–11pm. KPFT 90.1 FM • kpft.org • 713/526-4000.

ART/PHOTOGRAPHY

School of Art Annual Student Exhibition. Through March 13. Blaffer Gallery, University of Houston's Fine Arts Building • blaffergallery.org • 713/743-9971.

Not the Family Jewels!: Alternative Processes in Wearable Art. Emily Sloan curates works by 12 artists. Through March 14, with closing reception March 11, 7pm. Gallery 1724, 1724 Bissonnet St. • 713/582-1198.

Return to the River honors Black History Month. Presented by Art League Houston and curated by Beth Secor. Through March 18. JPMorgan Chase Heritage Hall, 712 Main St. • artleaguehouston.org • 713/523-9530.

Extreme Tea, an exhibition of tea paraphernalia. Through March 21. Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, 4848 Main St. • crafthouston.org • 713/529-4848.

McKay Otto. Through March 27. Wade Wilson Art, 4411 Montrose, Suite 200 • wadewilsonart.com • 713/521-2977.

Spirits & Headhunters: Vanishing Worlds of the Amazon. Through March 28. Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Dr. • hmns.org • 713/639-4629.

Rain or Shine: How Houston Developed Space City Baseball. Through April 4. Heritage Society Museum, 1100 Bagby St. • heritagesociety.org • 713/655-1912.

Barkley L. Hendricks: Birth of the Cool features life-sized portraits of ordinary people. Through April 18. Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 5216 Montrose Blvd. • camh.org • 713/284-8250.

The Book of Memory. Bela Gold's contrast between beauty and cultural references in the Holocaust. Through April 25. Holocaust Museum Houston, 5401 Caroline St. • hmh.org • 713/942-8000.

Perspectives 169: Odili Donald Odita. Works on canvas and Plexiglas. Through May 2. Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 5216 Montrose Blvd. • camh.org • 713/284-8250.

Prendergast in Italy. Through May 9. Museum of Fine Arts Houston. 5601 Main St. • mfah.org • 713/639-7300, 713/639-7379 (Spanish).

Ruptures and Continuities: Photography Made after 1960 from the MFAH Collection. Through May 9. Museum of Fine Arts Houston, 5601 Main St. • mfah.org • 713/639-7300, 713/639-7379 (Spanish).

Iron: Forged, Tempered, Quenched celebrates American blacksmithing. Through May 16. Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, 4848 Main St. • crafthouston.org • 713/529-4848.

Sargent and the Sea. Through May 23. Museum of Fine Arts, 5601 Main St. • mfah.org • 713/639-7300, 713/639-7379 (Spanish).

Fabergé: Imperial Jeweler to the Tsars features more than just jeweled eggs. Through July 25. Houston Museum of Natural Science, One Hermann Circle Dr. • hmns.org • 713/639-4629.

Forgotten Gateway: Coming to America through Galveston Island chronicles immigration through the Port of Galveston, a major gateway to American immigration. Through Sept. 11. Moody Gardens, One Hope Blvd. in Galveston • moodygardens.org • 800/582-4673.

Bernar Venet exhibition. Eight cor-ten steel towers dot Hermann Park. Through Sept. 30. Golf Course Dr. • hermannpark.org • 713/524-5876.

Art Walk. Stroll among myriad galleries in the historic Strand district. March 6. Galveston Arts Center, Market and 25th streets, Galveston • galvestonartscenter.org • 409/763-2403.

Liquid Lines: Exploring the Language of Contemporary Metal features furniture, jewelry, hollowware, and sculpture. March 7–July 18. Museum of Fine Arts Houston, 5601 Main St. • mfah.org • 713/639-7300, 713/639-7379 (Spanish). →

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Light & Vision II: Forty Years of Photography. March 10–26. Rice Media Center at Rice Univ., 6100 Main • rice.edu.
Zoosphere. Allison Hunter investigates humankind's relationship to the natural world. March 12–April 17. DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway • diverseworks.org • 713/335-3445.
FotoFest. More than 200 museums, galleries, and various spaces throughout the city exhibit photography art as part of the FotoFest Biennial. March 12–April 25. fotofest.org.
Alice Neel: Painted Truths. Seven decades of portraits of Manhattanites. March 21–June 13. Museum of Fine Arts Houston, 1001 Bissonnet St. • mfah.org • 713/639-7300.
Art Bike 2010. Twenty local artists tranform bicycles to raise awareness of multiple sclerosis. March 22–April 25. Discovery Green, 1500 McKinney St. • nationalmssociety.org.
Bayou City Art Festival. The 13th annual award-winning outdoor art gallery features cartoonist Vic Lee's "Waiting to Fly," juried fine art by 300 artists representing 17 media formats, multicultural music and dance, international food and wine, interactive art at the Creative Zone, and more. March 26–28, 10 am–6 pm. Memorial Park, S. Picnic Ln. • bayoucityartfestival.com.
Black and White. Paintings and sculptures by Matt Messinger, Kevin Peterson, Roberto Del Rio, Allan Rodewald, Janet Wayte, and Jane Dipaolo. March 27–April 24. McWhorter Gallery, 2219 Canal St. • mcwhortergallery.com • 713/868-4616.
Michael Peterson: Evolution/Revolution. Wood sculpture. March 27–July 2. Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, 4848 Main St. • crafthouston.org • 713/529-4848.

DAILY

March 1 (Mon.)

CraftTexas 2010. Houston Center for Contemporary Craft calls for entry for the sixth in a series of juried exhibitions showcasing the best in Texas-made contemporary craft. Deadline, March 1. callforentry.org • 713/529-4848.

March 5–7 (Fri.–Sun.)

HADA Spring Show & Sale, since 1964, one of the oldest antiques show in the country, features more than 150 international dealers. George R. Brown Convention Center • hadaantiques.com.

March 6 and April 17 (Sat.)

Finding and Maintaining a Long-Term Relationship. Licensed professional counselor and therapist Denise O'Dougherty discusses IMAGO concepts for building trust and intimacy. 10am–noon. $42. Leisure Learning Unlimited, 2990 Richmond Ave. • llu.com • 713/529-4414.

March 9 (Tues.)

NANO Fiction. Monthly reading with Nicholas T. Brown, Caitlin Johnson, and Lisa Lee. 7:30pm. Kaboom Books, 3116 Houston Ave. • nanofiction.org • 713/869-7600.

March 11 (Thurs.)

Nelofer Pazira: Fact or Fiction. The Afghani/Canadian actress, author, and filmmaker discusses Afghanistan. 7pm. Rothko Chapel, 1409 Sul Ross St. • rothkochapel.org • 713/524-9839.

March 12 (Fri.)

An Evening with Ellen Goodman, the Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist for the *Boston Globe*. 8pm. Presented by First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston at Ensemble Theatre, 3535 Main St. • firstuu.org • 713/526-5200.

March 20 (Sat.)

Assert Yourself: Personal Boundaries and Effective Confrontation. Licensed professional counselor and therapist Denise O'Dougherty discusses ways to improve confidence, self-esteem, and good communication skills. 10am–noon. $42. Leisure Learning Unlimited, 2990 Richmond Ave. • llu.com • 713/529-4414.

March 21 (Sun.)

BBVA Compass Tour de Houston. Leaving from City Hall, bicyclists ride through Houston on a 70-mile route at 7am, a 40-mile route at 7:30am, or a 20-mile route at 8am. Benefits Houston Parks and Recreation Department. Register by March 18, 11:59pm at bbvacompasstourdehouston.com • 832/393-0868.

March 26–28 (Fri.–Sun.)

Comicpalooza features Jason Neulander and Tim Doyle signing *The Intergalactic Nemesis* comic book. George R. Brown Convention Center, 1001 Avenida de las Americas • comicpalooza.com. (See page 50 for details.)

March 27 (Sat.)

Style Show and Luncheon benefits Pi Beta Phi Houston Alumnae Club's literacy philanthropies. 11am. Hotel InterContinental Houston, 2222 West Loop South • tammycjenkins@comcast.net.

Daily (Mon.–Fri.)

HIV Testing. Free HIV testing, with no Gold Card or donation required or requested. 9am–1pm. HCHD Thomas Street Clinic, 2015 Thomas St. • 713/873-4157 • 713/873-4026.

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HIV Testing. Legacy Community Health Services offers free, confidential, rapid HIV testing using the OraQuick-Advance collection method with results available within 20 minutes. • *MONDAYS:* All Star News and Video Emporium, 3415 Katy Frwy & Studewood, 4-8pm; George Sports Bar, 617 Fairview, 6-10pm. • *TUESDAYS:* 611 Hyde Park Pub, 611 Hyde Park, 4-8pm; Midtown Spa, 3100 Fannin, 4-8pm. • *WEDNESDAYS:* Club Houston, 2205 Fannin, 8pm-12am; EJ's, 2517 Ralph, 10pm-1am. • *FRIDAYS:* Midtown Spa, 3100 Fannin, 5-9pm; EJ's, 2517 Ralph, 10pm-1am. • Free, confidential syphilis testing is also offered. HIV and syphilis testing is offered at 215 Westheimer, Monday–Thursday, 11am–7pm, and Friday, 11am–5pm. 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. 10:15am. First Unitarian Universalist Church's Sojourner Truth Room, 5200 Fannin St. • 713/529-8571.

Weekly (Mondays)

TG Support Group. Helping TransGenders Anonymous is a facilitated support group for all transgenders, supporters, family, and significant others. 7–9pm. Haven Center, 1827 W. Alabama • transhouston.com • 713/520-8586.

Gay Dads' Support Group. Helping gay men who are or were previously married to a woman and who had children within that relationship. 7:30–9pm. Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, 1440 Harold, room 230 • fathersfirstofhouston.com.

Weekly (Thursdays)

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

Weekly (Sun., Wed., Sat.)

Love and Rackets. Houston Tennis Club welcomes players and enthusiasts of all skill levels. Sundays, 9am–noon; Wednesdays, 7:30–9pm; clinics, every Saturday 9–10:30am. 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 L.L.P. 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.

Monthly (1st Sat.)

First Saturday Arts Market. Local artists display and sell original works of art, and local musicians entertain. Free. 11am–6pm. Wind Water Gallery, 548 W. 19th • 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. 1–6pm. 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. 2pm. 1034 West 17th.

Monthly (2nd Tues.)

Community Center Dinner Night, presented by Houston GLBT Community Center. Participants pay for their own meals. 6:30pm. W. Gray Café, 415 W. Gray St. • houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org • 713/524-3818.

Monthly (3rd Wed.)

Bingo with the Divas, hosted by An' Marie Gill & Jessica Van Shelton. 8–10pm. Benefits Bering Omega Foundation. Tony's Corner Pocket, 817 W. Dallas St.

Monthly (4th Sun.)

Share with the Clear Lake satellite of PFLAG Houston in a safe, confidential setting. 2–4pm. Bay Area Unitarian Universalist Church Fellowship Hall, 17503 El Camino Real, Clear Lake • pflaghouston.org

Monthly (4th Wed.)

Lesbian Dinner Group. Single and coupled women come for a meal but stay for the camaraderie. 7:30pm. Cafe Express, 1422 W. Gray St. • lesbian.dinner.group@gmail.com.

Monthly (3rd Thurs.)

Share with PFLAG Houston in a safe, confidential setting. 7:30pm. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church's Chatham Room, 1805 Alabama St. • pflaghouston.org. ■

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Krewe of Olympus's Red Explosion 2010, 12th Night Party January 9









Cabaret for the Cure 2010 at Legacy Community Health Services January 15








Bunnies on the Bayou, SnowBunnies Kickoff January 17








New Blood *continued from page 41*

"The GLBT community tends to be gypsies, so if you don't have that address correction element in the list, the list deteriorates," Hill says. "It's now two years out of date, so as much as 20 percent of the list [is useless]."

The board has denied funding for mail-outs that would facilitate address corrections—a project that Banks wants to do some other way. "I can't talk about it now because I need to put it before the board," he says, "but we're looking at doing that a new way."

These kinds of things have some members feeling disheartened, and even stymied. Banks is aware of the criticism and admits his ways are different from those of some past presidents. Nevertheless, he maintains his passion for the group.

"Maybe they don't know me very well, and maybe they're not interested in knowing me that well, but the people who have seen me work know where my heart is," Banks says. "I just have to keep doing what needs to be done."

Hill sees this current discord as merely a bump in the road that, so far, has led to success. Electing a gay mayor in Houston was simply a dream when the caucus formed 35 years ago, he says, adding that he regrets how the caucus leadership has alienated some long-time members in the process.

"We tend to get overly personal, and that may be off-putting to some, but I think that we're justified in making it personal because [it has resulted in real progress]," Hill says. "That has not happened by accident; that happened [because of the tireless efforts] of a relatively small group of people, and I am proud to have been one of those people."

Josef Molnar wrote about the Lawrence v. Texas *case in the March 2003 issue of* OutSmart.

your gay agenda

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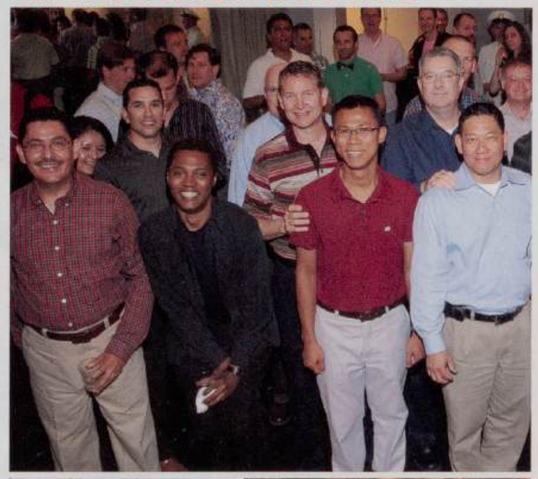
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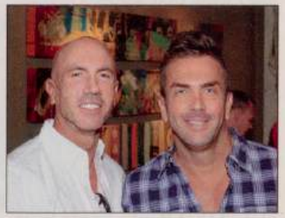
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Photos by Dalton DeHart

BCBC Underwriters Party at John Palmer Art January 17





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continued from page 14

NATIONAL ACTIVISTS LAUD MILITARY LEADERS' RECOMMENDATION TO REPEAL 'DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL'

IN EARLY FEBRUARY, THE EFFORT TO REPEAL the Don't Ask, Don't Tell law, which discriminates against gay and lesbian military personnel, received endorsement from General Colin Powell, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Gen. Powell's announcement of his support for repealing the law concurs with current Joint Chiefs chairman Admiral Mike Mullen. On February 2, Admiral Mullen became the first Joint Chiefs chairman to support the repeal since Don't Ask, Don't Tell became law back in 1993.

Gen. Powell supported Don't Ask, Don't Tell passage back in 1993, but "attitudes and circumstances have changed," Gen. Powell stated, explaining his reversal on the policy. "The principal issue has always been the effectiveness of the Armed Forces, and order and discipline in the ranks."

Following Gen. Powell's announcement, Human Rights Campaign president Joe Solmonese pointed out that opposing repeal now means second-guessing some of the nation's top military leaders.

"I want to ask the senators and members who are speaking out against this repeal—what do you know about military effectiveness that General Powell, Secretary Gates, Admiral Mullen, and the Commander in Chief don't know? The truth is that there are no more excuses. The death knell for Don't Ask, Don't Tell has been rung, and now is the moment to send this law into the history books where it belongs."

Gen. Powell's announcement came within days of President Barack Obama's 2010 State of the Union address, in which the president stated: "This year, I will work with Congress and our military to finally repeal the law that denies gay Americans the right to serve the country they love because of who they are."

"We strongly applaud Sec. Gates supporting the president's view that DADT needs to go. It's a matter of when and how, not if," said Aubrey Sarvis, Servicemembers Legal Defense Network's executive director. "We also strongly applaud Chairman Mullen, who unambiguously personally supported gays and lesbians serving openly. The top military brass of the United States just laid out a roadmap for full repeal." ■

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Business News

by Nancy Ford

Building on the Ballet. On March 10 at 11 a.m., Houston Ballet will hold a topping-off ceremony for its new $53 million Center for Dance, currently under construction at 601 Preston Street. A 20-foot steel beam will be placed on the west side of the 115,000 square-foot, six-story building, eight months after breaking ground in July 2009. Doubling the space of its current home at 1916 W. Gray, the ballet's six-story building is designed to house nine dance studios, a black-box dance laboratory



ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF GENSLER

Houston Ballet's new home on Preston Street will open in the spring of 2011.

that seats 200, and artistic, administrative, and support facilities for Houston Ballet and its Ben Stevenson Academy. Set to open in spring 2011, the new structure will be the largest professional dance company facility of its kind constructed in the United States. houstonballet.org.

On the Gay Web. In an effort to attract more gay travelers to Houston, the Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau, with the help of Houston's LGBT community, has launched a new website, mygayhouston.com. The decision to launch the site was made after research of the LGBT market by the U.S. Travel Association found that 85 percent of the LGBT community takes annual vacations, compared with a national average of 64 percent; LGBT travelers spend between $1500 and $3499 per person per vacation; and LGBT travelers spend $54 billion annually, about 10 percent of the total market.

my gay **HOUSTON**

The site profiles local LGBT residents and some of their favorite things to do in Houston, featuring LGBT events and attractions, restaurants, and bars that welcome gay travelers. mygayhouston.com.

Legacy Expands to Gulfton Area. In early February, CHRISTUS Health transferred ownership of the CHRISTUS Medical Group–Southwest Community Health Center to Legacy Community Health Services, allowing Legacy to increase its current health-care services and provide more people with more services. Legacy's Southwest Clinic, as it will be called, pledges to provide a high level of quality, compassionate health-care services to members of all income levels in the Gulfton neighborhood and surrounding areas of Southwest Houston. legacycommunityhealth.org. ■

Community

continued from page 14

STORIES FROM THE STREETS

What's it like to live on the streets? To be really down and out with nowhere to go? Hopefully, most of us will never know. But before we can solve the problem of poverty and homelessness, we need to understand how people get to that point, and how they are sometimes able to get out.

That's why journalist Ann Walton Sieber (a former *OutSmart* editor) and award-winning photographer Ben Tecumseh DeSoto created the Understanding Poverty Project, documenting in text and photos the lives of Houston's homeless.

"We did a show at DiverseWorks in 2008," Sieber says. "It was supposed to open when Ike hit, so it was delayed. But when people finally came out and saw it, they responded."

But Sieber and DeSoto didn't want to just have an art show. They wanted people to actually meet those whose stories they told.



BEN TECUMSEH DESOTO FOR UPP

Scot More (r) went from being homeless to being the Community Services director at the Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County. Here he works with a colleague on the annual homeless census count.



BEN TECUMSEH DESOTO FOR UPP

Joseph Benson is a leader in the homeless consumer movement in Houston and in the U.S. Benson will be speaking on the March 16 panel, and moderating the March 19 panel. Here he is pictured speaking at the SEARCH sleep-out in November 2009.

"Being able to look a homeless person in the eye and see them as a real person and not turn away," she says, "is what I hope people will take away from this new *Sharing Our Stories* panel."

One of Sieber's stories is about Scot More, a man who lost his relationship, his house, his job, and was HIV-positive.

She recorded More's story for the project: "I spent my 40th birthday eating hot dogs alone. I was at Lord of the Streets [in Midtown], and I remember sitting there thinking, 'My life is over.' You know? I'm 40, I have nothing, I'm in a homeless shelter, I have no job, no money, and these hot dogs suck. And it's my birthday. You know, I was like, 'Oh my God!' Talk about depressing!"

But More found help, and today he is head of community outreach at the Houston Coalition for the Homeless, which is the umbrella organization for all of the homeless agencies in the city.

For the upcoming Understanding Poverty event, *Sharing Our Stories*, More will take part in a panel discussion to share his story and answer questions from the audience.

Another panel member is Joseph Benson, once a well-known chef who wound up losing both legs in a car accident. Pain medication and depression led him to a life on the streets for four years before he found help. Benson, like More, is now an advocate for the homeless and has organized a voter registration drive and pushed for health care for the homeless.

"There's policy and politics," Sieber says, "but when it comes right down to it, people relate to other people." Which is why this event will include not just pictures and text, but real voices telling their tales.

While meeting these people and seeing the photos and written stories may tug at the heartstrings, Sieber hopes people will come away from *Sharing Our Stories* with more than feelings. Maybe they will take action.

As Sieber says, small changes can do much. But as for the big picture on homelessness in our country: "Ending it?" she muses, "I don't know, but let's at least cut it down." —*Marene Gustin*

Understanding Poverty Project's Sharing Our Stories*: an evening of stories from folks who have been homeless and their allies—Tuesday, March 16, 7 p.m., at Live Oak Friends Meeting House, 1318 West 26th Street; and Friday, March 19, 7:30 p.m., at Houston Institute for Culture, 708 Telephone Road.* ■

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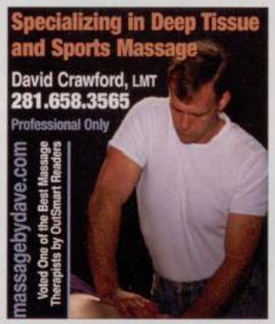
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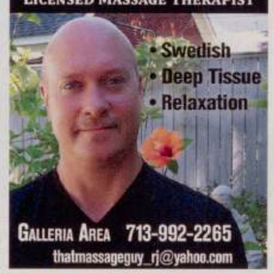


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BAR & CLUB GUIDE

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 Menil-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
Connected to G Spot and the adjacent New Barn, Chances provides lesbians and those who love them with three separate clubs to satisfy their dance and live music needs. 1100 Westheimer • chancesbar.com • 713/523-7217.

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 nightspot 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 • ejsbar.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 • 713/589-9780.

BEHIND THE BAR

WHO: Brad Bond

WHERE: EJ's • 2517 Ralph St. 713/527-9071 • ejsbar.com

WHAT'S UP: Fans of al fresco cocktailing flock to EJ's expansive patio as spring finally begins to thaw in Montrose.



NANCY FORD

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.

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.

PABLO'S BAR & GRILL
Formerly known as the Pasadena Sky Bar, this LGBT-friendly venue located on the eighth floor of the Camden Plaza Hotel boasts a brand-new dance floor and resident DJ. 114 Richey St. in Pasadena • pasadenaskybar.com • 832/884-7276.

PRAVADA
This chic, predominantly straight club goes lesbian each Wednesday with Skirt Productions' Kiss La Femme, featuring go-go dancers and DJ Joy De La O. 2815 Shepherd • clubpravada.com • 713/533-1200.

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.

THE RIPCORD
This well-kept, multi-roomed, leather bar for men and their friends boasts a busy patio, especially on the weekends. The Black Hawk Leather shop is located inside the club, providing BDSM essentials. 715 Fairview Ave. • theripcord.com • 713/521-2792.

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-SOBE • southbeachthenightclub.com.

TC'S
New owners, Tim and Corey, have revamped the deep-Montrose neighborhood bar, erasing any hint of its former occupant, Cousin's. Numerous flat-screen televisions and day-long drink specials highlight the updated décor. 817 Fairview • 713/526-2625.

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. 24704I-145N, Suite 103. 281/298-9035 • www.ranchhill.com • myspace.com/ranchhillsaloon.

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 Recession 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
This friendly club, a favorite with the BOIs (born-on-islanders), has expanded to more than 5,000 square feet in its new downtown location, offering a limited lunch menu and "champagne room" for private parties. 1828 Strand St. • myspace.com/pinkdolphinbar • 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 • halobcs.com. ■

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SignOut

by Lilly Roddy

Finally, after several months of retrograde, Mars, the planet of action and decision, goes direct on the 15th. This is the time to put those new ideas and projects into action. You have until April 15, when Mercury goes retrograde, to put your plans into action. Don't delay. • April is an especially busy month, with lots of changing plans and directions. Be prepared to shift your agenda or goal to fit the current energies. People are feeling pressured to make decisions in their lives. This is a time for action—but remember, the choice to act is yours. And don't feel pressured to make a choice if you are not ready. • The New Moon on the 15th in Pisces gives you time for inner reflection. What is your inner and true agenda? At the Full Moon, on the 29th in Libra, it will be time to share those inner views with someone significant in your life. You will need someone who will be an honest mirror for you. • The Sun enters the sign of Aries, the Vernal Equinox, on the morning of the 20th. Mercury is moving along, starting the month in Pisces and then entering Aries on the 17th. Venus is floating through Pisces until she enters Aries, the warm inspiration, on the 7th. On the very last day of the month, Venus slips into her own sign of Taurus on the 31st. Mars is building up his speed in Leo. Jupiter remains in Pisces, Saturn in Libra, Uranus in Pisces, Neptune in Aquarius, and Pluto in Capricorn.

ARIES (March 21–April 19). This is such a nice month for you to take some time for rest and retreat before your very busy summer arrives. It is normal for you to be more sensitive than usual and to need more time to yourself. A nice time for yoga, tai chi, dance, or any movement classes. You have been on a treadmill for awhile, and you just need a break. By the latter part of the month, you will feel that familiar call to focus on setting long-term goals while cleaning out things from your past that you no longer need. This could be fairly intense on the 24th and 25th. Try to maintain a perspective.

TAURUS (April 20–May 20). This is your month to join into social networking. You are ready to connect with old friends and make new ones. From a business point of view, this is a great month for marketing yourself or your wares. You are not so settled at home. There continue to be ripples from the effects of last month's old wounds being reopened. The healing begins after the 15th. By the end of the month, you are ready for some recuperation time. Be sure that you limit your activity level and choose to only be around people that you feel safe with. And on the 31st, it's time for new clothes.

GEMINI (May 21–June 21). Your career area is very stimulated this month. You may be bursting at the seams with new ideas and opportunities that are opening up for you. For those of you who want to look for new jobs, this is an excellent month to be looking, especially after the 15th. But most of you can expect some increase in business, possible promotions, and more money for what you do. March is a very social month for you. Social affairs that have a business tone to them are best for you.



ILLUSTRATION: DAVID EDUARDO FLORES PEREZ

PISCES (February 19–March 20). This is your birthday or solar return month. This is a time to consider the past year and begin looking forward to the next one. This is a very positive and growth-oriented time for you. Overall, you are feeling more optimistic about your life, your work, and your relationship. This will help you to get past any problems that might come up. This is a great time to look for a promotion or a new job with great pay, and a very good time for relationships if you are single or involved. School, travel, and taking on big projects are all favored. The good feelings continue for almost two months.

CANCER (June 22–July 22). As the month begins, you have some time to get away from your habits and routines. This is a wonderful month to explore new areas, both physically and mentally. You will be very good at connecting thoughts and concepts together. This could be a good time for writing, traveling, taking or teaching classes, or just reflecting. In the background you can feel that push to get back on track. That influence begins to become unavoidable after the 20th. Time to get back to getting your life in order. You are very focused on the future and how your current choices will affect that future. June and July could be intense for you. Get ready now. Be the ant and not the grasshopper.

LEO (July 23–August 22). I know the Leos have just been wading through molasses for the last couple of months. Everything you do takes so much extra effort. And even with the best of intentions, you still may not have been successful. You may have been feeling angry or repressed in some way. That will all change after the 15th. Get your agenda in order because you are going to be energized and ready for some personal challenges of your choosing. Relationships could be an obvious outlet for this energy. If you are single, this would put you out there on the hunt. If you are in a relationship, you need some new fun adventure. In business, your tolerance could be very low and you may need to watch what you say.

VIRGO (August 23–September 22). This is an excellent month for relationships. You are feeling optimistic about the one you are in, or you feel certain that you are going to meet someone this year—and you certainly might. You want to be free of any old relationship restrictions that you placed on yourself in the past. This could be a great time to start a business partnership. People are ready to get involved. It's a great time to look for work or any sort of self-promotion. At the very least, it's a good social month.

LIBRA (September 23–October 23). Your overall theme is being dictated by Saturn in your sign for the next couple of years. Saturn is all about being more mature and expecting others to act the same way, taking life seriously, expecting others to be polite in all dealings, and eliminating those who don't heed your boundaries. This month the spotlight shines on the work and health arenas of your life. You are attempting to get the people you work with to get along better. You will be more heavy-handed than many will expect. Pay more attention to your exercise and eating habits. They need some updating.

SCORPIO (October 24–November 21). For the last couple of months, your career efforts were going in reverse. You may have been under some scrutiny from bosses or clients. You had the sense that you were ready to move forward, but you couldn't avoid having to address issues from the past. You could do a lot to clear things up this month, particularly after the 15th. There has been a lot of anger in the air, and you felt like you were neglected or passed over. There will be some resolution and even some closure. Some relationships may come to an end as well. You are just tired of their drama.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22–December 21). There is lots of movement for you on the home front. You may be considering moving or remodeling what you have. This is a time to focus on the home and family. There could be lots of growth in your family. People could be having babies, or some of you could have people moving in. When will you come out of this fabulous dream and get back to the real world? Around the month of June, so have a good time. This is a good time to entertain at home.

CAPRICORN (December 22–January 19). This is a good month for you to back off a bit and take time to gain some perspective. You have been pushing yourself harder than you normally do. There is a lot of extra activity in your day-to-day life. You could be overwhelmed with all the details. You certainly should be expressing how you feel. You will be feeling a bit more optimistic, but don't take this as a signal to take on more responsibility. Close to the end of the month, you are ready to get back to reinventing yourself.

AQUARIUS (January 20–February 18). With Mars still in your relationship sector, you are having old hurts from the past continue to come up. This could be about not setting your boundaries early enough in the relationship. This is a time when you are supposed to be more direct and to the point with others around you. You may feel angrier than usual, or that you are not able to control yourself as well. These feelings will help you break through that wall of detachment so you can fight for what's yours. Money, resources, and self-worth are at the bottom of this. Pay attention. This is really how you feel.

Read Lilly Roddy's forecast for all of 2010, which appeared in OutSmart*'s January issue. For more astro-insight, log on to lillyroddy.com.*

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OUT IN HOUSTON

Photos by Dalton DeHart



(Front row) **Shelley Smith**, **Linda Reihl**, **Tina Berry**, and (standing) **Ernesto Ramirez**, **Eston Hensley**, and **Mike Reihl** after *Wonderland* at Act OUT at The Alley Theatre, January 28.



Megan Baker, **LaRence Snowden**, **Gigi Huang**, and **Blake Byer** at the HRC table captain gala 2010 kickoff, January 21.



Frank Sosa and **Trini Mendenhall Sosa** recieving the Shannon R. Schrader Humanitarian Award from Dr. **Shannon Schrader** at "Cabaret for the Cure 2010" at LGHS, January 15.



Dee Young, **Jan Wilbur**, **Christina Gorczynski**, **Ann Herbage**, **Nancy Parra**, and **Jerry Fenske** during "Houston Votes", with the Young Professionals and the League of Women Voters, at Café Adobe, January 22.



John Cox, **Brian Hull**, **Vince Flickinger**, **Shane Alderman**, and **Christian Rogers** at "Snowbunnies" 2010, Bunnies on the Bayou kickoff, January 17.



Ernie Manouse and **Riyad Abu Taha** during "Hollywood Night" at Little Napoli Italian Cuisine, January 16 .



Scott Thomison, **Billy Underwood**, **Marc Hill**, and **Dimas Cardoza** at BCBC 2010 underwriters party at John Palmer Art, January 17.



Joel Quinones, **Nick Eronko**, **Shana Ross**, and **Randy Boatright** at their group 50th birthday "Disco Inferno" party, January 23.



Cast of *Miss Saigon* during OUT at TUTS, February 11.



Andrea Roth, **Donna Roth**, **Jim Wrotenbery**, **Phillip McNutt**, and **Natalie Oakes** at Democracy for Houston precinct chair activist training, January 30.

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RuPaul's DRAG RACE

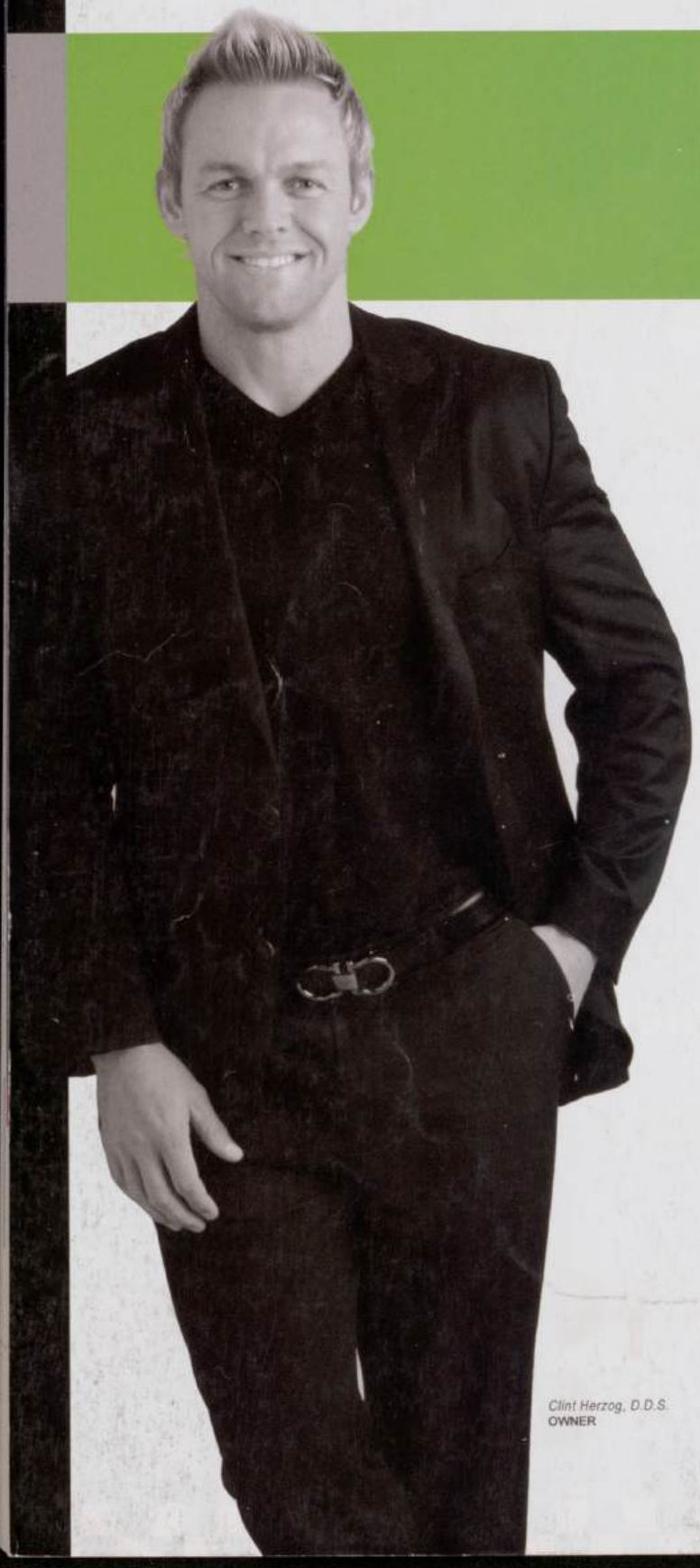
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