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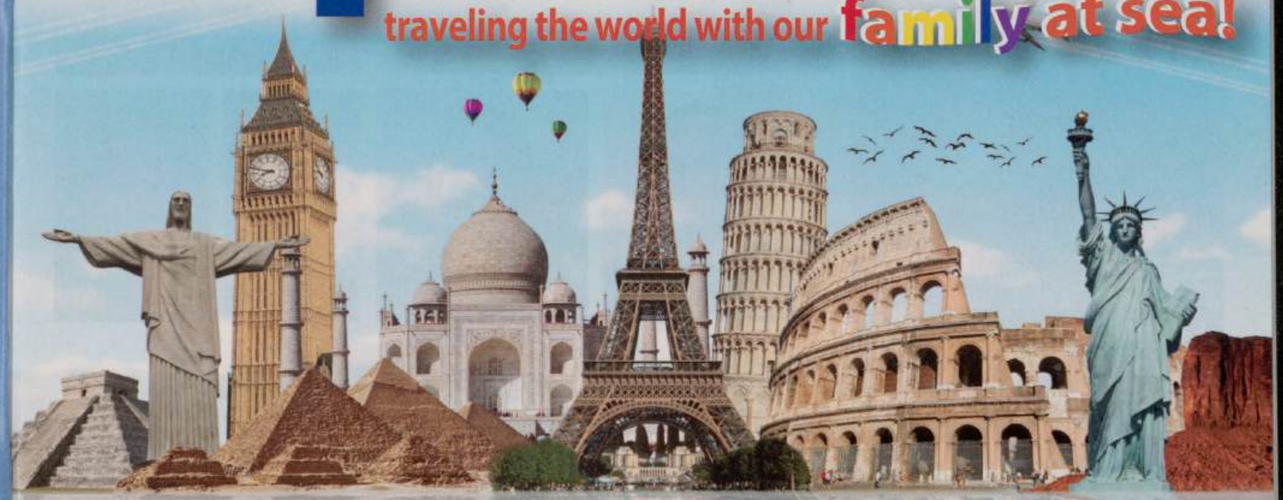
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The Houston couple are dedicated to the city and to one another. See page 47.

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- OUT at TUTS's *Victor/Victoria*, sponsored by OutSmart Magazine
- *The Old Friends* by Horton Foote—ActOUT at the Alley Theatre at U of H
- Tony Carroll Birthday Fundraiser for Harris County Democratic Party
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Special thanks to Donald Harvey, PA-C on 7 years of service with us. Best of luck in your new endeavor!

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Gay Couples Find Hurdles to Getting a Texas Driver's License

Some gay couples have been denied a Texas driver's license after taking their same-sex spouse's last name because the Texas Department of Public Safety won't recognize documents that reflect the change.

DPS won't accept out-of-state marriage licenses or certain other documents to verify applicants' identities. Virtually the only way DPS will issue a driver's license in such cases is to provide a Texas court order approving a name change or a U.S. passport with the new surname, according to *The Dallas Morning News*.

DPS spokesman Tom Vinger said the agency must adhere to a 2005 amendment to the Texas Constitution barring recognition of same-sex marriage. He noted that the regulations provide "other options for establishing identity," such as a court order.

But gay couples say the other options are costly and time-consuming.

Connie Wilson, who recently moved from California to Houston with her wife and three children, said DPS last week rejected her application, although she presented a California driver's license and a Social Security card with her new married name.

"How many hoops are they going to make me jump through?" asked Wilson.

Dallas resident Amanda Barbour, who took partner Heather Rodenborg's last name after they married in Massachusetts, said she knew she couldn't get a replacement driver's license from DPS without first going to court.

But it costs more than $350 to have a name changed in Dallas County, even if done without a lawyer, she said.

Barbour, now Rodenborg, said she shelled out $298 in court fees and between $60 and $70 to obtain the criminal-background and credit-history checks that are required. She said she also paid to park her car during her three trips to the courthouse.

"When you're trying to tally up your costs of your marriage, you don't necessarily think about having to spend $400 to change your name," she said.

The DPS rule also highlights how Texas has resisted a growing acceptance of gay marriage found elsewhere in the country. U.S. District Judge Orlando Garcia in February declared Texas's 2005 law unconstitutional, but it has remained in effect pending appeal.

IOC Adds Antidiscrimination to Host Contract

International Olympic Committee (IOC) President German Thomas Bach, speaking at a press conference after an executive board meeting at the IOC headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland, said that the IOC will require future Olympic host cities to abide by rules that forbid any kind of discrimination, a move prompted by the outcry caused by Russia's adoption of a law banning so-called gay "propaganda" ahead of the 2014 Winter Games in Sochi.

The International Olympic Committee sent a letter to the three candidates for the 2022 Winter Games specifying that the host city contract will include new wording on nondiscrimination.

The language, based on Principle 6 in the Olympic Charter, also includes a specific reference to discrimination based on gender.

continued on page 16

Photos by Dalton DeHart



Bill Baldwin hosted State Representative Mary Ann Perez's re-election campaign reception at his home on September 17. Attendees included Annie's List staffer **Colleen Loper**, **Baldwin**, Annie's List board member **Eileen Olson**, State Representative **Mary Ann Perez**, Planned Parenthood Texas Votes staffer **Yvonne Gutierrez**, and Emily's List staffer **Laura Rose**.



On September 13, Pride Houston presented beneficiary Bunnies on the Bayou with a check for $3,000 from Pride's Wonderland Houston circuit party. Pictured here are **Jason Gallegos**, Pride Houston vice president of operations, **Karen Morry**, Pride Houston board member at large, **Jack Berger**, Bunnies on the Bayou president, **Frankie Quijano**, Pride Houston president & CEO, **Nathan De Paz**, Bunnies on the Bayou vice president, **Paul Pettie**, Pride Houston board member at large, **Cristina E. Martinez**, Pride Houston board member at large, and **Rob Higdon**, Pride Houston CFO.



On September 13, **Brett Cullum**, **Lee Ingalls**, artist **Edgar Medina**, **Bryant Johnson**, **Bob Briddick**, **Gary Wood**, and **Tim Stokes** unveiled the painting that will be auctioned at the Outreach United Coming Out Party to be held on October 10.

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Community Mourns the Passing of John Danielson

John A. Danielson III passed away unexpectedly at his home on Saturday, September 13. Danielson was born September 5, 1959, in Waterville, Washington, where he also received his high school diploma. He then went on to receive his accounting degree from Eastern Washington University. Though he resided in Houston for over 30 years, he often returned home to Waterville to help with the family farm and spend time with his mother. Danielson was employed by TransCanada, which recently honored him for 25 years of service.



DALTON DEHART

John A. Danielson III passed away unexpectedly at his home on Saturday, September 13.

His father, John A. Danielson Jr.; his mother, Lillian Grace Lenderman; his brother, Jerry Danielson; and his beloved pets, Ginger, Buckles, and Rio, preceded John in death. His loving partner, Brian R. Flores; his siblings, Jim Danielson and Melanie Danielson-Hayes; brother-in-law, Marc Hayes; as well as several nieces and nephews survive John.

John was an extremely gracious host who opened his heart and home on Burlington Street to many community nonprofits over the years. He was a volunteer, officer, or board member of over 30 organizations, including AIDS Walk Houston, Bunnies on the Bayou, The Diana Foundation, EPAH, Kindred Spirits, Krewe of Olympus, Legacy Community Health Services, The Montrose Center, Pride Houston, and the Westmoreland Civic Association, among many others. He always had a smile on his face as large as the generosity he provided to those around him. Many in Houston will sorely miss him.

A memorial service was held for John on September 27 at the Bradshaw-Carter Funeral Home.

In lieu of customary remembrances, Flores has asked that contributions be made to the John A. Danielson III Memorial Foundation to benefit the Houston organizations that he cared so much about.

News *continued from page 14*

The new clause—seen by The Associated Press—requires the host city and national Olympic committee to "conduct all activities in a manner which promotes and enhances the fundamental principles and values of Olympism, in particular the prohibition of any form of discrimination with regard to a country or a person on grounds of race, religion, politics, gender or otherwise, as well as the development of the Olympic Movement."

The inclusion of the new language follows the global controversy that surrounded the buildup to the Sochi Games after Russia passed a law prohibiting gay "propaganda" to minors. The law was passed in the year before the games and led to international protests by gay and human rights groups.

International gay rights groups All Out and Athlete Ally were among those pushing the IOC to add the language to the host contract.

"This . . . sends a clear message to future host cities that human rights violations, including those against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, will not be tolerated," said Andre Banks, co-founder and executive director of All Out. "We will continue working to make sure this change is powerfully enforced. These new rules must prevent a replay of Sochi."

All Out is also urging the IOC to amend Principle 6 to specifically prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or identity.

The three finalists in the bidding for the 2022 Games are Almaty, Kazakhstan; Beijing; and Oslo, Norway. The Oslo bid, facing significant political and public opposition in Norway, remains in limbo and could still drop out. The IOC will select the host city next July 31 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. ■

Community

Photos by Dalton DeHart



Violet S' Arbleu, **Kory Poole**, **Titanica Da Barge**, and **Carl Han** danced the night away at the Virgin Debut Rave, held at Super Happy Fun Land on September 20. The event benefitted Stonewall Culture, a new organization that supports local LGBT art and charities by providing tools to maximize their fundraising dollars.



On September 21, the Rothko Chapel, in partnership with Edge of Arabia and Art Jameel, held a discussion and celebration in honor of the International Day of Peace. Back row: **Sarah Abu Abdallah**, **Ava Ansari**, **Kate Busby**, and **Taysir Batniji;** front row: **Fred Baldwin**, **Dina Al-Sowayel**, **Wendy Watriss**, and **Stephen Stapleton**.



Texas State Representative **Celia Israel** (center) at the home of **Blake Ellis** (l) and **Shaun Nelson** for her fundraiser on September 10.



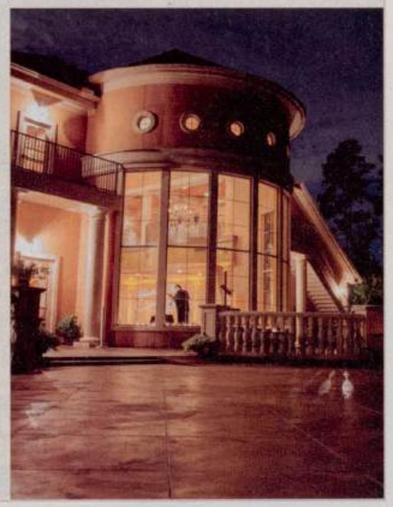
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by Susan Bankston

The Man Doth Protest Too Much

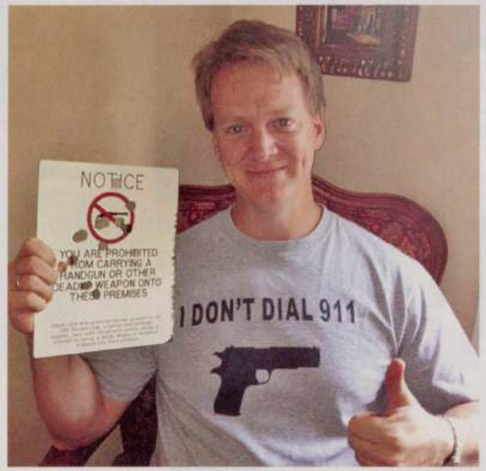
Is Patrick Johnston the president of The Royal Homophobes for No Damn Fun?

I suspect it's pretty boring in Ohio. I say that because it appears that they've had to resort to making their own fun.

In Ohio, Patrick Johnston is an anti-choice leader. I suspect he's also been elected president of The Royal Order of Homophobes for No Damn Fun in Ohio. He is so narrow-minded that his ears rub together.

Johnston's church has been protesting at a local topless bar for years, so of course he's just all atither about boobs, ta-tas, and hooters. (Personally, I think they are just trying to get a free peek.)

One Sunday last month, just for the helluvit, the topless dancers returned the favor and protested at his church—topless.



Patrick Johnston posted this photo on his Facebook page with this caption: "When I bought my office building from the hospital, I was able to have some fun with the dumb sign they had on the front door. This target fell victim to my 9mm Kahr with a 3-in. barrel."

Was he outraged? Is a frog waterproof?

I have a theory that outrage is a substitute for foreplay among right-wing folks. No, seriously—think about it. They quiver when they're trying to stop all the rest of us from doing what normal people do to quiver.

Anyway, Johnston wants to stop all this public nudity in Ohio. To me—and I only speak for myself here and not the entire staff of The World's Most Dangerous Beauty Salon, Inc., because some of them disagree with me—the problem with Ohio is that there is not nearly enough public nudity.

Verdelia disagrees. "It would take more than a few nekkid folks to get me to vacation in Ohio," she says. "Maybe nekkid people giving away 50-dollar bills," she ponders out loud. "Nope," she decides, "not good enough."

But Patrick Johnston wants to outlaw nakedness in Ohio, because decent citizens have no idea the problems that naked is causing in that state. And do you know who is causing this naked invasion?

The gays. They're causing all of this toplessness.

Patrick explains: "The gay pride parade in Columbus is 500,000 strong. Why? Because the women go topless," he insisted on Facebook. "This is the only [parade] where I've seen this level of nudity. San Francisco, Chicago, Washington DC—I have never seen the kind of public lewdness I have seen in Columbus, Ohio."

Okay, just a thought here. He does understand, doesn't he, what *gay* means, right? I mean, the only thing my gay friends say about boobs is, "Get those things outta the way, so I can see the guy in the Speedo behind you."

Just a second thought here. How many Pride parades did Johnston have to attend to come up with this scientific measurement of cross-country lewdness? Is it an official position, you know, like National Pride Parade Attender? Buck Pochek, the head honcho over at The Good Folks at Buck Pochek's Rural Entertainment Promoters and General Purpose Feed Store, says he'd like to apply for that job when nekkid season opens again. He wants to publish *Naked: The Coloring Book*. There's a bestseller, for sure.

Johnston goes on. "I am sick that women can legally bare their breasts to children and to married men against their will in Ohio," he says.

Honey, when boobs are outlawed, only outlaws will have boobs.

Boobs don't flash people. People flash people.

Hell, in Texas we let our boobs live in the governor's mansion.

And speaking of the Texas governor's mansion, this is the last time we'll get to chat before early voting starts on Monday, October 20. I want you to start thinking of voting as a way to thumb your nose at the sumbitches.

I know you're going to vote for Wendy Davis, Leticia Van De Putte, and all the statewide Democrats, but for the love of all that is semi-sacred, do not forget those other candidates further down the ballot. They are your local candidates, and they can make your life miserable or better.

In Harris County, don't forget to vote for Steven Kirkland as judge for the 113th District Court, Kim Ogg for District Attorney, and my friend Melissa Noriega for the Harris County Department of Education Trustee, Position 7.

Also, please take the time to find Kyle Carter on your ballot. He's running for the 14th Court of Appeals. Vote for him. It's important.

In Fort Bend County, vote for Wilvin Carter for District Attorney. Oh please, gimme a break—the guy he's running against had his pilot light go out and has been just a source of escaping gas for years.

This election, truth be told, you cannot make a mistake if you vote a straight Democratic ticket.

Susan Bankston lives in Richmond, Texas, where she writes about her hairdresser at The World's Most Dangerous Beauty Salon, Inc., at juanitajean.com.

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by
Grace S.
Yung, CFP

Identity Theft

What losing your identity can really *cost*

Over the past several years, identity theft has affected millions of people in the U.S. and around the world. Last December alone, a security breach at Target stores exposed credit card information and personal data of more than 110 million people—and it appears to have started with an e-mail "phishing" scheme. More recently, Home Depot has been added to the list of major retailers that have been targeted in a string of hacking attacks by criminals who are seeking customers' payment information.

Identity theft can happen to anyone, and an identity thief who gains access to your personal information can do a number of things that are extremely damaging and costly, such as:

- Draining your bank account(s)
- Running up charges on your credit cards
- Opening up new accounts for utilities and cell phones
- Obtaining medical treatment on your health insurance.

If you and a partner share bank accounts, investment accounts, and other jointly held items, having your identity stolen could create twice the trouble, as both individuals may be at risk.



Signs of Identity Theft

Even if your accounts don't show signs of tampering, it's still imperative that you take action if you've had your purse or wallet stolen, for example—or even if you suspect that someone has obtained your personal or financial information. You and your partner should each contact the credit reporting companies immediately and place a fraud alert on your credit files.

In addition, it's a good idea to regularly check your bank and investment account statements for any type of unusual activity. Today, with most banks and brokerage firms allowing online account access, this is something that you can accomplish relatively easily since you can typically check your balances 24/7.

You should also order a copy of your credit report regularly in order to keep an eye on all of your accounts. This includes loans, credit cards, and other financial activity. All consumers are legally allowed to obtain one free copy of their credit report each year by going to annualcreditreport.com. Here, you will be able to view your information from all three of the big credit reporting agencies—Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion.

It's a good idea to view all three reports, as not all companies and lenders report financial information to all three of the credit bureaus—so you may find some significant differences. Look for any type of unusual activity on your credit report, and contact the credit bureau immediately if you find any.

In addition to unusual activity on your credit report, there are other signs that may indicate your identity has been stolen. Some examples include:

- Finding unfamiliar withdrawals on your bank statement
- Merchants refusing to take your checks
- Debt collectors calling about debts that you did not incur
- A health insurance plan disputing a payment because your medical records show a condition that you don't have
- Medical providers billing you for services or supplies that you did not use
- The IRS notifying you that more than one tax return was filed in your name.

Your identity or personal information may also have been compromised if you *don't* get your bills or other mail. This could mean that identity thieves are intercepting these items in order to use account information.

Keeping Your Information Safe

One of the best ways to avoid becoming a victim of identity theft is to keep your personal and financial information safe. There are a number of ways to do this, both in online and offline situations. →

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 continued from page 20

Online

When on the computer, there are several important "rules" that should be followed to keep your information as secure as possible. This is especially important if both you and your partner share the same computer, as it may contain sensitive personal and financial information about both of you. These include:

- **Install security software.** Making use of anti-virus and anti-spyware are two of the best ways that you can protect your computer. Doing so can protect your important files and online passwords for bank accounts, investment accounts, and other important areas.
- **Don't open suspicious e-mails.** It should go without saying that any e-mail that says you've won millions of dollars in a foreign lottery is a scam—especially if it asks you to provide your bank account number so that you can receive "payment." The number-one lesson here: don't open these e-mails!
- **Be smart about WiFi.** When using the WiFi signal in a public location, it is important to be careful about sending any type of personal or sensitive financial information. Remember here that even if you are visiting an encrypted website via a public WiFi network, only the information that you send to and from that website is protected. If, however, you are connecting to the Internet through a secure wireless network, then all of the information that you are sending over that network should be protected.
- **Don't share passwords.** Regardless of whether you're working in a public place or in the privacy of your home or office, sharing your password should be off limits. This not only goes for computer-related information, but also the password for your ATM card and other items that could lead criminals to your personal and/or financial data.

Offline

When you're out in the "real" world, there are also ways to protect your information from identity theft. For example, whenever you're disposing of anything that contains your personal information on it, you need to be very sure that you have destroyed, shredded, or removed any access to it.

This means that prior to getting rid of an old computer, don't just hit the DELETE button to remove old files. You also need to use a "wipe" utility program to overwrite the entire hard drive. You should follow a similar procedure when discarding cell phones or other mobile devices.

You should also carefully guard your Social Security number—and if someone does happen to ask you for it, be sure that you ask why it is needed, how it will be used, and how it will be protected.

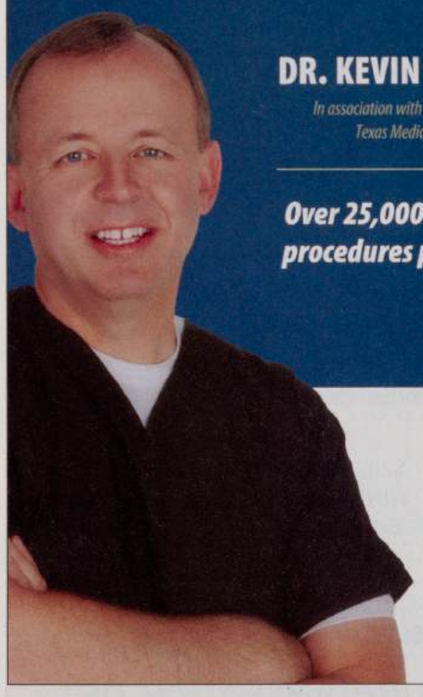
Additional Considerations

There are other ways to protect yourself, too. Services such as LifeLock help to safeguard your financial and personal information. When you sign up with these companies, they will actively monitor for potential threats by looking out for unusual credit card transactions, bank activity, and entries on your credit report.

If a threat is detected, you will be alerted via phone, text, or e-mail so that you can quickly put a stop to any additional transactions, and take any further action that may be needed. While the cost of these programs can vary, a basic plan costs approximately $10 per month. But considering that, on average, those whose personal information is misused can lose an average of more than $9,600, the price is well worth it.

Personal finance-related questions may be e-mailed to grace.yung@lpl.com

Grace S. Yung, CFP, is a certified financial planner practitioner with experience in helping domestic partners plan their finances since 1994. She is a principal at Midtown Financial LLC in Houston and was recognized as a "Five-Star Wealth Manager" in the 2014 September issue of Texas Monthly.



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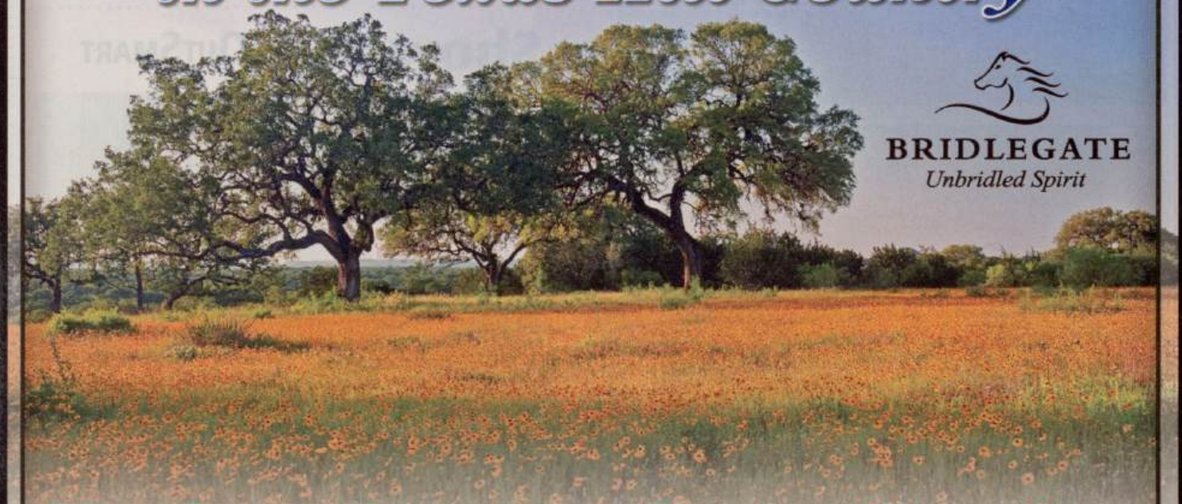
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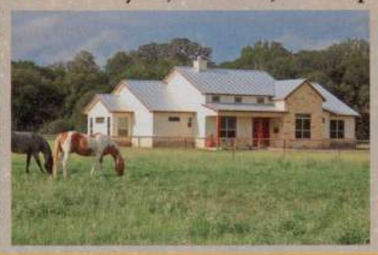
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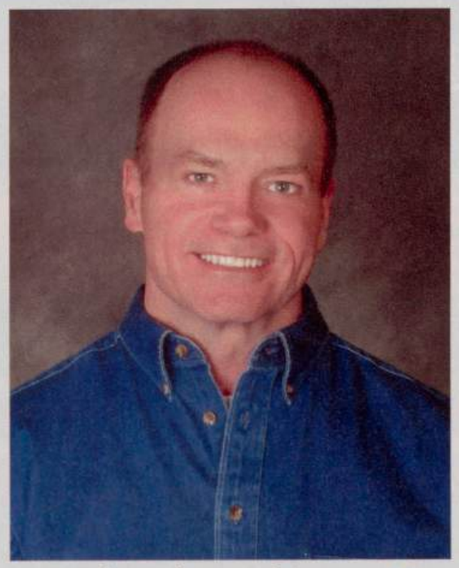
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On Thursday, September 11, Edward Guerrero and David Bolkovac were wed at City Hall in San Francisco. With rings, the latest edition of OutSmart, and the rainbow flag in hand (the same flag carried by David in the March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay, and Bi Equal Rights and Liberation that took place in Washington DC on April 25, 1993), they tied the knot. Pictured on the steps of City Hall are (l–r) **Casaundra Aguilar** of Alvin, Texas, **Nancy Wolf** of Los Angeles, California., grooms **David Bolkovac** and **Edward Guerrero** with **Jared Walters** of New York City.

GOING OUT OF TOWN?
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For Your Calendar

PROUD SPONSOR Out▾Smart HOUSTON'S LGBT MAGAZINE

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

October 8–11: Houston's High School for the Performing and Visual Arts (HSPVA) presents ***The Sound of Music***.
INFO: onstagehspva.org

October 11: Coming Out Party, presented by OutReach United, features Tasha Kohl and benefits local charities.
INFO: outreachunited.org

October 16: Houston Area Community Services, Inc. (HACS) A wine-tasting fund-raiser at Kolanowski Studio.
INFO: hacstxs.org

October 18: Afternoon of Escapism, benefitting the League of Women Voters Education Fund, at John Palmer Art Gallery & Studio.
INFO: johnpalmerstore.com

October 25: Houston Pride Band presents ***Houston Pride Band Bares All*** at Resurrection MCC, 2025 W. 11th Street, 3 p.m.
INFO: houstonprideband.org

SAVE THE DATE
November 1: Lesbian Health Initiative Fall 2014 offering complimentary lifesaving tests and services. INFO: lhihouston.org

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Alessio Bax
Photo Credit: Lisa-Marie Mazzucco

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October 2014

On behalf of everyone at Bud Light and Silver Eagle Distributors, I would like to thank the readers of OutSmart Magazine for once again recognizing our role and partnership in the LGBT community. Bud Light is honored to be selected as FAVORITE BEER among OutSmart readers for the eighth year in a row. We also greatly appreciate the distinction of MOST SUPPORTIVE LOCAL COMPANY of the Houston LGBT community for the fifth year in a row, and are happy to share this honor with our Anheuser-Busch family, who was recognized as the MOST SUPPORTIVE NATIONAL COMPANY.

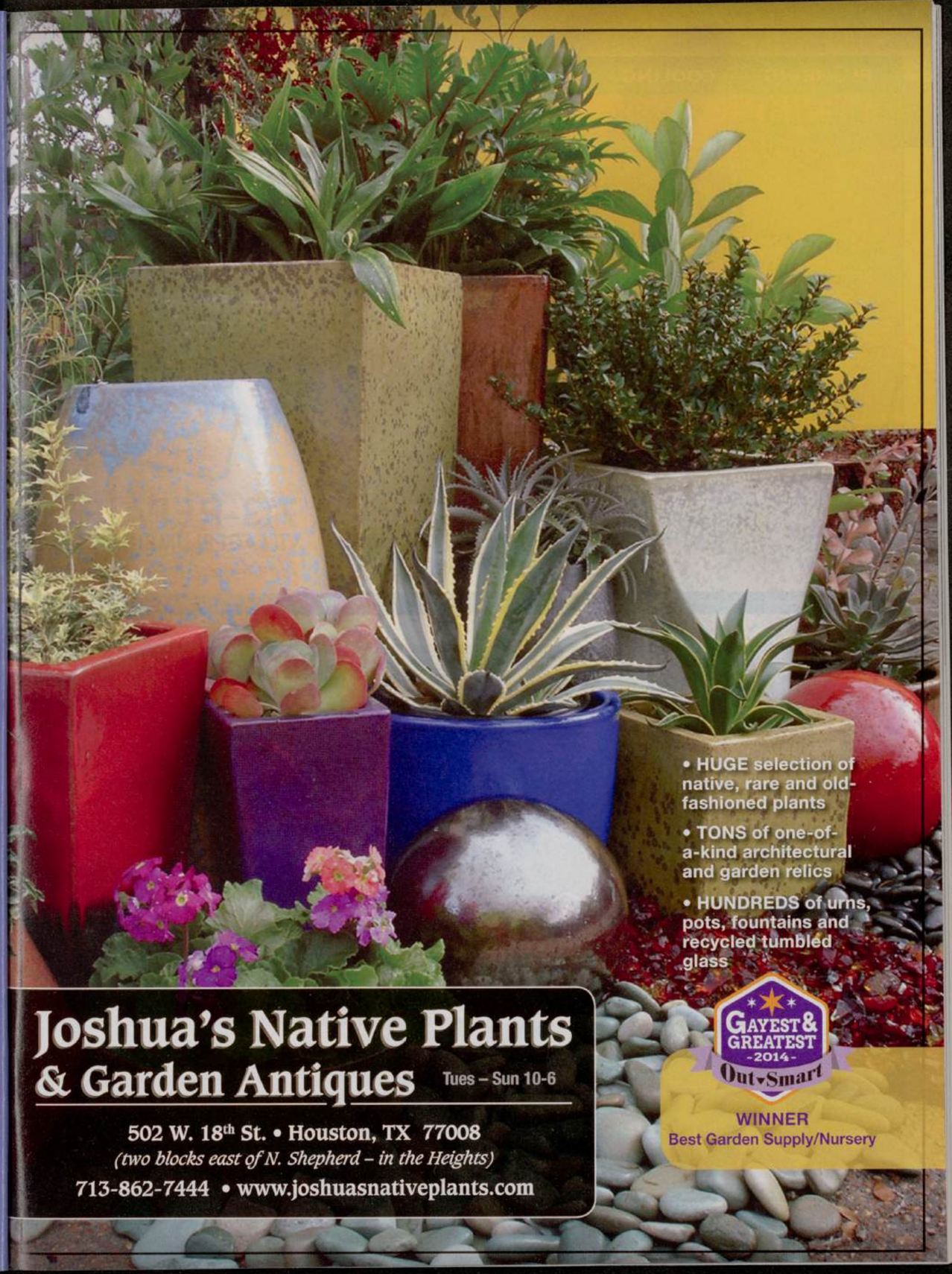
As the largest Anheuser-Busch wholesaler in the U.S., Silver Eagle Distributors is proud to call Houston home, and enjoys supporting the city in various ways throughout the year. This commitment is evident in the LGBT community through the variety of events and non-profit organizations we support, including Pride Houston, The Montrose Center, Bunnies on the Bayou, The Montrose Softball League, and many others. We greatly enjoy supporting these events each year and also thank each of you for enjoying our products in a safe and responsible manner when celebrating.

Our heartfelt thanks again, for recognizing us with these great distinctions. We look forward to another great year of continued participation in the many activities of the LGBT community. Cheers to the readers of OutSmart magazine!

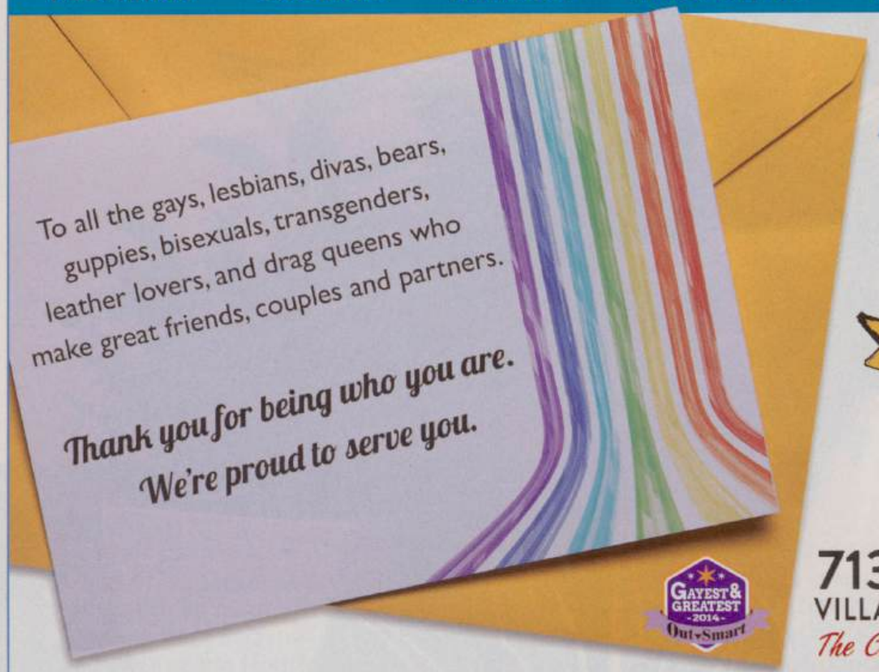
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30th Anniversary Alaska Cruise - *Holland America ms Westerdam*	BRAND NEW	Aug 1 - 8, 2015
BRAND G VACATIONS		
People-to-People Exchange: Cuba		Feb 14 - 21, 2015
Amazon Discovery / Machu Picchu	BRAND NEW	Apr 20 - 30, 2015
Jewels of Spain, Portugal & the Douro River - *Uniworld's Queen Isabel*		July 3 - 12, 2015
Prague & Danube River Cruise - *AMADEUS Elegant*		Aug 4 - 13, 2015
ATLANTIS EVENTS		
Silhouette Caribbean Cruise - *Celebrity Silhouette*		Feb 1 - 8, 2015
Auckland to Sydney Mardi Gras Cruise - *Holland America Oosterdam*		Feb 24 - Mar 8, 2015
Singapore to Hong Kong - *Celebrity Millennium*		Mar 29 - Apr 9, 2015
Rome, Greek Isles & Istanbul - *Celebrity Equinox*	BRAND NEW	Aug 14 - 24, 2015

**Dates subject to change. Certain restrictions apply.*

Love Songs in the key of G&G

Gayest & Greatest 2014 Out•Smart

That's the Gayest & Greatest, baby



You know how you know when you're in love? ALL THE SONGS MAKE SENSE. And because we love the winners of this year's GAYEST & GREATEST READERS' CHOICE AWARDS, we're dedicating some of the greatest love songs to them. Think of it as a compilation album of the greatest love hits about your favorite loved ones.

by Marene Gustin

One of the best love songs ever is Cyndi Lauper's "Time After Time."

If you're lost, you can look and you will find me, time after time.

And we dedicate it to our perennial winners like Dr. Bruce Smith, Mayor Annise Parker, Rob Schmerler, Denise O'Doherty, and Dr. Kenneth Lester, to name a few.

Looking for a veterinarian or pet supply store for your fur babies? Check out the "Puppy Love" section for Molly's Mutt House and Best Vets Dr. Danielle Rosser and Dr. Richard Clive. *And they called it puppy love, just because we're in our teens:* It's a cute song and perfect for this category about loving your pets—just think of the Paul Anka version, not the creepy version with siblings Donny and Marie.

The B52's "Love Shack" goes out to our favorite Realtors, homebuilders, and title companies, while we serenade our bank and financial planners with the O'Jays' "For the Love of Money," because who doesn't love money, money, monnnneeey. We salute you Jeremy Fain, Karen Derr, and Pat Walker . . . and take a bow, Chicago Title and Loyd Russel Homes! And again this year, Grace Yung and Rick Dickson are our favorite folks to keep our wealth . . . our wealth!

"Love Hurts" was first recorded by The Everly Brothers in 1961, but the Roy Orbison version is a classic, and it has been recorded by countless other artists over the decades. If you've been hurt by love and bear the love scar, then check out this category for therapists. It just might help. Tony Carroll, Dr. Dan Garza, Denise O'Doherty, Kristin Anderson, and Woodja Flanigan have room on their couches!

If you've got a "Blind Love," you just might need a great eye doctor like Dr. Stewart Zuckerbrod and Dr. Juliet Farmer or eyewear specialists like Eye Gallery and Spectacles to help put things in perspective.

Love, exciting and new, come aboard, we're expecting you. Yes, it's the lyrics from *The Love Boat* theme song written by Paul Williams, and if you are of a certain age, you know all the words. It was one of the campiest shows of the '70s and '80s and was famous for having a passel of aging stars guest-starring as cruise passengers in every episode. So, this tune goes out to our beloved cruise group Aquafest and the travel folks at Concierge Travel.

And who doesn't love Houston's restaurant and bar scene? We "Can't Help Falling in Love with You" (the Elvis version, of course) with eateries 1308 Cantina, Niko Niko's, Giacomo's, and Gloria's . . . we've got winners in every food group!

"Sugar Baby Love" goes out to the best desserts, even though the treats at Dessert Gallery, Acadian Bakers, and Chocolate Bar may not be on our diets this year. And "To Sir with Love" (*If you wanted the sky I would write across the sky in letters that would soar a thousand feet high: To Sir, with Love.*) takes on a whole new meaning when it's sung to the city's best leather bars, The Eagle and The Ripcord.

And let's not forget our favorite legal eagles ("Justify My Love")—Mitchell Katine and John Nechman, along with Connie Moore and Debbie Hunt. Our beloved politicians get a chorus of Whale's "Love Hate Thing" because, well really, what else would you sing to a politician? Hopefully, Ellen Cohen and Mike Laster will enjoy being serenaded!

So settle in, cruise the winners of this year's Greatest & Gayest Readers' Choice Awards, and feel free to sing along.

Gayest & Greatest -2014- Out▾Smart

Our People

Community Hero (Male)
Bryan Hlavinka
Finalists: Ray Hill, Lou Weaver

Community Hero (Female)
Annise Parker
Finalists: Christina Gorczynski, Carol Wyatt

Most Prominent LGBT Male Activist
Noel Freeman
Finalists: Bryan Hlavinka, Brad Pritchett

Most Prominent LGBT Female Activist
Christina Gorczynski
Finalists: Kristen Capps, Monica Roberts

Most Valuable Male Volunteer
Bryan Hlavinka (tie)
Jason Gallegos (tie)
Finalists: Kris Banks, Franki Quijano

Most Valuable Female Volunteer
Christina Gorczynski
Finalists: Augie Augustine, Januari Leo, Carol Wyatt

Leading Male Fundraiser
Don Gill (tie)
Gary Wood (tie)
Finalist: Carl Han

Leading Female Fundraiser
Carol Wyatt
Finalists: Robin Brown, Marion Coleman

Favorite Local Politician (Male)
Mike Laster
Finalists: Garnet Coleman, Robert Gallegos

Favorite Local Politician (Female)
Ellen Cohen
Finalist: Kim Ogg

Best LGBT Businessperson (Male)
Charles Armstrong
810 Pacific Street
713-521-0193
sobehouston.com
Finalists: David Lorms, Irwin Palchick, Grey Stephens

Best LGBT Businessperson (Female)
Kathy Hubbard
Hubbard Financial
2615 Montrose Blvd.
713-522-0000
Finalists: Sandy Bubbert, Julie Mabry

Most Supportive Business of the LGBT Community (Local)
Neon Boots (tie)
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neonbootsclub.com
Silver Eagle Distributors (tie)
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713-869-4361
silvereagle.com
Finalists: Avita Pharmacy, Charles Armstrong Investments, FBar

Most Supportive Business of the LGBT Community (National)
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anheuser-busch.com
Finalists: Shell, Southwest Airlines, Wells Fargo Bank

Favorite Radio Personality (Male)
Special K, KRBE
krbe.com
Finalists: JD Doyle, Bryan Hlavinka, Chad Pitt

Favorite Radio Personality (Female)
Sarah Pepper
HOT 95.7
hothits957.cbslocal.com
Finalists: Lauren Finkelstein, Maria Todd

Best TV Personality (Male)
Frank Billingsley (tie)
Channel 2, Houston KPRC
click2houston.com
Ernie Manouse (tie)
Channel 8, Houston PBS
ernieontv.com
Finalists: Andy Cerota, Ryan Korsgard

Best TV Personality (Female)
Dominique Sachsa
Channel2, Houston KPRC
click2houston.com
Finalists: Casey Curry, Deborah Duncan, Miya Shay

Favorite Blogger (Female)
Monica Roberts
transgriot.blogspot.com
Finalist: Cristan Williams

Favorite Blogger (Male)
Joey Guerra
Houston Chronicle and 29-95.com
Finalists: Matt Burrus/Michael Pearce GaybyBoom Blog, *Houston Chronicle*; AJ Mistretta, MyGayHouston

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transgriot.blogspot.com

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Finalists: John Cox, Oliver Puzon

Favorite Community Photographer (Female)
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yvonnefeece.com

Best LGBT Website (Local)
HouEquality.com
Finalists: MyGayHouston.com, OutSmartMagazine.com, PrideHouston.com

Our Community

Favorite LGBT Social Organization
Houston Gaymers
houstongaymers.com
Finalists: Bunnies on the Bayou, Executive & Professional Association of Houston (EPAH), Montrose Softball League

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Finalists: AssistHers, Legacy Community Health Services, Lesbian Health Initiative

Favorite National LGBT Organization
Victory Fund
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Finalists: Human Rights Campaign, National Gay & Lesbian Task Force

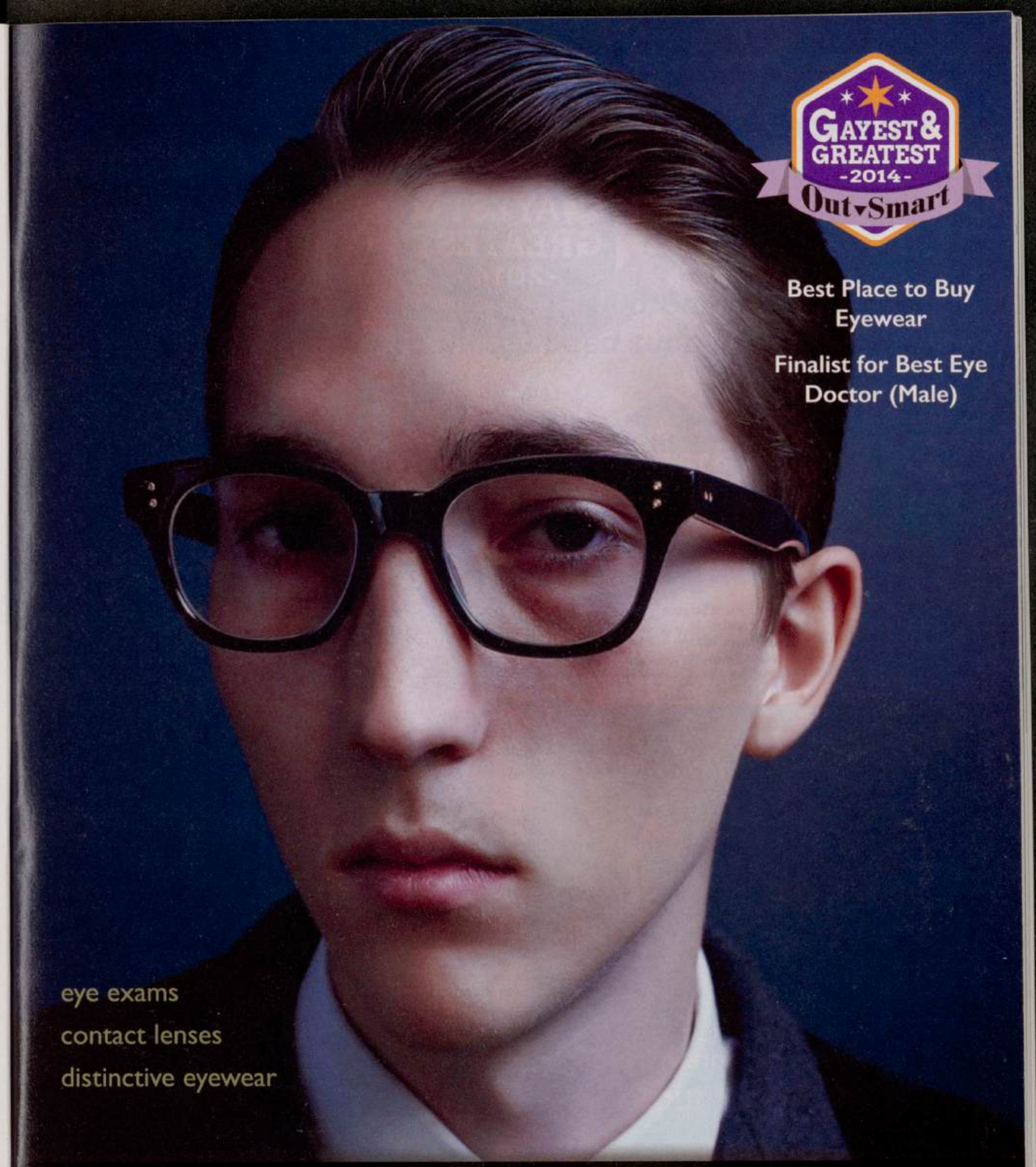
Favorite LGBT Benefit Event of the Year
Bunnies on the Bayou
bunniesonthebayou.org
Finalists: Heritage Gala, HRC Gala, Pride Parade

Favorite Place to Worship
Resurrection MCC
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713-861-9149
resurrectionmcc.org
Finalists: Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, Cathedral of Hope, Grace Lutheran, Living Mosaic

Favorite Place to Take Out-of-Town Visitors
Discovery Green
discoverygreen.com
Finalists: Hermann Park, Menil Collection

Favorite Houston Museum
Museum of Fine Arts
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mfah.org
Finalists: Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Menil Collection, Museum of Natural Science

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Finalists: Knapp Chevrolet, Planet Lincoln, River Oaks Chrysler-Jeep

Best Import Auto Dealership
Advantage BMW (tie)
2101 San Jacinto
713-289-1200
advantage-bmw-houston.com

Momentum Dealerships (tie)
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momentum-mini.net
Finalists: Houston Jaguar-Land Rover, Star Motors

HEALTH & BEAUTY

Best Chiropractor (Male)
Kenneth Lester, DC
1603 Shepherd Drive
713-526-5252
kennethlesterdc.com
Finalists: Art Keller, DC; Byron Menard, DC

Best Chiropractor (Female)
Day Lee Snell
3411 Richmond Ave.
Ste. 100 A, 713-520-9330
greenwayplazachiropractic.com
Finalists: Jackie Doval, DC; Melissa Stephens, DC

Best Cosmetic Skin Care Center
Skin Renaissance (tie)
507 West Gray
713-942-7546
skinrenaissance.net

The Skin Renewal Center (tie)
1512 W. Alabama
713-533-0800
theskinrenewalcenter.com
Finalist: Heights Dermatology

Best Cosmetic Surgeon Center (Male)
Scott Yarish, MD
Town & Country Plastic Surgery
10565 Katy Fwy
713-467-0146

Best Cosmetic Surgeon Center (Female)
Angela Sturm, MD
6655 Travis
713-526-5665
drangelasturm.com

Best Aesthetic Physician
Octavio Barrios, MD (tie)
507 West Gray
713-942-7546
skinrenaissance.net

Patrick McNamara, MD (tie)
1512 W. Alabama
713-533-0800
theskinrenewalcenter.com

Best Dentist (Male)
Bruce Smith, DDS
1006 Missouri
713-529-4364
brucesmithdds.com
Finalists: Marcus De Guzman, DDS; Cory Logan, DDS; Randy Mitchmore, DDS

Best Dentist (Female)
Diana Wilde, DDS
Floss Dental
514 Elgin, 713-942-0101
flossdental.com
Finalist: Jewel Day, DDS

Best Eye Doctor (Male)
Stewart Zuckerbrod, MD
5420 Dashwood Dr., Ste 101
713-668-9118
houstoneye.com
Finalists: Evan Mapes, MD; Scott Sawyer, MD

Best Eye Doctor (Female)
Juliet Farmer, OD
2502 Woodhead
713-528-2010
info@boutiqueeyecare.com
Finalists: Christine Tyler, OD; Lisa Woo, OD

Best Gym/Place to Work Out
Houston Gym (tie)
1501 Durham
713-880-9191
houstongym.com

FIT Athletic (tie)
1532 W. Gray
713-782-9348
fithouston.com
Finalists: Anytime Fitness, Club Houston, Define Body & Mind

Best Hair Stylist (Male)
Jesse Cougot
804-405-0005
jessecougotdoeshair.mysalononline.com
Finalists: Carlos Gomez, Joel Quinones, Anthony Skoogi

Best Hair Stylist (Female)
Jessica Alston
Tre Spa
2516 Sunset, 713-523-7800
trespasalon.com
Finalists: Celina Arzola, Patty Gooch

Best Massage Therapist (Male)
Ryan Fugate
713-269-7926
ryanmassageworks.com
Finalists: Joel Leal, Tom Zeppelin

Best Mental Health Therapist (Male)
Tony Carroll, LCSW
1006 Missouri
713-527-0000
houstontherapist.com
Finalists: Tony Aucoin, LCSW, LCDC; Ken McLeod, LCSW, ACSW; Robert Snellgrove, LCSW

Best Mental Health Therapist (Female)
Denise O'Doherty, LPC, LMST, LCDC, RN
3730 Kirby, Ste. 910
713-524-9525
relationshiptherapist.com
Finalist: Enod Gray, LCSW, CSAT

Best Personal Trainer (Male)
Ryan Monceaux
832-623-7823
houstontrainers.com
Finalists: Michael Shallis, Shane Stimmer

Best Personal Trainer (Female)
Kimberly Marler
1210 W. Clay, #3
832-443-3488
coachkimmie.com
Finalists: Shana Ross, Danielle Sampey

Best Physician (Male)
Gordon E. Crofoot, MD, PA
3701 Kirby, Ste. 1230
713-526-0005
crofootmd.com
Finalists: Octavio Barrios, MD; James Carroll, MD

Best Physician (Female)
M. Sandra Scurria, MD
6565 W. Loop South
Ste. 300, Bellaire
281-661-5901
sandrascurriamd.com
Finalists: Julia Kovacs, MD; Patricia Salvato, MD

Best Psychiatrist (Male)
Daniel Garza, MD
2323 Shepherd, Ste. 805
281-610-8190
Finalist: Barry F. Gritz, MD

Best Psychologist (Male)
Woodja Flanigan, PhD
2600 Southwest Fwy., Ste. 409
713-589-9804
dwoodjaflanigan.com
Finalist: David Genac, PhD

Best Psychologist (Female)
Kristin K. Anderson, PhD
9525 Katy Fwy., Ste. 200
713-263-0400
drkristinanderson.com

Best Tanning Salon
Eclipse
415 Westheimer
713-520-6611
eclipsesunlesstanning.com

Best Tattoo Parlor
Electric Chair
8722 Richmond, 713-780-3500
electricchair.cc
Finalists: Sacred Heart, Shaw's Tattoo Parlor

HOUSE & HOME

Best Art Gallery
Archway Gallery
2305 Dunlavy
713-522-2409
archgallery.com
Finalist: John Palmer Art Gallery

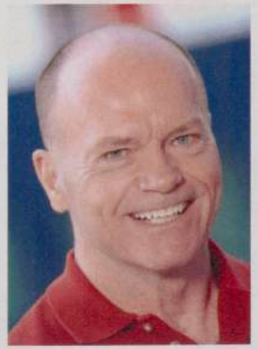
Best Florist
AJ's Urban Petals
1217 West 20th Street
713-957-0449
ajsurbanpetals.com
Finalists: Glenwood Weber Design, John Friedman Flowers

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HOUSTON, TEXAS 77004
TELEPHONE: 713-808-1000
WWW.LAWKN.COM
Info@lawkn.com

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- Employment Law
- HIV Discrimination
- Criminal Law
- Real Estate, HOA, and Relationship Issues
- Estate Planning Documents

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Best Furniture Store
IKEA (tie)
7810 Katy Fwy.
713-688-7867
ikea-usa.com

Mitchell Gold & Bob Williams (tie)
4091 Westheimer
832-397-5130
mgbwhome.com

Finalists: Gallery Furniture, Rooms To Go

Best Furniture Store on a Budget
IKEA
7810 Katy Fwy.
713-688-7867
ikea-usa.com

Finalist: Gallery Furniture

Best Garden & Nursery Supply
Buchanan's Native Plants (tie)
611 E. 11th St.
713-861-5702
buchananplants.com

Joshua's Native Plants (tie)
502 W. 18th St.
713-862-7444
joshuanativeplants.com

Finalist: AJ's Landscaping Company

Best Insurance Agent (Male)
David Lorms (tie)
2200 N. Loop West, Ste. 136
713-688-8669
lormsinsuranceservices.com

Rob Schmerler (tie)
6575 W. Loop South
Ste. 185
Bellaire
713-661-7700
schmerleragency.com

Best Insurance Agent (Female)
Pam Ellis
5900 Memorial, Ste. 301
713-869-7263
callpam.com

Best Interior Designer (Male)
Kevin Hamby
1300 Holman, Ste. 301
713-718-6097

Finalist: Mark Wade Brown

Best Interior Designer (Female)
Laura Umansky
1840 Westheimer
713-522-0855
laurau.com

Best Landscaping Company
AJ's Landscaping
1223 W. 21st St.
713-957-0449
ajslandscaping.com

Finalist: Glenwood Weber Design, Windswept Landscaping

Best Plumber
Village Plumbing
5403 Kirby
713-581-8353
villageplumbing.com

Finalist: Tom Pierce Plumbing

Best Pool Company
Pools By James
713-822-2531

Finalists: Reflection Pools, Tranquility Pools

Legal & Financial

Best Attorney (Male)
Mitchell Katine
1834 Southmore
713-809-1000
lawkn.com

Finalists: Jim Evans, Raed Gonzales, John Nechman, Jerry Simoneaux

Best Attorney (Female)
Connie Moore and Debbie Hunt
3608 Audubon
713-522-4282
mooreandhunt.com

Finalist: Clyde Williams

Best Bank/Credit Union
Wells Fargo
wellsfargo.com

Finalists: BBVA Compass, JP Morgan Chase

Best Financial Advisor/Planner (Male)
Rick Dickson
richard.dickson@lpl.com

Best Financial Advisor/Planner (Female)
Grace Yung, CFP
Midtown Financial Group, LLC
3355 W. Alabama, Ste. 230
713-355-9833
midtownfg.com

Pets

Best Doggie Day Care
Molly's Mutt House
3407 Montrose Blvd.
832-581-2453

Finalists: Pet Paradise, Rover Oaks

Best Place to Adopt a Pet
Houston SPCA
900 Portway
713-869-7722
houstonspca.org

Finalist: BARC, Molly's Mutt House

Best Place to Buy Pet Supplies
PetSmart
Multiple Locations
petsmart.com

Finalist: Natural Pawz

Best Veterinarian (Male)
Richard Clive, DVM
Midtown Veterinary Hospital
1434 W. Alabama St.
713-528-4900
midtownvethospital.com

Finalists: Randy McBride, DVM; Tom F. Vining, DVM

Best Veterinarian (Female)
Danielle Rosser, DVM
West Alabama Clinic
2030 W. Alabama
7113-528-0818
westalabamaanimalclinic.com

Finalists: Dayna Baxter, DVM; Christie Cornelius, DVM

Real Estate

Best Home Builder
Loyd Russell Homes
Russell Garrison
3939 Washington, Ste. 200
713-529-4399
loydrussell.com

Best Mortgage Company
John Frels
Sente Mortgage
1717 Yale
713-524-1850
mortgageassociates.com

Finalists: Academy Mortgage, Zeus Mortgage

Best Real Estate Agent (Male)
Jeremy Fain
Greenwood King
1616 S. Voss Rd., Ste. 900
713-677-4337
har.com/jeremyfain

Finalists: Tim Anthony, Bob Beszborn, Richard Ray, Tim Surratt, Andy Weber

Best Real Estate Agent (Female)
Karen Derr (tie)
Boulevard Realty
1545 Heights Blvd.
713-875-7050
yourblvd.com

Pat Walker (tie)
Keller Williams Realty Metropolitan
5050 Westheimer, Ste. 200
713-412-6682
har.com/patriciawalker

Finalists: Pamela Efferson, Debbie Levine, Lynette Lew

Best Title Company
Chicago Title, Innerloop
3700 Buffalo Spdwy., Ste. 400
713-529-4399
chicagotitleinnerloop.com

Travel & Vacations

Best Airline
Southwest Airlines

Finalist: United Airlines

Best LGBT Cruise or Tour Company
Aquafest (tie)
4801 Woodway, Ste. 400 W
800-592-5098
aquafestcruises.com

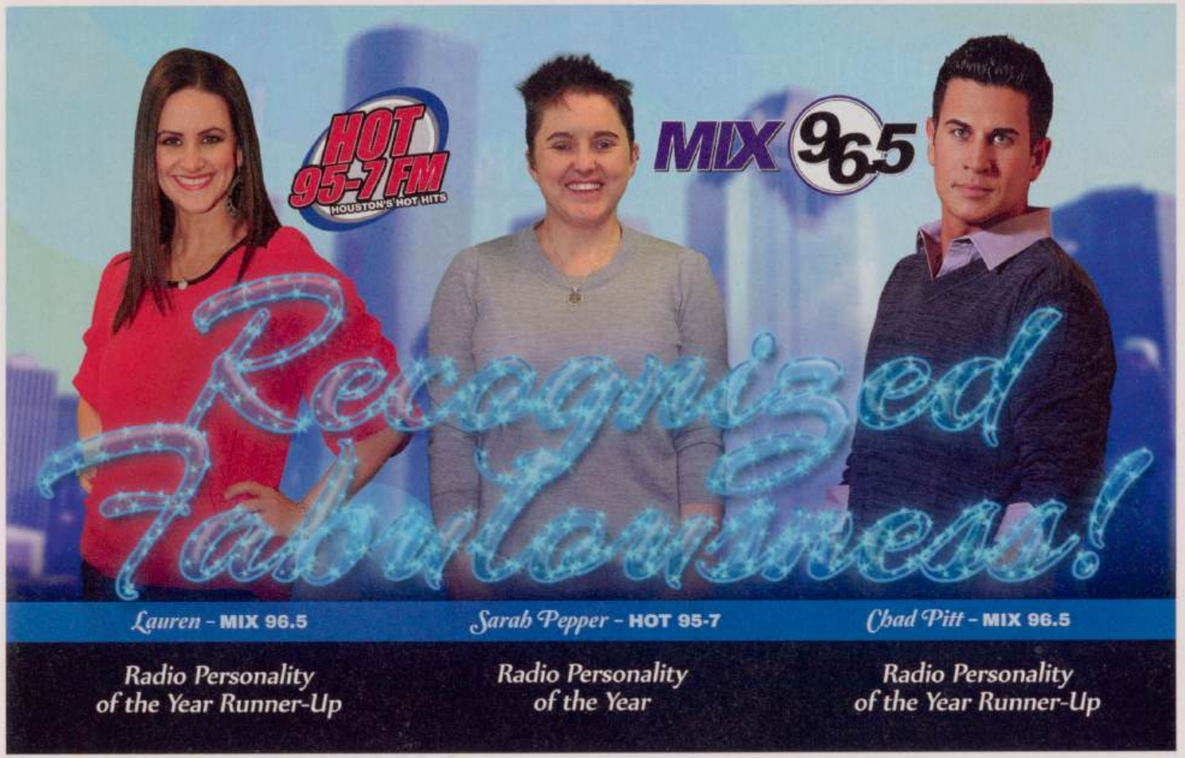
Concierge Travel (tie)
4920 Mimosa
713-661-2117
conciergetravel.cc

Finalists: Gayribbean Cruise, Sweet Cruises

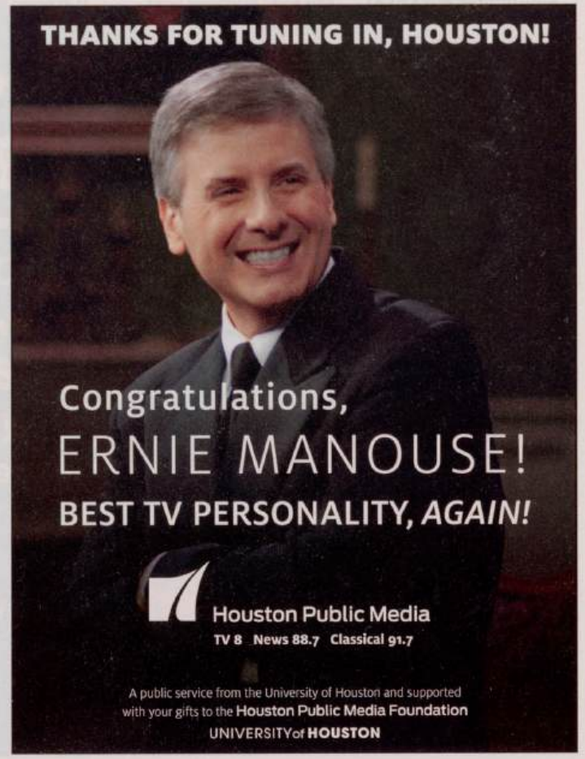
Best LGBT Travel Destination
Puerto Vallarta

Finalists: New Orleans, Provincetown

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Best Local Hotel
Hotel Derek
2525 W. Loop South
713-961-3000
hotelderek.com
FINALISTS: GRANDUCA HOTEL, HOTEL ZA ZA

Best Local Travel Agency
Concierge Travel
4920 Mimosa
713-661-2117
conciergetravel.cc

Best Travel Website
Orbitz.com

Shopping & Services

Best Astrologer (Male)
Kevin Casey
4344 Westheimer
713-993-0550
bodymindandsoulhouston.com

Best Astrologer (Female)
Lilly Roddy
920 W. Main
713-529-5842
lillyroddy.com

Best Copy/Print Shop
Copy.com
1201 Westheimer, Ste. F
713-528-1201
copydotcom.com

Best Grocery Store
HEB
Multiple Locations
heb.com
FINALISTS: KROGER, WHOLE FOODS

Best Jewelry Store
Silverlust
1338 Westhiemer, Ste. C
713-520-5440
silverlustonline.com
FINALIST: ZADOK JEWELERS

Best Liquor Store
Spec's Liquor Stores
2410 Smith St. &
Multiple Locations
713-526-8787
specsonline.com

Best Cellular Phone Store
Premier Paging (tie)
12220 Murphy Rd., Ste. F
Stafford, TX
281-575-8500
premierwirelesstx.com

Apple Store (tie)
Multiple Locations
apple.com

Best Erotic Playthings Store
Adam & Eve
1111 Westheimer &
Multiple Locations
713-521-2326
adamevetexas.com
FINALISTS: EROTIC CABARET, EXECUTIVE VIDEO SUPERSTORE, HOLLYWOOD SUPER CENTER

Best Eyewear Store
Eye Gallery (tie)
1806 Westheimer, Ste B
713-523-1279
eyegalleryhouston.com

Spectacles (tie)
4317 Montrose
713-529-3937
wearusout.com
FINALISTS: EYE CONTACT, EYE ELEGANCE, EYE TO EYE

Best Men's Clothing Store
Macy's
2727 Sage & Multiple Locations
713-968-1985
macys.com
FINALISTS: THE CLASS ROOM, NIEMAN MARCUS, SOHO

Best Women's Clothing Store
Macy's
2727 Sage & Multiple Locations
713-968-1985
macys.com
FINALISTS: NORDSTROM'S, TOOTSIE'S

Best Specialty Food Store
HEB – Central Market
heb.com & centralmarket.com
FINALISTS: PHOENICIA, SPEC'S DOWNTOWN, WHOLE FOODS

Dining Out

Best New Restaurant
Coltivare
3320 White Oak Dr.
713-637-4095
coltivarehouston.com
FINALIST: OSTERIA MAZZANTINI

Best 24-Hour Restaurant
House of Pies
FINALISTS: KATZ'S DELI, MIDTOWN BAR & GRILL

Best Restaurant for Cheap Eats
Jenni's Noodle House
3111 S. Shepherd &
Multiple Locations
713-noodles
noodlesrule.com
FINALISTS: PHO SAIGON, TACOS A GO-GO

Best Restaurant for Elegant Dining
Brennan's
330 Smith St.
713-522-9711
brennanshouston.com
FINALISTS: MARK'S AMERICAN CUISINE, OUISIE'S TABLE, SORREL

Best Restaurant for Outdoor Dining
Baba Yega
2607 Grant St.
713-522-0042
babayega.com
FINALISTS: BACKSTREET CAFÉ, TILA'S

Best Catering Firm
Jim Benton of Houston, LLC
2811 Eastman St.
713-802-2860
jimbentonhouston.com
FINALISTS: DON CARLOS CATERING, EL TIEMPO, MELANGE CATERING

Best Food Truck
Bernie's Burger Bus
281-349-9400
berniesburgerbus.com
FINALISTS: SYLVIA'S ENCHILADA KITCHEN, TILA'S, WAFFLE BUS

Best Barbeque
Goode Co. Barbeque
5109 Kirby Dr.
713-522-2530
goodecompany.com
FINALISTS: HICKORY HOLLOW, PAPPAS

Best Breakfast
Baby Barnaby's
602 Fairview
713-522-4229
barnabyscafe.com
FINALISTS: BREAKFAST KLUB, LA MEXICANA, TACOS A GO-GO

Best British
Red Lion
2316 S. Shepherd
713-782-3030
redlionhouston.com
FINALIST: BLACK LABRADOR PUB

Best Brunch
Gloria's
2616 Louisiana, Ste. 101
832-360-1710
gloriasrestaurants.com
FINALISTS: BABA YEGA, THE BIRD AND THE BEAR, RIVA'S, SORREL

Best Cajun
Ragin' Cajun
4302 Richmond Ave., Ste. A
713-623-6321
ragin-cajun.com
FINALISTS: BB'S CAJUN CAFÉ, WOODROW'S

Best Chinese
Kam's
4500 Montrose
713-529-5057
kamscuisine.com
FINALISTS: AMBASSADOR, CHINA GARDEN

Best Cuban
El Rey
910 Shepherd
713-802-9145
elreytaqueria.com

Best Deli
Kenny & Ziggy's New York Deli
2327 Post Oak Blvd.
713-871-8883
kennyandziggys.com
FINALISTS: JASON'S DELI, KATZ'S DELI

Best Dessert
The Acadian Bakers (tie)
601 W. Alabama
713-520-1484
acadianbakers.com

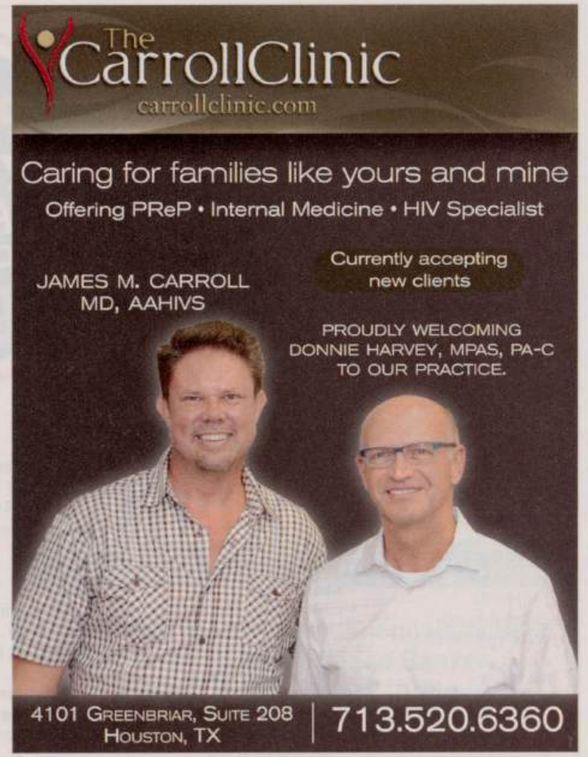
Dessert Gallery (tie)
3600 Kirby, Ste. D
713-522-9999
dessertgallery.com
FINALIST: THE CHOCOLATE BAR

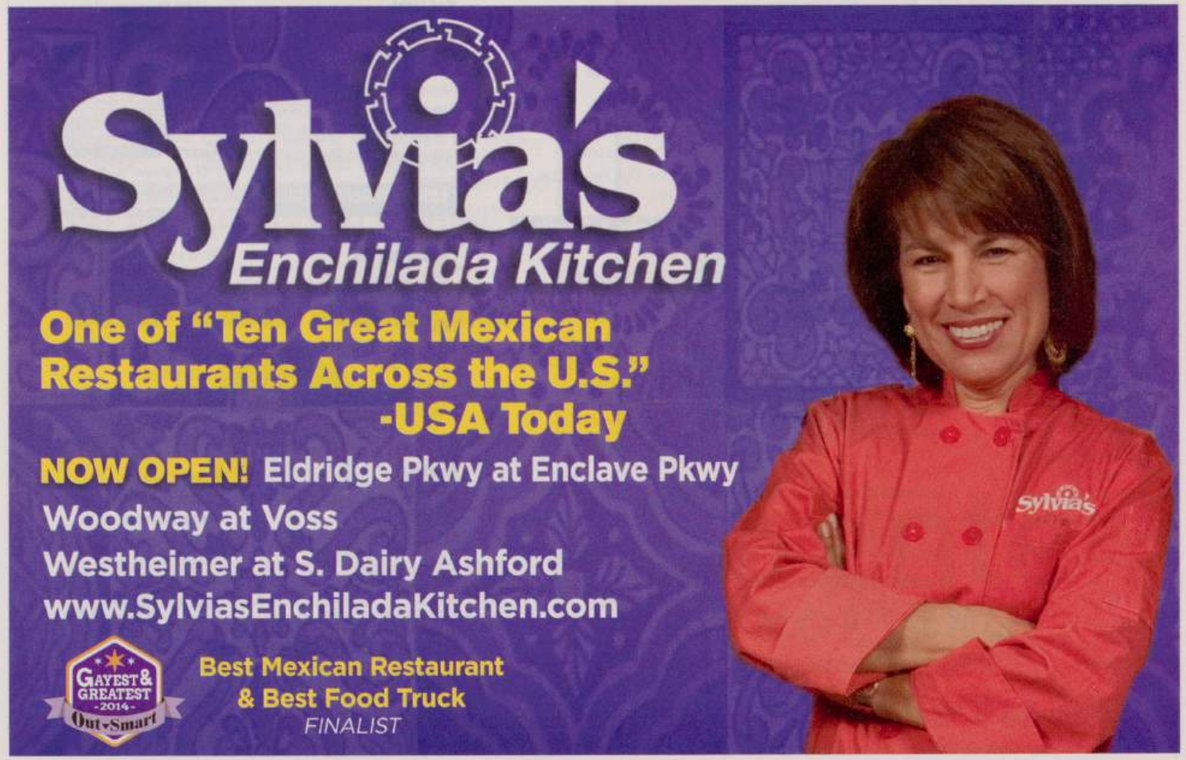
Best French
Charivari
2521 Bagby St.
713-521-7231
charivarirest.com
FINALIST: BRASSERIE 19

Best Greek
Niko Niko's
2520 Montrose
713-528-1308
nikonikos.com
FINALISTS: MIDTOWN BAR & GRILL, THEO'S

→









Best Hamburger
Lankford Grocery & Market (tie)
88 Dennis
713-522-9555
lankfordgrocery.com

The Acadian Bakers (tie)
604 W. Alabama
713-520-1484
acadianbakers.com
FINALIST: CHRISTIAN'S TAILGATE

Best Indian
Bombay Brasserie
2414 University Blvd, #210
713-355-2000
thebombaybrasserie.com
FINALISTS: KHYBER GRILL, SHIVA

Best Italian
Giacomo's (tie)
3215 Westheimer Rd.
713-522-1934
giacomosciboevino.com

Riva's (tie)
1117 Missouri
713-529-0666
rivasrestaurant.com
FINALISTS: CARRABBA'S, DAMIAN'S

Best Japanese
Uchi
904 Westheimer
713-522-4408
uchirestaurant.com/houston
FINALIST: SAMURAI

Best Lunch Spot
Gloria's
2616 Louisiana, Ste. 101
832-360-1710
gloriasrestaurants.com
FINALISTS: THE ACADIAN BAKERS, BABA YEGA, MAINE-LY SANDWICHES

Best Mediterranean
Aladdin
912 Westheimer
713-942-2321
aladdinshouston.com
FINALIST: SKEWER'S

Best Mexican
Gloria's (tie)
2616 Louisiana, Ste. 101
832-360-1710
gloriasrestaurants.com

1308 Cantina/El Tiempo (tie)
1308 Montrose &
Multiple Locations
713-8070-8996
eltiempocantina.com
FINALISTS: LA MEXICANA, SYLVIA'S ENCHILADA KITCHEN, TILA'S

Best Pizza
Pizza L'Vino (tie)
544 Waugh Dr.
713-526-1000
pizzalvino.com
713-8070-8996

Star Pizza (tie)
77 Harvard
713-869-1241
starpizza.net
FINALIST: PIZZERIA SOLARIO

Best Seafood
Danton's Seafood
4611 Montrose
713-807-8883
dantonsseafood.com
FINALISTS: PAPPADEAUX, TONY MANDOLA'S GULF COAST KITCHEN

Best Steakhouse
Laurenzo's (tie)
4412 Washington Ave.
713-880-5111
laurenzos.net

Morton's Steakhouse (tie)
5000 Westheimer
713-629-1964
mortons.com

Best Sushi
Uchi
904 Westheimer
713-522-4808
uchirestaurant.com/houston
FINALISTS: THE FISH, OISHII

Best Thai
Nidda
1226 Westheimer
713-522-8895
FINALISTS: KHUN KAY THAI, THAI SPICE

Best Vegetarian
Ruggles Green
2311 W. Alabama
713-533-0777
rugglesgreen.com
FINALISTS: FIELD OF GREENS, RADICAL EATS

Best Vietnamese
Mai's
3403 Milam St.
713-520-7684
maishouston.com
FINALISTS: DUA, PHO SAIGON, RED PIER, VAN LOC

Drinks & Spirits

Best Coffee House
Starbucks
Multiple Locations
starbucks.com
FINALISTS: ANTIDOTE, BLACKSMITH, SOUTHSIDE ESPRESSO

Favorite Wine Bar
Boheme
307 Fairview
713-529-1099
barboheme.com
FINALISTS: 13 CELSIUS, MAX'S WINE DIVE

Club with the Best Happy Hour
F Bar
202 Tuam
713-522-3227
fbarhouston.com
FINALISTS: CROCKER BAR, GUAVA LAMP, JR'S

Club/Restaurant with the Best Margarita
1308 Cantina/El Tiempo
1308 Montrose &
Multiple Locations
713-807-8996
eltiempocantina.com
FINALISTS: FBAR, JR's

Club/Restaurant with the Best Martini
Guava Lamp
570 Waugh
713-524-3359
guavalamphouston.com
FINALISTS: F BAR, METEOR

Favorite Brand of Beer
Bud Light
budlight.com
FINALISTS: SHINER, ST. ARNOLD

Favorite Brand of Liquor
Ketel One
ketelone.com
FINALISTS: ABSOLUT, TITO'S

Entertainment/NightLife

Favorite Gay Bar
Crocker Bar (tie)
2312 Crocker
713-529-3355

JR's (tie)
808 Pacific St.
713-521-2519
jrsbarandgrill.com
FINALISTS: F BAR, NEON BOOTS

Favorite Women's Bar
Pearl Bar
4216 Washington
832-740-4933
pearlhouston.com
FINALISTS: NEON BOOTS, RANCH HILL SALOON

Favorite Straight Bar
Anvil
1424 Westheimer
713-523-1622
anvilhouston.com
FINALISTS: BOHEME, ROYAL OAK

Favorite Club for Dancing
South Beach
801 Pacific St.
713-529-7623
southbeachthenightclub.com
FINALISTS: F BAR, NEON BOOTS

Best Drag Show Bar
F Bar
202 Tuam
713-522-3227
fbarhouston.com
FINALISTS: GUAVA LAMP, METEOR, TC's SHOW BAR

Favorite Bar to Two-Step
Neon Boots
11410 Hempstead Hwy
713-677-0828
neonbootsclub.com
FINALIST: RANCH HILL SALOON

Favorite Bar to Shoot Pool
George Country Sports Bar
617 Fairview
713-528-8102
georgescountrysportsbar.com
FINALISTS: JR's, NEON BOOTS, TONY'S CORNER POCKET

Favorite Place to Watch Male Dancers
Meteor
2306 Genesee St.
713-521-0123
meteorhouston.com
FINALISTS: MONTROSE MINING COMPANY, TONY'S CORNER POCKET

Favorite Place to Show Off Your Leather
Eagle Houston
611 Hyde Park
eaglehouston.com
FINALISTS: MONTROSE MINING COMPANY, RIPCORD →

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Houston Associate Judge Phyllis Frye
Dallas County Sheriff Lupe Valdez
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Favorite Club if You're Under 21
South Beach
810 Pacific St.
713-529-7623
southbeachthenightclub.com
FINALISTS: BAYOU CITY BAR AND GRILL, BLUR

Favorite Club after 2 a.m.
South Beach
810 Pacific St.
713-529-7623
southbeachthenightclub.com
FINALISTS: KRYPTONITE, VIVIANA'S

Favorite Bartender (Male)
Christopher Barry (tie)
Christopher Tyer (tie)
FINALISTS: REGGIE MILES, MARC RUIZ

Favorite Bartender (Female)
Kristina Prats
FINALISTS: CRYSTAL MURLEY, SARAH THOMPKINS

Favorite DJ (Male)
Chris Allen (tie)
Joe Ross (tie)
FINALISTS: DJ LEVEL, CHRIS ZANE

Favorite DJ (Female)
DJ Athenz
FINALIST: DJ MELLE MEL

Most Divine Drag Queen
Kara Dion (tie)
Kofi (tie)
FINALISTS: KIKI DION VAN WALES, KOURTNEY PAIGE VAN WALES

Favorite Local Non-Drag Entertainer (Male)
Marty Adamson
FINALISTS: JERRY ATWOOD, TYE FRAZIER

Favorite Local Non-Drag Entertainer (Female)
Morena Roas
FINALIST: NINA LOMBARDO

Favorite Local Band
The Goods

GALVESTON

Our People

Community Hero (Male)
Rodney Seiler
FINALISTS: TOM LONG, ROBERT MAINOR

Most Prominent LGBT Activist
Misty Valdez

Most Prominent LGBT Female Activist
Jill Costa
FINALIST: MISTY VALDEZ

Most Valuable Male Volunteer
Robert Evans
FINALISTS: DAVID BOWERS, TOM SCHWENK

Most Valuable Female Volunteer
Pam Froeschner

Leading Male Fundraiser
Rodney Seiler (tie)
Johnny Mize (tie)
FINALISTS: EDDIE KIER, MARK SMITH

Leading Female Fundraiser
Pamela Passino

Favorite Local Politician (Male)
Craig Brown

Favorite Local Politician (Female)
Susan Criss
FINALIST: TERILYN TARLTON

Best LGBT Businessperson
Rodney Seiler (tie)
3rd Coast Downtown
2416 Postoffice
409-765-6911
3rdcoastdowntown.com
Paul Vincent (tie)
Georgetown Mortgage
4022 Ave S ½
409-599-9461
FINALISTS: DAVID PASCHALL, TOM SCHWENK

Most Supportive of the LGBT Community (Local)
Pink Posse
at the Pink Dolphin Tavern
FINALISTS: 3RD COAST DOWNTOWN, GALVESTON.COM, ISLAND ETC THEATRE

Favorite Community Photographer (Female)
Susan Henry
2115 Postoffice
409-762-6454
susanhenryphotograpy.com

Favorite Community Photographer (Male)
Billy Hill
409-771-8211
g-townsurf.com

Best TV Personality
Frank Billingsley
KPRC, Channel 2
dick2houston.com

Best (Local) LGBT Website
Galveston.com
523 24th St.
409-765-3502
galveston.com

Our Community

Favorite Community Organization
Galveston Historical Foundation
502 20th St.
409-765-7834
galvestonhistory.com
FINALIST: AIDS COALITION OF GALVESTON

Favorite Benefit Event of the Year
ACCT Annual Brunch
FINALIST: PAWS GAL

Business & Services

AUTOMOTIVE

Best Domestic Auto Dealership
Classic Auto Group Galveston
8020 Broadway
409-744-5711
classicautogroupgalveston.com

Best Import Auto Dealership
Clear Lake Fiat
15965 Gulf Freeway
281-310-8300
houstonfiatdealer.com

HEALTH AND BEAUTY

Best Chiropractor
Chad Duchon, DC
2724 61st #5
409-744-9355
galvestonspine.com

Best Dentist (Male)
William Glenn III
2601 Broadway
409-765-5538
drglennfamilydental.com

Best Dentist (Female)
Barbara A. Pickering, DDS
8333 Stewart Rd.
409-744-4330
barbarapickeringdds.com

Best Eye Doctor
Kevin Katz, OD, MS
Texas State Optical
515 22nd St.
409-762-8679
tsogalveston.com

Best Gym/ Place to Work Out
Urban Fitness
2009 Postoffice
409-621-2878
urbanhealthandfitness.com
FINALIST: TOTAL FITNESS

Best Hair STYLIST
Jim Windmiller
Windmiller's Hair Salon
1015 26th St.
409-762-1627
windmillers.com
FINALIST: BILL KIRKLIN

Best Physician (Male)
Victor S. Sierpina, MD
6710 Stewart Rd., Ste 100
409-744-4030
FINALIST: JIM HUNDERUP

Best Physician (Female)
Angela Shepherd, MD
6710 Stewart Rd., Ste 100
409-744-4030

Best Mental Health Therapist
Marco Vega
301 University Blvd.
409-486-7044

Best Tattoo Parlor
Island Tattoo
3615 Broadway St.
409-974-4133
FINALIST: ASYLUM

→







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House & Home

Best Furniture Store
Star Furniture
3727 Broadway
409-762-7821
starfurnituregalveston.com

Best Landscaping Company
Tom's Thumb Nursery & Landscaping
2014 45th St. • 409-763-4713
tomsthumbnursery.com

Best Interior Design
Seamus Kraham
Urban Resort Home
411 25th Street
409-443-5410
Urbanresorthome.com
Finalists: Eddie Kier, Johnny Mize

Best Insurance Agent (Male)
Alex Monteith
SMI Agency
1802 Broadway, Ste 118
409-765-9515
smiagency.com

Best Insurance Agent (Female)
Gigi Heffernan
Heffernan Insurance Agency
1703 Tremont Street
409-765-9011
heffernaninsurance agency.com

Legal & Financial

Best Attorney (Male)
Ernest Caldwell
1619 Avenue E
409-762-3500
Finalist: David Bowers

Best Attorney (Female)
Connie Moore & Debbie Hunt
Moore and Hunt
3608 Audubon, Houston
713-522-4282
mooreandhunt.com

Best Bank/Credit Union
HomeTown Bank of Galveston
1801 45th Street
409-763-1271
bankofgalveston.com
Finalist: Amoco Federal Credit Union

Pets

Best Veterinarian
Jackie Cole, DVM
Campeche Cove Animal Hospital
3802 Cove View Blvd.
409-740-0808
campechecoveanimal hospital.com

Real Estate

Best Real Estate Agent (Male)
David Bowers (tie)
The House Company
2615 Broadway
409-763-2800
davidbowers.com

V.J. Tramonte (tie)
Joe Tramonte Realty
1802 Broadway, Ste 206
409-765-9837
tramonterealty.com
Finalists: Tom Schwenk, Robert Zahn

Best Real Estate Agent (Female)
Kelly Kelley
Kelly Kelley Real Estate
3616 7 Mile Road
281-794-9463
kellykelley.com

Best Mortgage Company
Paul Vincent
Georgetown Mortgage
4022 Ave S ½
409-599-9461

Best Title Company
Stewart Title
222 Kempner
409-763-4641
stewartgalveston.com
Finalists: Chicago Title, Southland Title

Travel/Vacatioins

Best Day Spa
Hotel Galvez
2024 Seawall Blvd.
409-765-7721
wyndhamhotelgalvez.com
Finalist: San Luis Resort

Best Local Hotel
Hotel Galvez (tie)
2024 Seawall Blvd.
409-765-7721
wyndhamhotelgalvez.com

Commodore on the Beach (tie)
3618 Seawall Blvd
409-763-2375
commodoreonthebeach.com
Finalists: Hotel Galvez & Spa, The Tremont House, San Luis Resort

Best Local Travel Agency
Galveston.com
523 24th St.
409-765-3502
galveston.com

Best Local LGBT Travel Website
Galveston.com
523 24th St.
409-765-3502
galveston.com

Shopping/Services

Best Grocery Store
Kroger
5730 Seawall Blvd.
409-741-8580
kroger.com

Best Specialty Food Store
Maceo Spice
2706 Market Ave Drive
409-763-3331
maceospice.com
Finalist: Oasis Juice Bar

Best Liquor Store
Spec's
6815 Stewart Rd.
409-740-3161
specsonline.com
Finalist: Economy Liquor

Best Place to Buy Women's Clothing
Treasure Trove
2719 61st Street
409-737-9900
giftsandgarments.com

Best Place to Buy Men's Clothing
Cruz Cortez Clothiers
2227 Postoffice St.
409-763-9600
cruzcortezclothiers.com

Best Jewelry Store
Fullen Jewelry
2215 Postoffice
409-763-0555
fullenjewelry.com
Finalists: John Ford, Vic's Estate & Fine Jewelry

Best Place to Buy Eyewear
TSO/Kevin Katz, OD MS
515 22nd St.
409-762-8679
tsogalveston.com

Best Place to Buy Erotic Playthings
Wild Side Things
902 Seawall Blvd
409-762-0074
Finalist: XTC Boutique

Best Catering Firm
Butter & Company
923 Nicholson (Houston)
713-820-3221
butterandcompany.com
Finalist: Catering by Benno's

Best New Restaurant
Number 13
7809 Broadway
409-572-2650
number13steak.com

Best Restaurant for People Watching
The Spot
3204 Seawall Blvd.
409-621-5237
thespotgalveston.com

Best Restaurant for Elegant Dining
Shearns Seafood
7 Hope Blvd
409-683-4000
moodygardenshotel.com
Finalist: Gaido's Pelica Club

Best Restaurant for Cheap Eats
Gorditas
712 Seawall Blvd.
409-621-1944
galveston.com/gorditas
Finalist: The Press Box

Best Restaurant for Outdoor Dining
Smooth Tony's Patio & Grill
415 9th Street
409-765-5200
smoothtonys.com

Best Breakfast
The Sunflower Bakery & Café
512 14th Street
409-763-5500
thesunflowerbakeryandcafe.com
Finalists: Miller's Landing, Mosquito Café

→







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Best Brunch
Hotel Galvez & Spa
2024 Seawall Blvd.
409-765-7721
galveston.com/galvez
FINALISTS: MOSQUITO CAFÉ, SUNFLOWER CAFE

Best Lunch Spot
Mosquito Café
626 14th St.
409-763-1010
mosquitocafe.com
FINALIST: THE SUNFLOWER BAKERY & CAFE

Best Dessert
Patty Cakes
704 14th Street
409-762-2537
pattycakesgalveston.com
FINALISTS: MOSQUITO CAFÉ, THE SUNFLOWER BAKERY & CAFE

Best Barbeque
Queen's Bar-b-que
3428 Avenue S
409-762-3151
galveston.com/queens

Best Steak
The Steakhouse at San Luis Resort
5222 Seawall Blvd.
409-744-1500
sanluisresort.com

Best Cajun
Benno's on the Beach
1200 Seawall Blvd.
409-762-4621
bennosofgalveston.com
FINALIST: LEO'S CAJUN CORNER

Best Chinese
Happy Buddha
2827 61st St.
409-744-5774
galveston.com/happybuddha

Best Greek
Olympia Grill
4908 Seawall Blvd.
409-766-1222
olympiagrill.net

Best Hamburger
The Spot
3204 Seawall
409-621-5237
thespotgalveston.com
FINALIST: SONNY'S PLACE

Best Italian
Mario's on the Seawall
628 Seawall Blvd
409-763-1693
mariosseawall.com

Best Japanese
Yamato Japanese Restaurant
2104 61st St.
409-744-2742
FINALIST: SKY BAR

Best Mexican
Gorditas
712 Seawall Blvd,
409-621-1944
FINALISTS: LA ESTACION RESTAURANT, SALSA'S

Best Mediterranean
Olympia Grill
4908 Seawall Blvd.
409-766-1222
olympiagrill.net
FINALIST: MEDITERRANEAN CHEF

Best Pizza
Mario's on the Seawall
628 Seawall Blvd.
409-763-1693
mariosseawall.com
FINALIST: JACK'S PUB ON POSTOFFICE

Best Seafood
Pelican Club/Gaido's Seafood
3900 Seawall Blvd.
409-762-9625
gaidos.com
FINALIST: BENNO'S ON THE BEACH

Best Sushi
Yamato Japanese
2104 61st Street
409-744-2742
yamatotx.com
FINALIST: SKY BAR

Best Vegetarian
Oasis Juice Bar
409 25th Street
409-762-8446
oasisjuicebar.com

Best Vietnamese
Pho 20
2101 Broadway
409-750-9200
pho20.com

Best Coffee House
Mod Coffee & Tea House
2126 Postoffice
409-765-5659
modcoffeehouse.com

Favorite Gay Bar
3rd Coast Downtown (tie)
2416 Postoffice
409-765-6911
3rdcoastdowntown.com

Pink Dolphin Tavern (tie)
1706 23rd
409-621-1808
thepinkdolphintavern.com
FINALISTS: 3RD COAST DOWNTOWN, ROBERT'S LAFITTE

Best Happy Hour
Olympia Grill at Pier 21
100 21st Street
409-765-0021
olympiagrill.net
FINALIST: MEDICINAL PURPOSES

Best Margarita
Olympia Grill at Pier 21
100 21st Street
409-765-0021
olympiagrill.net
FINALIST: SALSA'S

Best Martini
Olympia Grill at Pier 21
100 21st Street
409-765-0021
olympiagrill.net
FINALISTS: HOTEL GALVEZ & SPA, SKY BAR, TREMONT

Best Straight Bar
San Luis Hotel Bar
5222 Seawall Blvd
409-744-1500
sanluisresort.com

Best Club for Dancing
3rd Coast Downtown
2416 Postoffice
409-765-6911
3rdcoastdowntown.com

Best Drag Show Bar
3rd Coast Downtown
2416 Postoffice
409-765-6911
3rdcoastdowntown.com
FINALIST: STARS BEACH CLUB

Best Place for Two-Step Dancing
3rd Coast Downtown
2416 Postoffice
409-765-6911
3rdcoastdowntown.com

Best Place to Shoot Pool
Pink Dolphin Tavern
1706 23rd Street
409-621-1808
thepinkdolphintavern.com

Best Place to Show off Your Leather
3rd Coast Downtown
2416 Postoffice
409-765-6911
3rdcoastdowntown.com

Best Bartender
John Timothy Branstetter
FINALISTS: NICK GRAY, MARCUS WILLIAMS

Best DJ (Male)
Joe Rios

Most Divine Drag Queen
Tara Dion
FINALISTS: LANA BLAKE, JASMEN PIERCE, CC RYDER

Best Local Band
The Line Up
thelineupmusic.com ■

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Friday, October 10



Tammie Brown,
RuPaul's Drag Race Season 1
Co-Hosted by Kara Dion
Friday, October 31

Adeciya Iman, Miss Gay Texas of US of A 2015 • **Saturday, October 18**



Delta Work, RuPaul's Drag Race Season 3
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Friday, October 24 - Saturday, October 25

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OCTOBER 24-26

Friday OCTOBER 24
4PM-7PM: Happy Hour at The Pink Dolphin Tavern, 1706 23rd St.
7PM-11PM: Happy Hour/Splash Divas Drag Show with Emcee **Kiki Van Wales** featuring RuPaul's **Delta Work** and **DJ Joe Rios** at Splash Bar, 3102 Seawall Blvd.
11PM-2AM: Karaoke at 3rd Coast Downtown, 2416 Postoffice


Kiki Van Wales


Delta Work

Sunday OCTOBER 26
11AM-4PM: Pool/Patio Party at Robert's Lafitte, 2501 Avenue Q
4PM-9PM: Sunday Tea Party with Drag Bingo/Karaoke hosted by **Carmen Can-Too** at Splash Bar, 3102 Seawall Blvd.
9PM-2AM: Karaoke Party hosted by David P at 3rd Coast Downtown, 2416 Postoffice


Carmen Can-Too

Saturday OCTOBER 25
11AM-4PM: Pool/Patio Party at Robert's Lafitte 2501 Avenue Q
4PM-7PM: Happy Hour at The Pink Dolphin Tavern, 1706 23rd St.
7PM-11PM: Happy Hour/Splash Divas Drag Show featuring RuPaul's **Delta Work** and **DJ Melle Mel** at Splash Bar, 3102 Seawall Blvd.


DJ Melle Mel

11PM-2AM: Gayribbean Bon Voyage Party/Drag Show featuring **Kara Dion, Kourtney Paige Van Wales** and **Dee Ranged** at 3rd Coast Downtown, 2416 Postoffice


Kara Dion


Kourtney Paige Van Wales

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Directing Houston

Susan Christian and Laura Spanjian are dedicated to the city—and to one another

by David Goldberg
Photo by Yvonne Feece



Four's company: couple Laura Spanjian (l), director of sustainability for the mayor's office, and Susan Christian, Houston's director of special events, with their son, Eli. Spanjian is expecting the pair's second son in November.

In November 2008, City Hall got a facelift with the election of Mayor Annise Parker, who made international headlines and brought positive attention to Houston. Parker has kept her name in the press by embracing new initiatives, events, and programs that strengthen Houston's quality of life. Susan Christian, the mayor's director of special events for the City of Houston, and Laura Spanjian, the director of sustainability in the mayor's office, have played a major role in these new initiatives. Separately and together, they are responsible for programs like the SundayStreets HTX events and the City Hall Farmer's Market.

But Christian and Spanjian aren't just a collaborative professional duo; they've been an actual couple for eight years, and are preparing for their second child in November. The couple met in 2006 at a Houston conference of the Victory Fund, which seeks to elect LGBT leaders to public office nationwide. Spanjian served as a board member and became close with then-City Controller Parker as the organization started mobilizing around her mayoral campaign. Christian was running the event, and once the two met, there was no going back. The only problem: Spanjian still lived in San Francisco. As Spanjian became a major player in Parker's campaign, she and Christian embarked on a long-distance relationship. They toyed with the idea of Christian coming to California, but with the mayor's victory, their future changed.

> **"You become part of the fabric of city government. You're not unique for being gay; it's just that you're part of the administration."**

In 2010, Mayor Parker recruited Spanjian to the newly created role of Director of Sustainability in the mayor's office. She was soon moving to Houston—and to Christian. "Mayor Parker's line is that I needed another woman to bring me to Houston," Spanjian says.

Christian has been a part of Houston city government for nearly 30 years. She moved to Houston from the small central-Texas town of Hico, which has a population of just over 1,300. "It's a great place to be from," Christian says. She started out in the mid-'80s in the Parks and Recreation Department, and within a few years had caught the attention of then-mayor Bob Lanier, who was looking to use civic events to bring positive national attention to the city. Since then, she's developed the mayor's civic celebration program into a year-round blockbuster, with 3.6 million people attending over 1,000 annual events. If you've ever enjoyed the Fourth of July Freedom Over Texas celebration, Thanksgiving Day parade, or the Children's Festival, then you've got Christian to thank. "I believe events are a core service for any city," she says. "They bring the city together, they improve the city, but they also serve as a catalyst for empowering neighborhoods to do very positive things. When you have positive interaction through events, negativity goes away very quickly."

Christian has been at the center of Houston City Hall's evolution through five mayors: Kathy Whitmire, Bob Lanier, Lee Brown, Bill White, and Parker. Even though she insists that diversity and →



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inclusion at City Hall has been a priority since Mayor Lanier, she didn't feel comfortable being open about her sexual orientation until the national and local culture started to change. "We all have different stories," Christian says. "Mine was a much more guarded and closed story. I didn't grow up in an environment that was accepting of the gay lifestyle. But the last four mayors have helped break those barriers down in a state and city that was accepting, but still didn't talk about it too much. By the time we got to Mayor White, you saw a lot more gay people within that administration being more open, including myself. I felt as though I had more freedom to be myself and to cast off a lot of fear with my work environment. Mayor Parker has been very inspirational to me."

Spanjian had the opportunity to move from a solidly progressive city government in San Francisco to one that is making positive progress in Houston. She feels that the mayor's strong example has practically made LGBT acceptance a non-issue. "You become part of the fabric of city government," she says. "You're not unique for being gay; it's just that you're part of the administration."

Spanjian's role at City Hall is almost unprecedented. "Mayor Parker was very clear that she trusted me, and that she was going to let me do, within bounds, what I'd like, and that was fantastic," Spanjian says. Her office has spearheaded Houston's bike-sharing program, which recorded over 40,000 checkouts in the first six months of 2014.

Houston has become the largest purchaser of renewable energy in the nation. City offices will soon convert over 160,000 light bulbs to LED, which should reduce energy needed for lighting by half. Spanjian is currently looking over proposals for an innovative One Bin for All solid-waste program, which would streamline waste disposal for Houstonians by using sorting technology to effectively reclaim waste that is not currently recycled. "Because of those initiatives and because of Mayor Parker's leadership on sustainability, Houston is really on the map as a green leader, which really hasn't happened before," she says.

The sustainability and events offices were seemingly made for collaboration, regardless of their leaders' personal partnership. Spanjian's office developed the SundayStreets initiative, which closed off a major street one Sunday in April, May, and June, and allowed pedestrians to have the freedom to roam, exercise, or play. But "it never would have happened without Susan producing the event," Spanjian says. The two also collaborated on the wildly successful City Hall Farmer's Market, now in its fifth year, which re-opened in September. Thanks to Houston's new prestige as a green leader, Spanjian will be hosting this year's national meeting of the Urban Sustainability Directors Network in town, with Christian producing the event.

While the two have been at the vanguard of much of Houston's development, they both agree that much in the city needs to be improved. "Transportation needs to get on steroids," Christian says. Spanjian hopes for a more dense, centralized downtown, with an increase in shared transportation and biking. Christian insists that this vision can become a reality with more interdepartmental collaboration.

As for LGBT programs, Christian believes that Houston's Pride event could be "more substantive." Spanjian wants Houston's Pride events to rival those of cities like San Francisco, which has a film festival and a transgender march, among other ancillary events.

They are both proud of City Hall's LGBT progress and its two gay council members, and they don't want to lose momentum. "I would love more gay people to run for office," Spanjian says. "We should have two to four LGBT council members. We should have another mayor in the future [from the LGBT community]."

"I'm equally interested in just having equality across the board," Christian adds. "I want the best mayor possible, whether they're gay or straight. I want them to be supportive of the diverse city that we live in, and every one of our cultures. To me, that's what makes a great city—nothing more and nothing less."

They were both impressed by the activism spurred on by the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance, which passed in May. The ordinance protects Houstonians from discrimination in city employment, city services, city contracting practices, housing, public accommodations, and private employment by defining 15 different protected characteristics, including sexual orientation and gender identity. Over 200 speakers—many of them young—signed up to deliver public comments to City Council, an unheard-of number. "I was so proud," Spanjian says. "This issue ignited young people. They're going to be politically active and on the right side of history for many years to come, and support more initiatives which aren't necessarily gay or lesbian, but are about making Houston better."

Since both Christian and Spanjian got their start in government work while in their 20s, they believe that empowering young Houstonians is essential to the city's future. But Christian's advice for young people, and especially young women, is to stay engaged. "What I'm seeing with a lot of women is that they are under a lot of pressure—raising families, working steadfastly to be [agents of change in various] fields. Then, at a certain point, you see incredible women step →

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back," she says. "And what I would say to these women is: we need your leadership and we need your talents."

There's no doubt that Christian and Spanjian are staying engaged with their work at City Hall while also making Houston a better place to raise children. Their son Eli, who is nearing three years old, already enjoys his central location in Montrose. "We live five minutes from the train, the zoo, and the museums—all of which Eli loves and goes to practically weekly," Spanjian says. They are expecting their second son in November. "It's a great place to raise a family," Christian says. "We feel very embraced by this community."

With successful citywide event collaborations, a beautiful home, and a growing family, it seems that Christian and Spanjian shouldn't need to change a thing—except perhaps one. "One of these days, we're going to get married," Spanjian says. The couple is considering a wedding in California, where Spanjian's family lives. "Or Texas will rise up, and we won't have to," Christian adds. With a couple this involved in local government, anything seems possible.

David Goldberg is a regular contributor to OutSmart magazine.

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Vote on November 4

Act before someone silences your rights

by Lane Lewis

Photo by Dalton DeHart



Proud Democrats: Texas gubernatorial candidate Wendy Davis (l) and Lane Lewis, chair of the Harris County Democratic Party, at the Toast to Turning Texas Blue held this past January at Warehouse Live.

Before every election, we hear the same thing: "The stakes have never been this high." "This is the most important election in our lifetime." "Act before someone silences your rights."

It might seem somewhat hyperbolic, but these warnings have never been truer in Harris County, Texas, and throughout the nation. The stakes *do* keep getting higher, making each subsequent election that much more important—especially where people are trying to stifle minority participation through unnecessary new voting restrictions disguised as "voter protection."

The work we do during October and early November will demonstrate how much we want to see progress in Houston, and the commitment we have to rights that affect our brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers.

There are races up and down the ballot that will have long-term impacts, and my main job as the chair of the Harris County Democratic Party is to help elect Democrats. We do this by educating voters, making contrasts between candidates, highlighting differences in policy positions, and encouraging the vote.

Democracy only works when we exercise the enfranchisement we are all lucky enough to have. Politicians depend on infrequent voters not turning out. If they would get out to vote, the world would have a much friendlier hue.

The Democratic Party ended "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and promoted marriage equality. Democrats gave seniors Social Security, women the right to vote and the Fair Pay Act, African-Americans the Civil Rights Act of 1964, students the Student AID Act, and all Americans the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and most recently, access to healthcare. We must continue being the party of "Yes We Can."

If everyone would get out to vote, the world would have a much friendlier hue.

Most of us are familiar with Governor Perry and the Republican record of "No We Won't." This year, Perry has essentially vacated the governor's mansion for weekends in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and Keene, New Hampshire, as he prepares yet another presidential run.

But as extreme as Perry is, Greg Abbott is much worse. He is running against a state senator named Wendy Davis to replace Perry, and Abbott will stop at nothing to put up hurdles to voting. He has also sued the federal government to prevent people from getting healthcare, and he is working each and every day to prevent LGBT couples from having their marriages recognized by the State of Texas.

A vote for Abbott is a big step back on the road to equality. It would send a message to the nation that Texas is not ready to lead on important issues, and it will have personal consequences for many reading these words. Plain and simple: an Abbott administration would be a dangerous proposition in Texas.

But the stakes are just as high in Harris County. You might not realize it, but we elect our judges in Texas, and this year there are a host of judicial candidates who are working around the clock to talk to voters, asking for their support. These are low-budget affairs, often run on dining-room tables next to kids finishing up their spelling homework and accompanied by the clanking of silverware being washed in the sink. There is no money for sharp TV ads in these races, yet these candidates have more of a direct impact on your lives than most other state and federal officials do.

When we say "justice matters" at my office, we understand it to mean fairness. We believe it to mean that a Democratic slate of judges will be fair and impartial, and also bring their personal experiences to the bench. Real-world experience? Yes, please! The other alternative is a dangerous proposition for all of us.

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Vote on November 4 *continued from previous page*

have more openly LGBT candidates on the ballot next month than at any time in Harris County history—fine candidates like Judge Steven Kirkland and Jim Evans. Jim Evans, when elected, will be the first openly LGBT family judge in the entire South. You would enter Jim Evans's court if you wanted to adopt children. Imagine LGBT couples no longer being forced to drive to Austin or San Antonio to adopt children in need of homes.

At the top of our county ticket is Kim Ogg, who is running for Harris County District Attorney. She is a respected and trusted leader, a voice of reason, and supported by people on both sides of the political spectrum. While the consensus is that she would make a top-notch district attorney, her ultimate enemy on November 4 will be voter apathy. Harris County is still a Republican place, and Kim has a "D" next to her name. Additionally, she lives with Olivia Jordan, her life partner of 28 years and the mother of their 15-year-old son, Jack.

For many voters, those are disqualifying traits. That only makes me work harder at my job. It energizes me to talk to more voters meeting in fluorescent-lit union halls and fragrant Mexican restaurants, and to reach out to our senior voters across the county. Talking to voters is how we win.

Campaigns are not rocket science. I need to talk to more voters and convince them to vote for my candidates than the other side does. It is simple arithmetic, and you are part of that equation. To be successful on election day this year, you must vote. Issues that you hold close to your heart will be decided at the polls on November 4, so staying home, or being tired, or anything else, is not an excuse.

We have two weeks of early voting in Texas—or you can vote on Election Day. You could even vote by mail if you qualify.

Harris County is not a Republican county. It is a blue county with low voter turnout.

Vote the straight Democratic ticket on November 4 . . .

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- because you may want to marry (or stay married to) the person you love.
- because kids attend schools with overcrowded classes and underpaid teachers.
- because all children deserve a safe home, and same-gender parents can help make that happen.

You have everything to gain and nothing to lose by voting Democratic on November 4.

Lane Lewis is Chair of the Harris County Democratic Party.

Know Your November 4 Ballot

LGBT candidates seek to bring equality to Harris County

In a time when those in power are trying to stifle voter participation, exercising our civic duty at the ballot box has never been more important. As the November 4 election quickly approaches, it is imperative that voters are educated on which candidates reflect their values and beliefs before casting their ballots. These openly LGBT candidates have all been endorsed by the Houston GLBT Political Caucus, have committed to promoting equality for all, and are asking for the support of our community.

Steven Kirkland
District Judge, 113th Civil District Court


DAVID LEWIS STUDIO

With 12 years of judicial experience, 24 years of legal experience, and over 30 years of experience working for the community, Steven Kirkland says, "I'm an excellent candidate for the bench. I've seen the justice system from all sides—as a defendant, as a plaintiff, as an attorney, and as a judge." He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Rice University and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Houston Law Center. Kirkland previously was Judge of the 215th District Court and is hoping to make his way back to the bench this election to serve the people "fairly, efficiently, and with compassion."

Jim Evans
District Judge, 308th Family District Court



Jim Evans knows families—he's a parent, divorced parent, stepparent, and adoptive parent. A native Houstonian, he has over 10 years of law experience, and his practice has recently focused almost exclusively on family law. Evans holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Houston Baptist University, a master's degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and is a graduate of the University of Houston Law Center. He and his husband, William Flowers, married in Connecticut in 2010. If elected, Evans will be the first openly gay family judge in Texas.

Kim Ogg
Harris Country District Attorney



With 26 years of experience in the justice system, Kim Ogg has worked as a prosecutor, defense lawyer, and is a long-time victims' advocate. She served as both the director of Houston's first anti-gang task force under mayor Bob Lanier and the executive director of Crime Stoppers of Houston. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Texas at Austin and is a graduate of the South Texas College of Law. "I think it's time to return the district attorney's office to sensible policies," she says, "and go after real criminals instead of small-time offenders."

David Rosen
Harris County Treasurer


THERESA RIVERNO

Although David Rosen is not a gay candidate himself, he calls LGBT equality "one of the most pressing crises of conscience facing our country." LGBT rights are personal for Rosen, as his two moms have been together for 28 years but have never been able to share health insurance. He has a bachelor's degree from the University of Houston, where he is also currently an MBA candidate. Rosen is the first American political candidate with gay parents to release a campaign ad starring his modern family. As county treasurer, he will strive to use technology to increase transparency, teach business skills to at-risk kids, and regularly issue reports on the state of our local finances.

Jerry Simoneaux
Judge, County Probate Court #3



For nearly 13 years, Jerry Simoneaux has practiced probate law almost exclusively, both in private practice and as a probate court staff member for the Honorable Kathleen S. Stone. He holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of Houston and is a graduate of the South Texas College of Law, where he also taught as an adjunct professor. "I believe our courts should be fair, efficient, and compassionate, but never political," Simoneaux says. "Fair to all parties—no exceptions."

Randy Roll
District Judge, 180th Criminal District Court



Randy Roll served as a criminal defense attorney for nearly 20 years before being elected Judge of the 179th District Criminal Court in 2008—a position he held until 2012. During that time, he reduced the waiting time for a trial from years to a few months and made the grand-jury selection system reflect the ethnic diversity of Harris County. He holds a Bachelor of Arts from Lamar University and is a graduate of the South Texas College of Law.

Greg Glass
District Judge, 230th Criminal District Court



Greg Glass has over 40 years of experience as a criminal trial lawyer. He also previously served as the Democratic Precinct Chair for Precinct 34. Glass holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Texas at Arlington and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Texas at Austin. If elected, he hopes to better prioritize cases for trial, as well as ensure that all non-violent offenders can post bail so that they can keep or obtain a job, support their dependents, and hire their own attorneys.

Herb Ritchie
District Judge, 263rd Criminal District Court



Candidate Herb Ritchie has 32 years experience in both civil and criminal cases and appellate procedure. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree, master's degree, and Juris Doctorate from the University of Texas at Austin, where he also taught as an instructor of Classics. Ritchie was elected Judge of the 337th Criminal District Court in 2008 and is hoping to return to the bench this November. "I believe in and will work for a system of justice whereby every person, regardless of status, receives fair and equal treatment under the Law," he says.

Damon Crenshaw
Judge, County Civil Court at Law #4



Damon Crenshaw has spent more than 26 years gaining experience in the courtroom as a lawyer, representing people from all walks of life, small businesses, and international business entities. He holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from Texas A&M University and is a graduate of South Texas College of Law. Crenshaw is an active volunteer with the Houston GLBT Political Caucus and lives with his partner of 28 years. "I've worked both sides of the docket and will approach my role as judge with a fair and open mind to both sides," he says. "I don't have an agenda. Everyone will get his or her day in court." *–Megan Smith*

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The 30-Year Fight for Equality in Houston

A look back at the 1984–85 referendum

by Dale Carpenter



The good, the bad, and the ugly: (l–r) In 1984, seven years after Houston gay activist Ray Hill protested an appearance of antigay crusader Anita Bryant at a downtown hotel, the city council passed two ordinances prohibiting discrimination against gay people in city employment. Mayor Kathy Whitmire supported both measures. After opponents gathered enough signatures for a referendum to repeal the ordinances, those in favor of the repeal brought in controversial psychologist Paul Cameron, who used his antigay rhetoric and fear tactics to influence voters, especially those in the black religious community. However, not all black leaders shared Cameron's mentality—former U.S. representative Barbara Jordan vocally opposed the repeal effort and was an ally to the LGBT community.



EDITOR'S NOTE: This essay is largely excerpted from Flagrant Conduct: The Story of Lawrence v. Texas, *by Dale Carpenter. Copyright © 2012 by Dale Carpenter. With permission of the publisher, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. All rights reserved.*

The recent passage of the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance by the city council, followed by an attempt to have it placed on the ballot to be repealed, recalls a momentous and divisive fight in this city three decades ago involving a far more limited antidiscrimination ordinance and an ensuing backlash.

By 1984, the gay civil rights movement in Houston was flush with success. Seven years earlier, community activists, led by people like Ray Hill, had loudly protested the appearance of Anita Bryant, an antigay crusader, at a downtown hotel event. The event sparked a movement. In 1979, the four-year-old Gay Political Caucus (now called the Houston GLBT Political Caucus), helped elect the first woman to the city council against an opponent who dismissed her supporters as "oddwads and homosexuals."

In 1981, gay voters were seen as instrumental in electing the city's first woman mayor, a liberal named Kathy Whitmire.

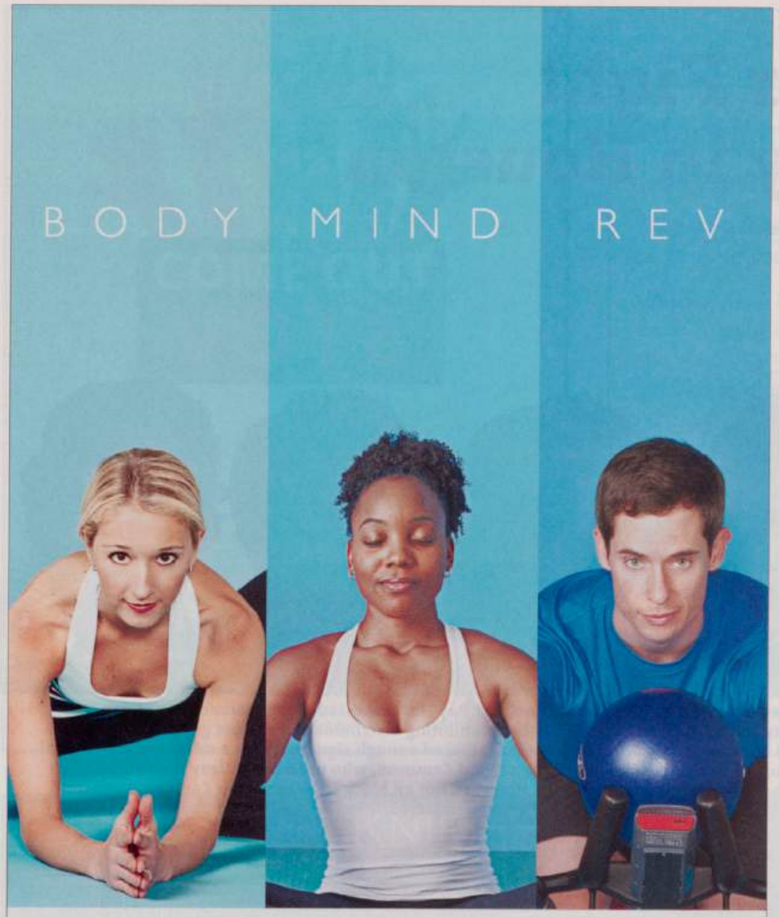
"By this time next year very close to all of them [homosexuals] are going to be infected. It's bad enough our boys are being raped" by homosexuals, [Paul Cameron] said, "but to have them die because of the rape is worse."

Two years later, candidates lined up for the GPC endorsement, which helped install a progressive majority in the city council for the first time. Politicians who wanted to get elected to city office could no longer campaign openly on antigay platforms. It was without question the high point in the early phase of the city's gay civil rights movement. *Newsweek* hailed the arrival of what it called "Gay Power in Macho Houston."

A chain of events soon shattered any illusion, however, that gay men and lesbians might have become a political powerhouse. It would bring to the surface all of the enduring stereotypes that homosexuals were perverted and dangerous—in the end, child-molesting criminals.

On June 19, 1984, the city council passed two ordinances prohibiting discrimination against gay people in city employment by adding "sexual orientation" to sections of the city's civil service code that already banned discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, age, disability, sex, and national origin.

A poll showed that Houstonians opposed discrimination against homosexuals by a nine-point margin. While the GPC →



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The 30-Year Fight for Equality . . .

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did not initially push for passage of the ordinances (some leaders feared a political backlash), the group eventually had no choice but to support it. The vote in the council was 9–6 on the main nondiscrimination ordinance and 8–7 on a second ordinance that dealt with affirmative action. Mayor Whitmire supported both measures. The closeness of the votes foreshadowed the political controversy that would ensue. As the council debated the measures, a group of Ku Klux Klansmen stood outside the chambers and chanted, "Death to homosexuals."

Passage of the ordinances enraged religious conservatives, who were beginning to coalesce into a local and national movement of their own as a response to what they regarded as attacks on traditional moral values. Within a month, they had gathered more than 60,000 signatures from voters for a referendum to repeal the ordinances. The referendum was set for January 19, 1985.

The winter of 1984–85 in Houston saw one of the most viciously antigay political campaigns ever conducted in the nation. City ordinances that protected, at most, a few hundred city workers became a symbol of the larger culture war being fought across the country. In Houston, the vote became a referendum on homosexuality itself.

Gay leaders foresaw a serious challenge. A meeting of community activists on July 11, 1984, mapped strategy for the coming six months. The planning group agreed that gay men and lesbians should remain largely invisible during the campaign. "It is essential that all spokespersons be from the non-gay community," read the minutes of the meeting. A 15-member steering committee would "work in the background with a city-wide group of non-gays." The main, public face of the campaign committee would "exclud[e] gay activists."

At a time when they had supposedly reached new heights of political power, the city's gay leadership, in other words, opted for a closeted strategy. They would try to hide during the campaign and let others take the public lead. Unfortunately, straight support never materialized in anywhere near the numbers, significance, or dedication the community hoped for.

With few exceptions, civic, religious, and business leaders were spooked by gay-rights opponents and remained on the sidelines or even joined the repeal drive. John Goodner, a council member who had previously sought and obtained GPC endorsement but was opposed to the antidiscrimination ordinances, formed a group called the Committee for Public Awareness (CPA) to promote a "yes" vote on the referendum. It immediately focused attention on the supposed danger of homosexuality itself, rather than on the question of whether city workers should be protected from job discrimination.

The CPA brought Nebraska psychologist Paul Cameron to Houston to speak. Cameron's efforts to "convert" homosexuals into heterosexuals and his shoddy and distorted research on the allegedly harmful effects of homosexuality had caused him to be expelled from the American Psychological Association. Cameron exploited the public's fears of AIDS, which was just then entering the national consciousness as a major health threat. Speaking at a prayer breakfast of the predominantly black Concerned Pastors and Ministers of Houston, Cameron advocated a quarantine of all gay people to prevent the spread of AIDS. Unless homosexuals were removed from society, Cameron told the ministers, mankind's very existence would be imperiled. "By this time next year very close to all of them [homosexuals] are going to be infected. It's bad enough our boys are being raped" by homosexuals, he said, "but to have them die because of the rape is worse." Even though Goodner later distanced himself from Cameron, the invidious tone was set.

CPA campaign coordinator Judi Wilson, a veteran of Anita Bryant's successful effort to repeal a Miami antidiscrimination ordinance in 1977, said that the goal of homosexuals was not equality, "but to have control." In a letter to voters, the CPA warned that Houston was in danger of becoming "another San Francisco or New York City—a haven for the ever increasing number of avowed homosexuals that will move to our City." Houston, she charged, "has been selected [by national gay rights organizations] as the site of what amounts to the critical battleground in the national war on traditional family values." The letter closed with a quote from Annise Parker, who was then a young GPC leader, saying that "a victory [in the referendum] would be a signal that it is time to press ahead for other goals."

Another pro-repeal group, Campaign for Houston, invited voters to a screening of a sensationalistic 1980 CBS documentary called *Gay Power, Gay Politics* just 11 days before the referendum. In its letter to voters, Campaign for Houston said the documentary revealed that in San Francisco "children may not safely play in the parks without being exposed to [sic] by men who are meeting men for 'anonymous' sex in full public view; sadomasochistic parlors have proliferated; the city's mayor is a pawn of the radical homosexuals; the public schools are mandated to teach homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle to the children; and more."

The city's business establishment, represented by the Houston Chamber of Commerce, publicly supported repeal. Led by former mayor Louie Welch, business leaders said they feared that protecting gay people →

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The 30-Year Fight for Equality . . .

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from discrimination could hurt the city economically, driving away commerce and tarnishing the city's image.

Lawyers at prominent Houston law firms and the president of the Houston Bar Association also announced support for repeal. Harvard-educated Scott Brister, a partner at the respected Houston-based law firm Andrews Kurth L.L.P. (and later a justice on the Texas Supreme Court), warned that the ordinances would "protect persons whose sexual practices might be unhealthy, perhaps violent, or sometimes abhorrent to the particular citizens whom they are to serve."

In the midst of an epidemic that threatened the public with a deadly, sexually transmissible virus, medical opinion played a major role in the campaign to repeal the ordinance. Campaign for Houston sponsored advertisements in which local allergist and religious-right activist Steven Hotze warned that homosexual men were the "primary carriers" of AIDS and that Houston would "become a homosexual mecca if we permit laws that encourage more homosexuals to settle here, increasing the threat to your health. . . . Enough is enough."

Religious leaders also played an important part in the repeal. Roman Catholic bishop John Morkovsky said those who supported the ordinances were "perverts." Edwin Young, pastor of the Second Baptist Church, predicted the ordinances would promote "pedophilia,-necrophilia, and other sexual perversions."

The Harris County GOP strongly backed repeal. The county party's chairman, Russ Mather, cautioned that if the ordinances stood, homosexuals would become police officers as a way to have sex with children. "I've heard that the first thing homosexuals do when they join the force is try to infiltrate the juvenile division," he said, evoking age-old fears of gay conspiracies to molest and recruit children. "When you have a homosexual patrolling Montrose, is he a cop first or a homosexual first?" asked Mather. Not surprisingly, given the decades-long animosity between the gay community and law enforcement, the Houston Police Patrolmen's Union endorsed the repeal.

Antigay forces saw an opportunity to split the coalition of racial minorities and progressive white voters. Before the ordinances passed, Goodner had warned they would weaken affirmative action for blacks and other racial minorities because they would be "pitting born minorities against minorities by choice." He predicted gay men and lesbians would win that contest, leading to more discrimination against blacks and Hispanics.

On the day of the referendum, which coincided with celebrations of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, the Committee for Public Awareness ran a large ad in the city's black newspaper, *The Informer and Texas Freeman*. The ad, endorsed by the black Baptist Ministers Association of Houston, warned that the ordinance was "the FIRST STEP in a calculated scheme by homosexuals to gain political power and to force their dangerous lifestyle on our city and nation."

Another CPA-sponsored ad, this one in the *Houston Chronicle*, featured pictures of six prominent black ministers urging repeal. "Let's not forfeit our hard-won rights to an artificial minority!" the ad warned. "This is a moral issue . . . not a discrimination issue. This is a gay power issue . . . not a civil rights issue."

Not all black leaders agreed. Former U. S. representative Barbara Jordan, the first black woman to be elected to the House of Representatives from the South, openly opposed the repeal of the ordinances.

Repeal advocates distributed slick brochures with photographs of schoolchildren exiting buses that thundered, "No matter what anyone says, no matter what they promise or deny or cross their hearts about, you know what the next step is: protecting the rights of homosexuals to teach their lifestyle in the classroom."

But perhaps the most inflammatory material of all was a brochure distributed during the campaign by Cameron's own Institute for the Scientific Investigation of Sexuality (ISIS). The front cover of "Murder, Violence and Homosexuality" depicted a young girl cowering and screaming in a corner, her hands attempting to shield her body, as a (presumably gay) man wielded a hatchet over her head. The ISIS brochure claimed gays were unusually likely to commit "sex murders," abuse alcohol and drugs, and even have automobile accidents. It closed with this:

In these and countless other ways homosexuals increase the collective risk of living. And to what advantage? What do homosexuals do for us that makes up for the damage they do to us? Nothing, nothing at all. There are no benefits associated with homosexuality, only liabilities—for them and for us. . . . Do we need this grief? Do our children need to play in a more dangerous world to satisfy the quirks of those given to kinky sex? No. Enough. Homosexuality ought to be suppressed with all deliberate speed, lets [sic] get on with it.

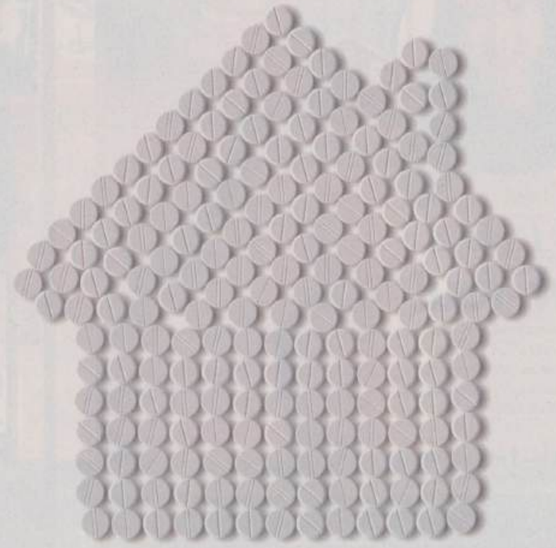
Supporters of the repeal effort staffed a 200-person phone bank on the eve of the election to remind like-minded people to vote, compared with only 45 phones for the pro-ordinance group. And the repeal campaign raised and spent tens of thousands of dollars more than its opponents.

All of this activity overwhelmed gay-rights advocates.

The results of the January 1985 →

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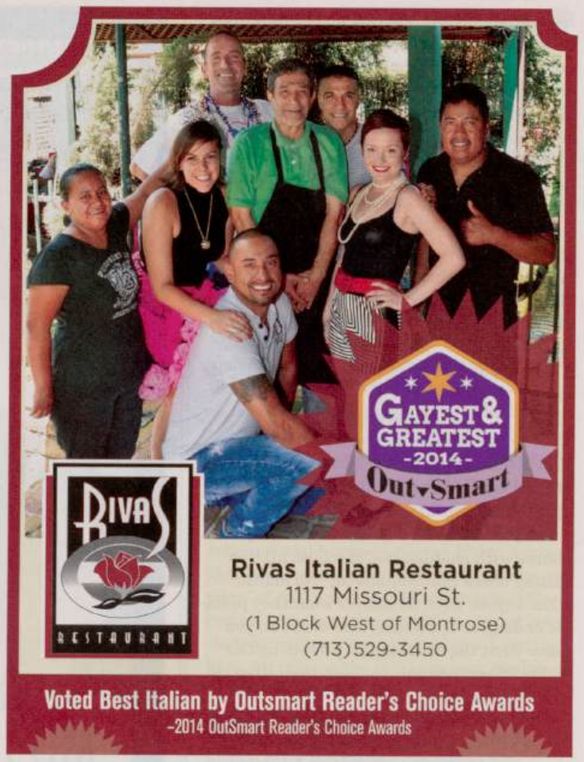
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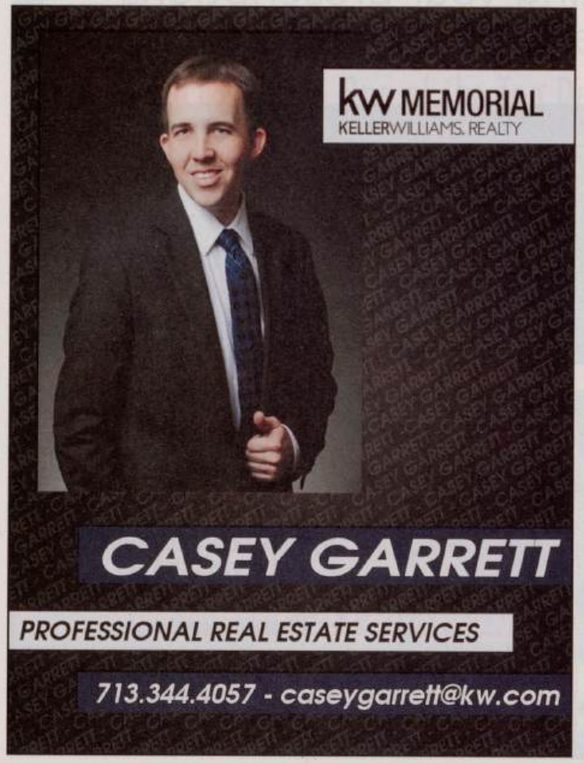


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The 30-Year Fight for Equality . . .

continued from page 61

referendum were devastating. Voters opted to repeal the antidiscrimination ordinances by a stunning margin, 80 percent to 20 percent. The repeal won handily in every section of the city except Montrose.

A pall hung over the gay community and its organizations. Just a year before, local gay leaders thought they were the new power brokers in the city; now nobody would return their phone calls. The ferocity of the repeal campaign proved that homosexuals were still pariahs after all. The campaign had given full voice to a deep-seated bigotry, and voters had overwhelmingly validated that hatred and disgust.

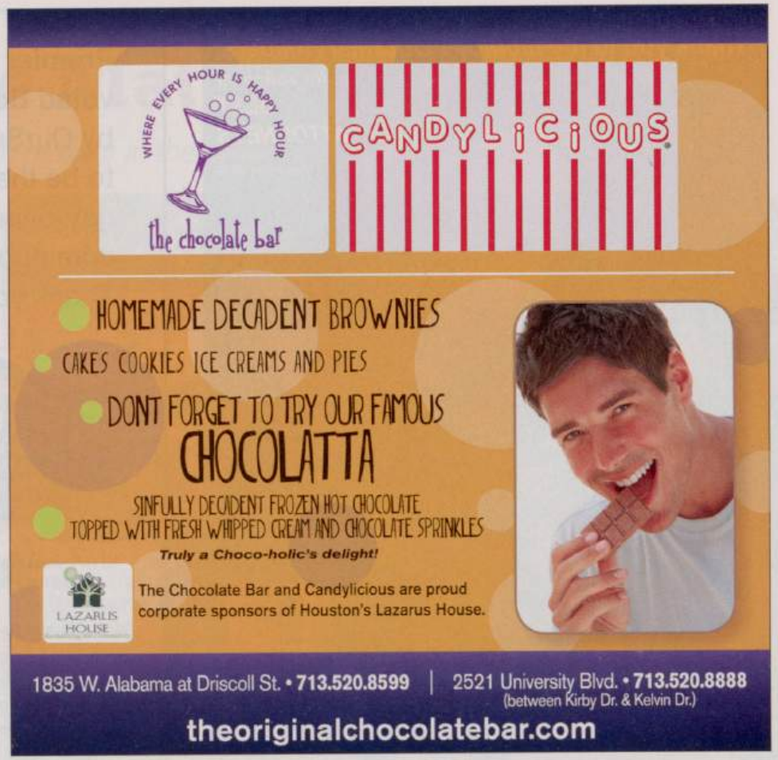
A columnist in the local gay newspaper noted that even otherwise progressive voters could not be counted on to stand up for gays. "We deluded ourselves. We believed our 'progressive coalition' we thought we belonged to would pull in behind us. . . . It didn't." Homophobia, not job discrimination, was "the real issue in this campaign."

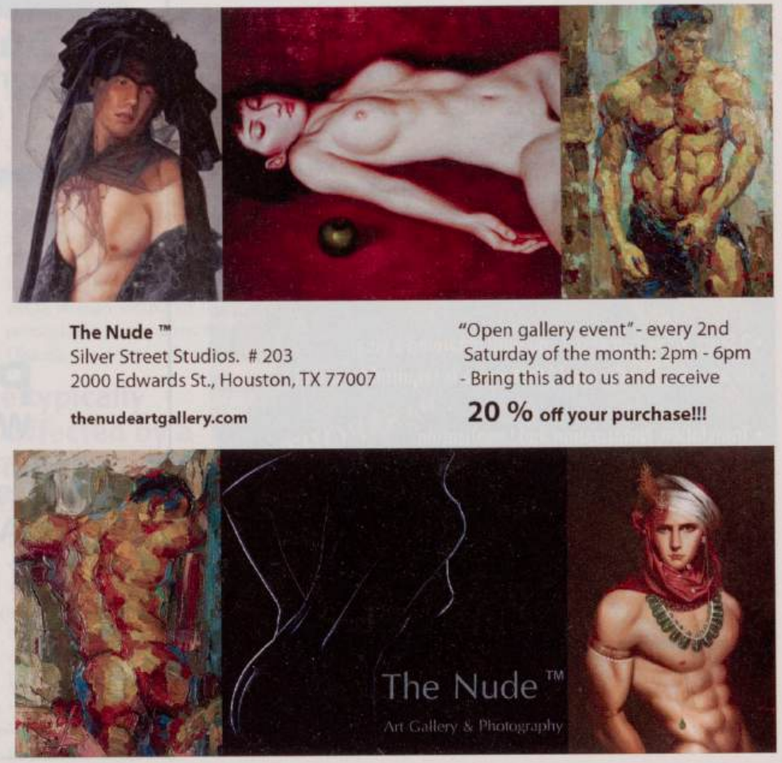
Just a month after the referendum, 59 percent of Houstonians told pollsters they opposed equal rights for gays. In the next election, not a single candidate for municipal office—not even Mayor Whitmire—sought the GPC's endorsement.

"The fallout from that [referendum] was that the community bubble had been burst," remembered Parker. "We weren't all-powerful and were shown to be mostly smoke and mirrors." The GPC was $10,000 in debt, its membership fell, and AIDS itself started to take a serious toll, both by killing leaders in the community and by diverting talent and energy toward dealing with the immense health crisis. While things gradually improved for the community, it would not soon regain the perceived influence on city politics it enjoyed in the golden years between 1979 and 1984.

The memory of the antidiscrimination ordinance repeal echoes across three decades. It's a history worth remembering both for its similarities and dissimilarities to the controversy over the HERO ordinance and other efforts to end invidious discrimination. It tells us a lot about what's changed and what hasn't. And it reminds us that progress toward equality is neither inevitable nor unilinear. As the past slowly escapes our grasp, we take hold of the future. That future isn't something that just happens to us. It is what we make it.

Dale Carpenter is the Distinguished University Teaching Professor and Earl R. Larson Professor of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Law at the University of Minnesota Law School. A former Houstonian, Carpenter was the author of the "OutRight" column for OUTSMART magazine from 1994 to 2009.

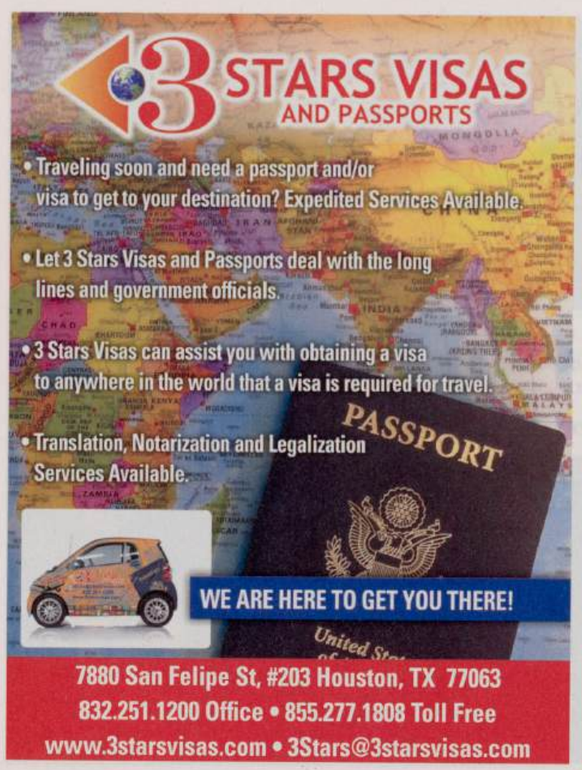




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Every Voice Matters

The importance of Texas women of color in the November election

by Amanda Williams



AP PHOTO/THE SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS-NEWS, HELEN L. MONTOYA

Get out the vote: Carol McDonald speaks at a San Antonio event protesting Texas Republicans' funding cuts to Planned Parenthood and access to women's reproductive healthcare. Low-income women of color have been especially affected by the state's recent cuts to funding for family planning and will be looking closely at candidates' plans to increase access to these services this election cycle.

On November 4, Texas holds its first truly competitive election for governor since 1990. We'll see Democrat Wendy Davis face off against Republican Greg Abbott for governor, while Leticia Van de Putte, also a Democrat, battles Republican Dan Patrick for lieutenant governor.

This important election has the potential to usher in drastic changes in the arenas of education, healthcare, pay equity, and more. It's also an historic moment for Texas women. The Davis and Van de Putte candidacies are only the fifth time in at least the past two decades that a party has nominated women for both governor and lieutenant governor. Should the all-female ticket win, it would be the first time that women occupied Austin's top two seats concurrently.

While groups around the state are conducting voter registration drives and getting the word out about these candidates, the voter turnout on Election Day will be the deciding factor in both races. And while there is much speculation about whether or not more women will feel empowered to turn out to vote—seeing that Davis and Van de Putte are up to bat—it has historically been the *women of color* who are the deciding factor in the Democrats' electoral victories across the country. Not only is this fact important from a grassroots movement-building perspective, but recognition of minority voters across the board is crucial to understanding what's really at stake this November.

Women of color are typically disproportionately affected by a slew of policies and restrictions at all levels of the political spectrum.

Take the 2012 election that saw Barack Obama beat Mitt Romney. Much was said about 2012's so-called gender gap among voters, and the common narrative was that women—who for the first time turned out at greater rates and in higher numbers than men—were responsible for President Obama's victory. However, according to a report by the Center for American Progress (CAP), while 55 percent of all voting women voted for President Obama, 76 percent of Latinas and 96 percent of black women voted for the president. This left 52 percent of white women voting for Romney, and only 42 percent of white women voted for President Obama. So it was only with the overwhelming support of women of color that Obama was able to claim a slim majority of the overall female vote. These numbers show the true extent of just how powerful the voices of women of color can be.

What we saw in 2012 is a small part of a big trend that has been going on for over a decade. The CAP reports that women of color have been voting at steadily increasing rates over the last 12 years. In fact, the increased turnout among all women of color has been quite dramatic. Between 2004 and 2008, Latina turnout increased by 21 percent, versus 8 percent for black women and 17 percent for Asian American women. Black women almost always turn out at greater rates than men of color.

Although this trend is prevalent nationwide, voter turnout in Texas as a whole is extremely low, especially for women. According to the most recent *Texas on the Brink* report, Texas is 51st (read: dead last) in women's voter turnout, and 47th in women's voter registration.

Furthermore, the recently enforced Texas Voter ID law is said to make it harder for minority populations to vote. This voter ID law requires voters to show photo identification when voting in person. The list of acceptable forms of photo ID include a Texas driver's license, an →





Every Voice Matters

continued from previous page

Election Identification Certificate, a Texas personal ID card, a Texas concealed-handgun license, a U.S. military ID, U.S. citizenship certificate, or a U.S. passport.

There are few exceptions to the law, and opponents of the law state that excluding certain forms of identification such as tribal IDs, student IDs, utility bills, Social Security cards, and expired driver's licenses makes compliance disproportionately more onerous for people of color, as well as students and the elderly. One study conducted by the Brennan Center for Justice shows that while just 8 percent of white voters lack photo identification, 25 percent of black voters and 16 percent of Latino voters *do not* have photo IDs.

Marianela Acuña-Arreaza is the Texas coordinator for VoteRiders, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization focusing on making sure that no eligible citizen is denied his or her right to vote due to lack of identification. She says that obtaining an appropriate photo ID can be more difficult than people think, especially for people of color and women. "Many women may change their names after they marry or divorce, and if their name doesn't match the name that is on their voter file, they may be given a provisional ballot [instead of a regular ballot] at the polls," Acuña-Arreaza says.

Acuña-Arreaza explains that if the name on your ID matches perfectly with the name on your voter file, then you get a regular ballot. If the names are completely different, then a voter will be given a provisional ballot. However, if the names are "substantially similar," then the decision is up to the poll worker. "It's tricky, because Latinos and Asian Americans often change their names when they become naturalized citizens," she says. "Some may use two different names, and in other cases, their names may be misspelled. These things are most common among people of color, making them at higher risk of receiving a provisional ballot, which won't be counted unless the voter takes an acceptable ID to the registrar's office by the Monday following the election."

VoteRiders assists people on multiple levels—from helping them with name changes to navigating the bureaucracy necessary to obtain a valid photo ID. You can find them online at voteriders.org.

Elections Have Consequences

Beyond the numbers, why are the voices of women of color so important in this election? What do they have to lose?

Women of color are typically disproportionately affected by a slew of policies and restrictions at all levels of the political spectrum. They currently represent 53.2 percent of uninsured women and, in turn, suffer from a variety of health disparities. Access to healthcare, reducing the rate of uninsured citizens, and the decision of whether or not to maximize funding for Medicaid are big issues facing our Texas candidates.

The fight for reproductive rights is an especially important healthcare concern. Low-income women of color often face various forms of reproductive oppression, including a severe lack of access to contraception, sexual health education, and family planning services. Since 2011, the state has cut family-planning funding and further restricted abortion services by closing dozens of clinics that offered much-needed women's health services in some of Texas's most underserved communities like the Rio Grande Valley. Women of color will be looking closely at the candidates' plans to increase access to reproductive healthcare.

Women of color also have a huge economic stake in this election. Although women make 77 cents for every dollar the average man makes, the wage gap is much more pronounced among women of color, with black women making 64 cents on the dollar and Latina women making 55 cents on the dollar. And because 40 percent of households with children have a female primary breadwinner, pay equity is an issue all women should be watching carefully.

Among the other hot-button topics, education and immigration will play a bigger role in determining who the best candidates are for women of color, and for our state as a whole. I encourage you to do your own research to learn where each candidate stands on these important issues.

For the past several months, Legacy Community Health Services—in partnership with the Nonprofit VOTE and Neighborhood Centers Inc. organizations—has been conducting nonpartisan voter registration drives in clinic lobbies to provide clients with critical voter information, empowering them to take part in the democratic process. As a community healthcare provider that sees thousands of Texas families every day, clients trust Legacy staff members to provide them with this important information that affects the well-being of all Texas citizens. Legacy clients are told that their voices are important and that their vote matters.

Although the issues at the forefront of this election may affect each one of us differently, *all* of our voices are crucial to upholding our democracy. To be heard, register to vote by October 6, make sure you have an appropriate photo ID, and vote on November 4.

If you have other questions about voting in Texas, please visit votetexas.gov.

Amanda Williams is the public affairs field specialist at Legacy Community Health Services and focuses on women's health, human trafficking, and civic engagement. She has a master's degree in social work with a political specialization. You can find her on twitter @ fullfrontalfem.





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Proud's Pride

An interview with 'First Comes Love' photographer B. Proud

by Gregg Shapiro



Face to face: these are just six of the 60 photographs in B. Proud's *First Comes Love: Portraits of Enduring LGBTQ Relationships*.

LGBT people have much to be proud of, and few people appreciate that more than lesbian photographer B. Proud. Her stunning coffee-table book *First Comes Love* (Soleil Press, 2014), a collection of photos and corresponding essays, celebrates the enduring relationships of 60 same-gender couples who have been together for anywhere from 10 to nearly 60 years. The cross-section of subjects includes both familiar faces—Prop 8 plaintiffs and the widow Edie Windsor, Houston's mayor Annise Parker and her spouse Kathy Hubbard, and the late Barbara Gittings and her widow Kay Lahusen—as well as couples that many readers will be meeting for the first time, who will make lasting impressions. This book would be a perfect gift for LGBT History Month (October) or for the winter holidays that are just around the corner. I spoke with Proud about *First Comes Love* last month.

Gregg Shapiro: *First Comes Love* has a history as a traveling exhibition of photos, stories, and video. What was the genesis of that aspect of the project?

B. Proud: From the very beginning, I envisioned the project as a series of photographs accompanied by stories. The whole Proposition 8 thing had me very angry, and I was determined to do what I could. I basically knew where I wanted this to go from the start.

"This is our real story, the one below the surface, and is one that needs to be told."

I decided to interview the couples on video with a two-fold purpose in mind: to have information to write their stories, and to have footage for films of various lengths for various purposes. To date, only a trailer is complete, but a longer-length film is being considered.

I originally wanted the photographs in the exhibition to be presented very large, as if you were meeting these people face to face. Or in the case of a book, I wanted them to fill a vertical page. From the very beginning, I intended this project to be educational in nature. I was envisioning how it would be viewed best by the public and how my message would best reach the public.



B. Proud

How did it evolve into the book *First Comes Love*?

As I mentioned, it was my goal from the outset to bring together a strong enough collection of images and stories to make a book. Once I had a good representative sample of what I was doing, I made several "print-on-demand" books through a service called Blurb, in order to show to my subjects and to potential publishers. These were 12"x12" square and very expensive to make on an individual basis, but people responded to them quite well and wanted to buy them even before it was a finished book/project. So I knew that I had a good thing. I also have a very good friend who designed those first books so they looked great and very professional, even if the printing wasn't as good as offset.

Who do you hope to reach with the book?

continued on page 74

What is STRIBILD?

STRIBILD is a prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in adults who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before. It combines 4 medicines into 1 pill to be taken once a day with food. STRIBILD is a complete single-tablet regimen and should not be used with other HIV-1 medicines.

STRIBILD does not cure HIV-1 infection or AIDS. To control HIV-1 infection and decrease HIV-related illnesses you must keep taking STRIBILD. Ask your healthcare provider if you have questions about how to reduce the risk of passing HIV-1 to others. Always practice safer sex and use condoms to lower the chance of sexual contact with body fluids. Never reuse or share needles or other items that have body fluids on them.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

What is the most important information I should know about STRIBILD?

STRIBILD can cause serious side effects:

- **Build-up of an acid in your blood (lactic acidosis),** which is a serious medical emergency. Symptoms of lactic acidosis include feeling very weak or tired, unusual (not normal) muscle pain, trouble breathing, stomach pain with nausea or vomiting, feeling cold especially in your arms and legs, feeling dizzy or lightheaded, and/or a fast or irregular heartbeat.
- **Serious liver problems.** The liver may become large (hepatomegaly) and fatty (steatosis). Symptoms of liver problems include your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice), dark "tea-colored" urine, light-colored bowel movements (stools), loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, and/or stomach pain.
- **You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or serious liver problems** if you are female, very overweight (obese), or have been taking STRIBILD for a long time. In some cases, these serious conditions have led to death. Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any symptoms of these conditions.
- **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** If you also have HBV and stop taking STRIBILD, your hepatitis may suddenly get worse. Do not stop taking STRIBILD without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to monitor your health. STRIBILD is not approved for the treatment of HBV.

Who should not take STRIBILD?

Do not take STRIBILD if you:

- **Take a medicine that contains:** alfuzosin, dihydroergotamine, ergotamine, methylergonovine, cisapride, lovastatin, simvastatin, pimozide, sildenafil when used for lung problems (Revatio®), triazolam, oral midazolam, rifampin or the herb St. John's wort.
- **For a list of brand names for these medicines,** please see the Brief Summary on the following pages.
- **Take any other medicines to treat HIV-1 infection,** or the medicine adefovir (Hepsera®).

What are the other possible side effects of STRIBILD?

Serious side effects of STRIBILD may also include:

- **New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do regular blood and urine tests to check your kidneys before and during treatment with STRIBILD. If you develop kidney problems, your healthcare provider may tell you to stop taking STRIBILD.
- **Bone problems,** including bone pain or bones getting soft or thin, which may lead to fractures. Your healthcare provider may do tests to check your bones.
- **Changes in body fat** can happen in people taking HIV-1 medicines.
- **Changes in your immune system.** Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any new symptoms after you start taking STRIBILD.

The most common side effects of STRIBILD include nausea and diarrhea. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that bother you or don't go away.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking STRIBILD?

- **All your health problems.** Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you have or had any kidney, bone, or liver problems, including hepatitis virus infection.
- **All the medicines you take,** including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. STRIBILD may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how STRIBILD works. Keep a list of all your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist. Do not start any new medicines while taking STRIBILD without first talking with your healthcare provider.
- **If you take hormone-based birth control** (pills, patches, rings, shots, etc).
- **If you take antacids.** Take antacids at least 2 hours before or after you take STRIBILD.
- **If you are pregnant** or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if STRIBILD can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking STRIBILD.
- **If you are breastfeeding** (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed. HIV-1 can be passed to the baby in breast milk. Also, some medicines in STRIBILD can pass into breast milk, and it is not known if this can harm the baby.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please see Brief Summary of full Prescribing Information with **important warnings** on the following pages.



STRIBILD is a prescription medicine used as a complete single-tablet regimen to treat HIV-1 in adults who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before. STRIBILD does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.

I started my personal revolution

Talk to your healthcare provider about starting treatment.

STRIBILD is a complete HIV-1 treatment in 1 pill, once a day.

Ask if it's right for you.

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Patient Information

STRIBILD® (STRY-bild)
(elvitegravir 150 mg/cobicistat 150 mg/emtricitabine 200 mg/ tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300 mg) tablets

Brief summary of full Prescribing Information. For more information, please see the full Prescribing Information, including Patient Information.

What is STRIBILD?

- **STRIBILD is a prescription medicine used to treat HIV-1 in adults who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before.** STRIBILD is a complete regimen and should not be used with other HIV-1 medicines.
- **STRIBILD does not cure HIV-1 or AIDS.** You must stay on continuous HIV-1 therapy to control HIV-1 infection and decrease HIV-related illnesses.
- **Ask your healthcare provider about how to prevent passing HIV-1 to others.** Do not share or reuse needles, injection equipment, or personal items that can have blood or body fluids on them. Do not have sex without protection. Always practice safer sex by using a latex or polyurethane condom to lower the chance of sexual contact with semen, vaginal secretions, or blood.

What is the most important information I should know about STRIBILD?

STRIBILD can cause serious side effects, including:

1. **Build-up of lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis).** Lactic acidosis can happen in some people who take STRIBILD or similar (nucleoside analogs) medicines. Lactic acidosis is a serious medical emergency that can lead to death. Lactic acidosis can be hard to identify early, because the symptoms could seem like symptoms of other health problems. **Call your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms which could be signs of lactic acidosis:**
   - feel very weak or tired
   - have unusual (not normal) muscle pain
   - have trouble breathing
   - have stomach pain with nausea or vomiting
   - feel cold, especially in your arms and legs
   - feel dizzy or lightheaded
   - have a fast or irregular heartbeat
2. **Severe liver problems.** Severe liver problems can happen in people who take STRIBILD. In some cases, these liver problems can lead to death. Your liver may become large (hepatomegaly) and you may develop fat in your liver (steatosis). **Call your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms of liver problems:**
   - your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice)
   - dark "tea-colored" urine
   - light-colored bowel movements (stools)
   - loss of appetite for several days or longer
   - nausea
   - stomach pain

   You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or severe liver problems if you are female, very overweight (obese), or have been taking STRIBILD for a long time.
3. **Worsening of Hepatitis B infection.** If you have hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection and take STRIBILD, your HBV may get worse (flare-up) if you stop taking STRIBILD. A "flare-up" is when your HBV infection suddenly returns in a worse way than before.
   - Do not run out of STRIBILD. Refill your prescription or talk to your healthcare provider before your STRIBILD is all gone
   - Do not stop taking STRIBILD without first talking to your healthcare provider
   - If you stop taking STRIBILD, your healthcare provider will need to check your health often and do blood tests regularly for several months to check your HBV infection. Tell your healthcare provider about any new or unusual symptoms you may have after you stop taking STRIBILD

Who should not take STRIBILD?

Do not take STRIBILD if you also take a medicine that contains:

- adefovir (Hepsera®)
- alfuzosin hydrochloride (Uroxatral®)
- cisapride (Propulsid®, Propulsid Quicksolv®)
- ergot-containing medicines, including: dihydroergotamine mesylate (D.H.E. 45®, Migranal®), ergotamine tartrate (Cafergot®, Migergot®, Ergostat®, Medihaler Ergotamine®, Wigraine®, Wigrettes®), and methylergonovine maleate (Ergotrate®, Methergine®)
- lovastatin (Advicor®, Altoprev®, Mevacor®)
- oral midazolam
- pimozide (Orap®)
- rifampin (Rifadin®, Rifamate®, Rifater®, Rimactane®)
- sildenafil (Revatio®), when used for treating lung problems
- simvastatin (Simcor®, Vytorin®, Zocor®)
- triazolam (Halcion®)
- the herb St. John's wort

Do not take STRIBILD if you also take any other HIV-1 medicines, including:

- Other medicines that contain tenofovir (Atripla®, Complera®, Viread®, Truvada®)
- Other medicines that contain emtricitabine, lamivudine, or ritonavir (Atripla®, Combivir®, Complera®, Emtriva®, Epivir® or Epivir-HBV®, Epzicom®, Kaletra®, Norvir®, Trizivir®, Truvada®)

STRIBILD is not for use in people who are less than 18 years old.

What are the possible side effects of STRIBILD?

STRIBILD may cause the following serious side effects:

- **See "What is the most important information I should know about STRIBILD?"**
- **New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do blood and urine tests to check your kidneys before you start and while you are taking STRIBILD. Your healthcare provider may tell you to stop taking STRIBILD if you develop new or worse kidney problems.
- **Bone problems** can happen in some people who take STRIBILD. Bone problems include bone pain, softening or thinning (which may lead to fractures). Your healthcare provider may need to do tests to check your bones.
- **Changes in body fat** can happen in people who take HIV-1 medicine. These changes may include increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), breast, and around the middle of your body (trunk). Loss of fat from the legs, arms and face may also happen. The exact cause and long-term health effects of these conditions are not known.
- **Changes in your immune system** (Immune Reconstitution Syndrome) can happen when you start taking HIV-1 medicines. Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body for a long time. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you start having any new symptoms after starting your HIV-1 medicine.

The most common side effects of STRIBILD include:

- Nausea
- Diarrhea

Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

- These are not all the possible side effects of STRIBILD. For more information, ask your healthcare provider.
- Call your healthcare provider for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking STRIBILD?

Tell your healthcare provider about all your medical conditions, including:

- If you have or had any kidney, bone, or liver problems, including hepatitis B infection
- If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if STRIBILD can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking STRIBILD.
  - There is a pregnancy registry for women who take antiviral medicines during pregnancy. The purpose of this registry is to collect information about the health of you and your baby. Talk with your healthcare provider about how you can take part in this registry.
- If you are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed if you take STRIBILD.
  - You should not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.
  - Two of the medicines in STRIBILD can pass to your baby in your breast milk. It is not known if the other medicines in STRIBILD can pass into your breast milk.
  - Talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements:

- STRIBILD may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how STRIBILD works.
- Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you take any of the following medicines:
  - Hormone-based birth control (pills, patches, rings, shots, etc)
  - Antacid medicines that contain aluminum, magnesium hydroxide, or calcium carbonate. Take antacids at least 2 hours before or after you take STRIBILD
  - Medicines to treat depression, organ transplant rejection, or high blood pressure
  - amiodarone (Cordarone®, Pacerone®)
  - atorvastatin (Lipitor®, Caduet®)
  - bepridil hydrochloride (Vascor®, Bepadin®)
  - bosentan (Tracleer®)
  - buspirone
  - carbamazepine (Carbatrol®, Epitol®, Equetro®, Tegretol®)
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  - rifabutin (Mycobutin®)
  - rifapentine (Priftin®)
  - risperidone (Risperdal®, Risperdal Consta®)
  - salmeterol (Serevent®) or salmeterol when taken in combination with fluticasone (Advair Diskus®, Advair HFA®)
  - sildenafil (Viagra®), tadalafil (Cialis®) or vardenafil (Levitra®, Staxyn®), for the treatment of erectile dysfunction (ED). If you get dizzy or faint (low blood pressure), have vision changes or have an erection that last longer than 4 hours, call your healthcare provider or get medical help right away.
  - tadalafil (Adcirca®), for the treatment of pulmonary arterial hypertension
  - telithromycin (Ketek®)
  - thioridazine
  - voriconazole (Vfend®)
  - warfarin (Coumadin®, Jantoven®)
  - zolpidem (Ambien®, Edlular®, Intermezzo®, Zolpimist®)

Know the medicines you take. Keep a list of all your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine. Do not start any new medicines while you are taking STRIBILD without first talking with your healthcare provider.

Keep STRIBILD and all medicines out of reach of children.

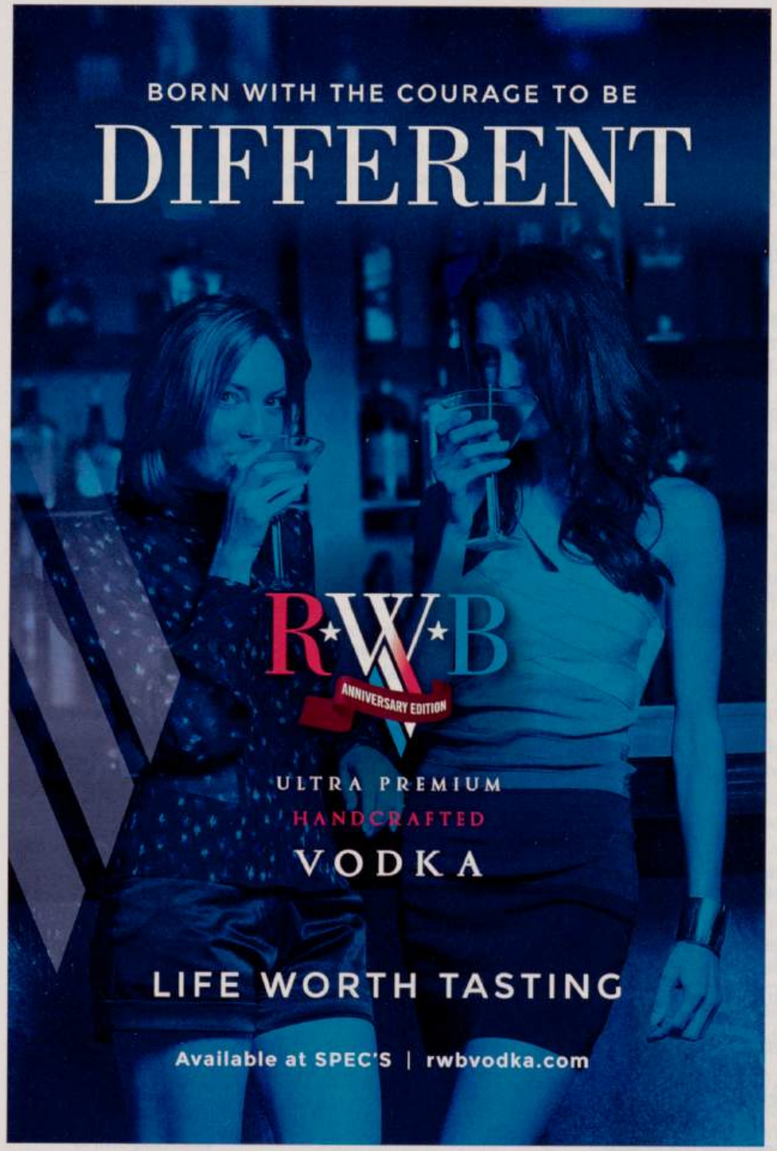
This Brief Summary summarizes the most important information about STRIBILD. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider. You can also ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for information about STRIBILD that is written for health professionals, or call 1-800-445-3235 or go to www.STRIBILD.com.

Issued: October 2013

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I guess you could say that I'm preaching to the choir when it comes to the LGBTQ community. They already understand the premise of the project, but this book and the exhibitions give me the opportunity to really celebrate our long-term couples. Each and every one of them has thanked me for doing this work, and I'm honored to be their voice.

I'm also hoping that as we win the right to marry across the country, the book stands as a testament to the youth of our community—that they too can have long and loving relationships. Having the physical book will give young couples who are coming out to their un-accepting parents a resource to help further explain who we are, and that they too can have long and devoted relationships.

My real hope, however, is to reach the general public—particularly those who have a difficult time accepting us. The best venues [to exhibit this project in] are not art galleries, but rather the more public forums like community centers, libraries, airports, government buildings, and schools.

On numerous occasions at the exhibitions of this work, I have witnessed people reading the stories or watching the videos and weeping . . . straight people. I have given lectures where I have been approached afterwards by parents of LGBTQ individuals who have told me that before my talk, they really had no idea the extent of the discrimination that their child faced. Even our best allies have still learned something from reading these stories. This is our real story, the one below the surface, and is one that needs to be told. Changing the marriage laws does not change minds. It takes more than that. People may not like the idea of us, but when they get to know us, we have the opportunity to make a difference.

Edie Windsor is one of the book's subjects, and she also wrote the foreword for the book. How did Edie come to be involved?
Edie is an amazing woman and a real icon in the community. I began trying to reach her back in 2012, well before the briefs were heard in the Supreme Court. I was told that I needed to go through her lawyer, so I wrote to her several times. And then I wrote to Edie herself several times and sent her lots of information about what I was doing. As it turns out, two of the [other couples I interviewed] are actually long-time friends of hers. They both put in a good word for me, but Edie was so busy and then so exhausted from the Supreme Court ordeal that she declined to participate. I waited a while, and then I made one final effort. I called her, only to find her answering machine full. So right before the winter holidays, I sent one last package with a final pitch and just left it up to the universe.

It was my birthday in January of 2014. I had pretty much lost hope on Edie, and I was a little grumpy that day about getting older. I was out and about doing errands with my dog, Soleil, in tow and decided to treat myself to a decadent coffee drink. So I stopped in at a local shop. While I was waiting, my cell phone rang, and it was an unknown California number. I almost didn't answer. At the last minute, I picked up, and the voice on the other end said, "Barbara? This is Edie Windsor. I would love to be a part of your project. You are doing great work." I nearly dropped the phone. I physically started to shake. My heart was pounding. We had a brief conversation, but she was so busy that we couldn't make a date for a photo shoot until mid-March, two months later. The scene at the coffee shop after I hung up was literally like that scene from the film *When Harry Met Sally*. I started screaming, "Yes! Yes! Yes!" and pounding on the table. People just stared at me. Knowing that my partner was teaching a class and not available, I ran outside to call my best friend. I just had to tell someone.

Lucky for me, our shoot went on as scheduled, and I showed up at her New York apartment with my crew on the designated date. We spent a lovely and amazing afternoon with her. She told us stories and showed us photographs. We made a portrait. I interviewed her on tape. And she agreed to do the foreword. We drank champagne. It was a great experience.

How did you go about finding the other subjects for the book?
I found subjects through all sorts of means and channels. The Internet does have its blessings at times. I began by e-mailing my friends and my network with a paragraph about what I was doing, and asked everyone to forward to their contacts. I posted on Facebook. People saw what I was doing on Facebook and contacted me. When news of my last exhibition went on the blogs of the Human Rights Campaign, Freedom to Marry, and *The Advocate*, I started to get contacted by people and media from around the world. But at that point, I had pretty much wrapped up shooting.

I've been photographing for the Human Rights Campaign for over a decade now, and I've made many friends. I reached out to all of those connections. I met the guys on the cover of my book while photographing the HRC national dinners year after year. They were always there. I reached out to many organizations and churches, trying to find the diversity that I was looking for. Many of the couples also connected me with other amazing couples.

Why did you choose to include yourself and your spouse Allison as subjects in the book?
Everyone who saw the project and the →

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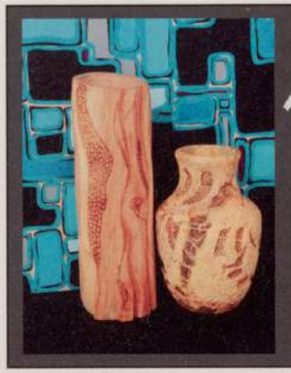
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sample book wanted to know where our photo was. Everyone insisted that we had to be included. While the impetus for the project began right after our 20th anniversary, my goal was really to celebrate the rest of our community, not us. Our photo was literally taken a few weeks before the book went to press. It was freezing on the beach that April morning. I knew what I wanted to do and enlisted the help of a great friend and fellow photographer to help me out.

The book has a fair share of celebrity couples—Prop. 8 plaintiffs Paul Katami and Jeff Zarrillo, Kris Perry and Sandy Stier, Houston mayor Annise Parker and Kathy Hubbard, sex educator Annie Sprinkle and her spouse Beth Stephens, and doc subjects Ruthie and Connie. What was involved in getting high-profile names such as these?
They were all interested immediately. It just took some time to schedule the shoot, which sometimes had to happen through their assistants. That was the hardest part. Otherwise, I just sent them a message, told them what I was doing, and asked if they wanted to participate. All of them were very supportive and encouraging.

Thomas Allen Harris is also quite a celebrity these days. His film *Through a Lens Darkly* is garnering much attention on the festival circuit. Ruthie and Connie were all about "spreading the word." They were great fun to be with. Annie and Beth came recommended through another couple, Michael and Dan, and they managed to fit me in right before one of their performances. I did reach out to some major celebrities who declined. I really wanted to photograph Elton John, but couldn't figure out how to reach him. And one TV celebrity cancelled on me at the last minute when I was already in New York for the shoot. It was very disappointing. But I have an amazing group of couples, I think. I'm really proud of them.

Dan Martin and Michael Biello not only appear as subjects in *First Comes Love*, but also wrote the song that accompanies the book. How did that come about?
Michael and Dan are the sweetest, most creative and loving men on the planet. We met for lunch one day, and during our meeting, they asked if I thought it would be okay if they wrote a song inspired by the project. They are such talented artists, I said yes immediately. I was thrilled and honored. I had no idea how long that might take, so I was a bit surprised when a few months later they invited Allison and me to their studio to hear the song. We met with them and had a nice glass of wine. Dan sat down at the piano and began to play and sing, and in no time, Allison and I both were in tears. We knew that it was the one we had been waiting and hoping for. Michael and Dan discussed with us the idea of having it professionally recorded, and we jumped at the opportunity. The plan was to get it recorded and mixed by September 14 (just six weeks later) because we were having a big party to celebrate our new federal rights (thanks to Edie Windsor and others), our second wedding anniversary, and the 25th anniversary of our relationship. It was perfect. There were only seven people at our actual wedding, but we promised we would celebrate when we had all of our rights. So when we finally celebrated, we premiered the song. It really is amazing, and we have many more hopes for where that is going.

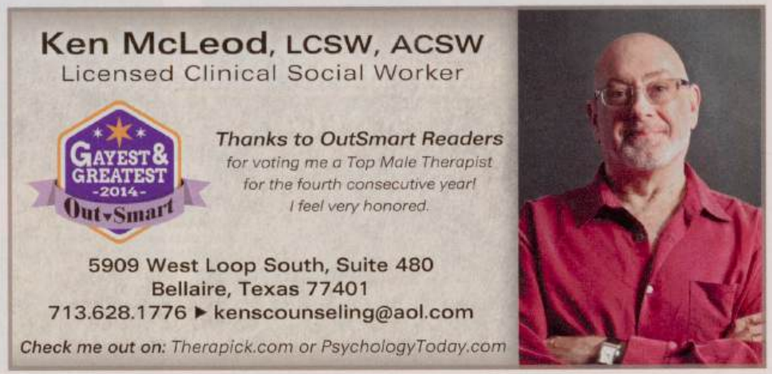
Were all the subjects at ease before the camera, or did you have to find ways to make them more comfortable?
Some couples were definitely more at ease than others, but as a photographer, I'm used to having to work with my subjects to get what I'm looking for. I've had years of experience, and it's fun and exciting to see what we can produce together through collaboration. All of the couples were eager to participate, so they were easy to work with and willing to try whatever I asked.

I initially started out by doing the interviews first, hoping that they would relax more after sitting together and talking about themselves. But I found that the interviews then took up too much time and the photos got short-changed. So I switched the routine.

Not unlike professional assignment work, I often tried more than one setup or location to see what gave the best results. I really didn't want the whole book to be photographs of couples smiling at the camera. I wanted to capture a special moment between the two of them—different expressions. I like the confident expressions in many of the images. Some of the couples were surprised at the shot that I chose, because it was one where they were not smiling. Sometimes the choice was quite difficult, because there were several great moments. I told the couples from the beginning that I would be asking their opinion on the photos, but that I would be making the final choice myself.

There is a history of LGBT people, and particularly couples, being featured in books such as Anderson Jones and David Fields' *Men Together* and Scott Pasfield's *Gay in America*. Did either or both of those books have an influence on your First Comes Love Project?
I'm familiar with both of those books, plus another one, *Women Together* by Mona Holmlund and Cyndy Warwick. There are amazing photographs and stories in all of those books, but my real inspiration was to make a book as beautiful as Brian Lanker's *I Dream a World: Portraits of Black Women Who* →





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Changed America. I was mesmerized by that book from the moment I saw it. I aspired to make photographs as powerful as those.

While there are similarities between my book and those you mentioned, I had a somewhat different vision for my project, but we're all really working towards the same goal—acceptance. In my book, I wanted to focus on the longevity factor of our relationships, and I wanted to include as much diversity as possible—not just men, not just women, but the whole L, G, B, T, and Q community. I chose to present the images in black and white to strip out all of the rainbow-flag and gay-pride-parade images that often portray our community, and ask the viewer to really look deeply into who these couples are.

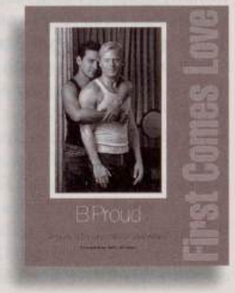
Are there plans for a *First Comes Love* 2, perhaps to include a broader geographic cross-section?

Oh my. [*Laughs*] I have to start with selling this book first! As a self-published author, I'm quite busy getting this book into the market. Distributors won't take me because it's my first book. There are lots of obstacles, and much to do. There's no one out there scheduling book signings. It's all me.

That said, I would love to do a sequel. Even with this book, I had hopes of covering a broader geographical area—particularly the South and Midwest, but I just didn't make it. I could have continued to photograph, but I felt that it was time to get the book out while the marriage equality debate was hot. Continuing to photograph could have put the publication date back an entire year. I set a deadline and I had to live with it. I was working trying to schedule a few other couples, but we just couldn't make it happen before the deadline. I applaud Scott Pasfield for making it to all 50 states. I did what I could between my teaching schedule, my photography business and assignments, taking care of two relatives over 90 years old, and trying to be a good partner. I would love to continue photographing for this project. Just this morning I heard about two women in their 90s who have been together for 70-plus years. That's amazing! If I can find the funding, I'll continue the work . . . or make a film.

First Comes Love can be ordered at firstcomeslove.org or from Lune Soleil Press (lunesoleilpress.com).

Gregg Shapiro also writes about Mary Lambert is this issue of OutSmart.



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No Judgments Here

Bering Memorial United Methodist Church in Montrose is 'a lighthouse to the LGBT community'

by Donalevan Maines

Photo by Tom Fricke



A safe haven: Bering Memorial United Methodist Church's mission is "to joyfully share God's love for all the world through committed word and action."

"For more than 25 years," says senior pastor Rev. J. Ernest "Ernie" Turney, "Bering Memorial United Methodist Church has been a lighthouse to the LGBT community, a safe haven, a place to come and not be judged, to serve God in joyful worship and to be helped in many, many ways."

From its beginnings in 1848 as part of a mission conference for German-speaking immigrants in Houston, the congregation purposed to be a group of Christians who don't just talk the talk, but walk the walk, explains Mark Albright, the church's historian.

The congregation at 1440 Harold Street in Montrose got the opportunity to show the LGBT community how God works through its members when the AIDS epidemic began to wreak its devastation in the 1980s.

"We started what became Bering Omega Community Services," says Turney. "We funded a dental clinic and an adult day-care center and acquired a residential hospice for people with HIV."

The church's Wednesday Night Spiritual Support Group for people with or affected by HIV became the cornerstone of the Bering Support Network (BSN). It's one of the longest-running HIV/AIDS support groups in the country, already serving more than 4,400 people.

Rev. Jerry Goree, the support network director, says the church's practice of celebrating Holy Communion at every Sunday service can be traced back to the 1980s, when the church held "three, four, sometimes five funerals a month.

"People weren't sure if they would ever have another Communion if it was every three months," he explains.

Albright joined Bering after moving from Pennsylvania to Texas in 1979 to perform in the musicals *Lone Star* and *Annie Get Your Gun* in Galveston.

"I grew up as a preacher's kid. I liked it. It worked for me."

"I grew up as a preacher's kid," he says. "I liked it. It worked for me. I was a loquacious and precocious child and my father was a United Methodist Church clergyman in the Central Pennsylvania Conference. He served wonderful little churches in Central Pennsylvania."

Albright, who now lives in Montrose and teaches history and economics at St. Agnes Academy, a Catholic college preparatory school, says, "Out of the blue, I ended up volunteering for one of Kathy Whitmire's campaigns for mayor. I met Bering's then-pastor's wife, and she invited me to attend Bering. I did, and I stayed."

Worship services on Sundays are held at 8:30 a.m. in the church's chapel and 10:50 a.m. in the sanctuary, says Albright. Dress is casual, but services are traditional and formal.

"The weekly attendance hovers around 180 people," says Albright. "It's a wonderful assembly, with rich, spiritual worship. There's a great deal of sharing and talking before and after—and during—the service. You feel a powerful connection to the community."

In November 1991, Bering became a "Reconciling Congregation" when its membership voted to adopt the UMC's "Reconciling Statement," which states: →

No Judgments Here

continued from previous page

We proclaim that all people are created in the image of God and affirm that each person, regardless of age, economic status, faith history, ethnicity, gender, mental or physical ability, marital status, sexual orientation, or gender identification, is a beloved child of God and worthy of God's love and grace.

As such, the church's work is guided by core principles of: (1) personal and social holiness; (2) peace with justice; (3) resisting oppression with a commitment to ending institutional racism, sexism, and economic injustice; (4) integrating sexuality with spirituality; (5) hospitality; (6) full equality in membership, ordination, and marriage for LGBT children; (7) stewardship; and (8) committing to honesty, integrity, excellence, equality, justice, dignity, civility, diversity, inclusion, and creativity.

"I started coming to Bering Church in 1992," says Goree, describing himself as "late," not coming out until he was 43. "I had so much shame," he explains. "I was in denial for so long. I always knew that God loved me; my problem was with God's people. Some Christians are so judgmental, sometimes."

At Bering, says Goree, who's now 70, "I met people in similar situations."

His own personal struggle "was very good preparation," he says, for serving as BSN's director, as well as Bering's minister of congregational care. "I can relate to so many people and their needs."

"Jerry has been working here a lot longer than I have," says Turney, whose assignment as Bering's senior pastor began in September 2008. He and his wife, Ann, arrived a few days before Hurricane Ike hit Houston. "We were without electricity for the next three and a half weeks," recalls Turney. "It took nine months before we were back in the fellowship hall, but our homeless ministry [Open Gate] never missed a beat."

Open Gate is a ministry for teens and young adults ages 18 to 24 who are homeless or at-risk street youth in the Montrose area and who regularly congregate within a 10-to-12 block radius of the church.

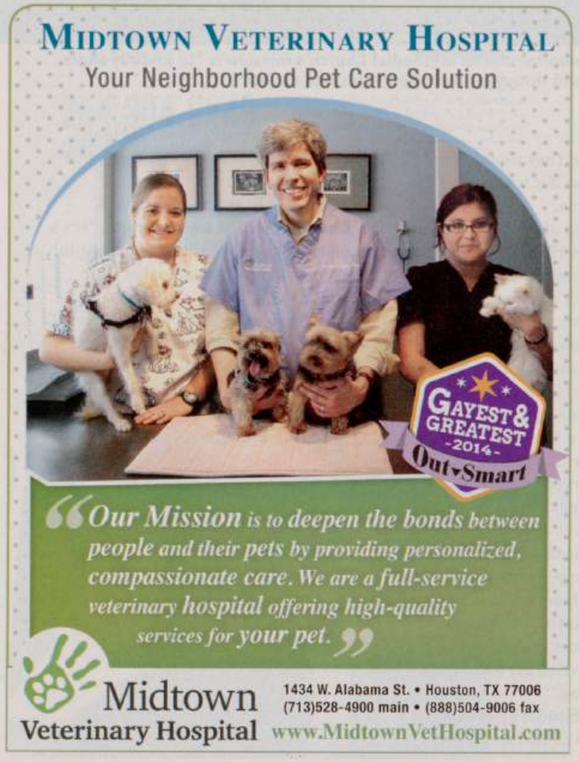
"Although they come from all areas of Houston and beyond, we have recognized the need to be the church to these young people in particular," according to a statement on Bering's website, beringumc.org. "It is our intent to provide a safe sanctuary, free from the biases and discriminations they face on the street. The ministry attempts to engage these youth in healing moments in an atmosphere of radical acceptance and reconciliation. We focus on the essential spiritual core of the gospel message: trust, hope, and love. Beginning with feeding their bodies, it is our goal to nourish and guide them so that they will find their God-given gifts and be able to lead productive grace-filled lives."

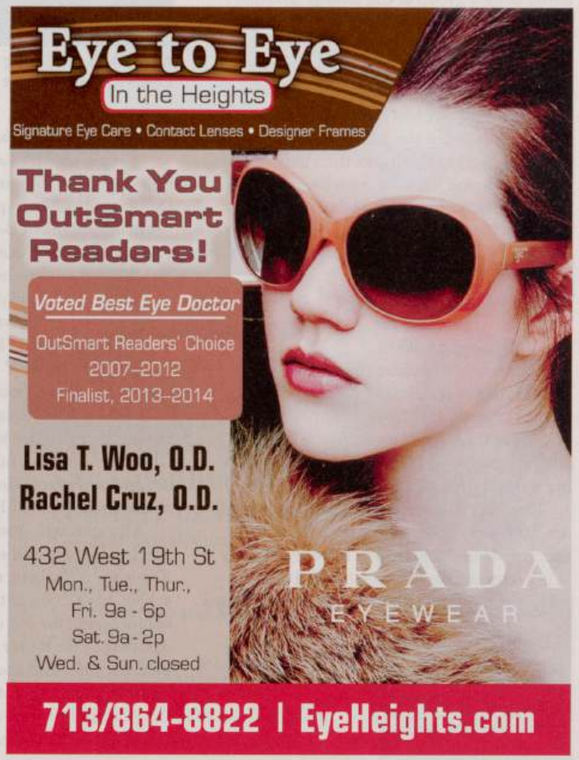
Turney also teaches a new member/Methodism class that explains the history of the Christian church, theologian John Wesley's understanding of salvation, and the history and structure of Bering Memorial UMC.

In 2008, the church announced its "mission statement" as follows: *Bering's mission is to joyfully share God's love for all the world through our committed word and action as seekers of Jesus Christ.*

The church's website also explains, "Bering continues to be a leading voice in the movement for full inclusion of LGBT persons in the life of the United Methodist Church. Homophobia, gender inequality, racism, an unjust American penal system, wealth inequality, poverty, and homelessness are just of few of the other issues about which the Church needs to have a voice in the dialogue. Looking to the future, we are constantly seeking to discern how Bering's voice can make the most difference, as we strive to mirror the all-inclusive, reconciling love of Jesus Christ in the world."

Donalevan Maines wrote about Marcus: or the Secret of Sweet *in the September 2014 issue of* OutSmart *magazine.*





In Appreciation

Bering UMC's Rev. Jerry Goree retires

A reception honoring Rev. Jerry Goree, who's retiring as director of Bering Support Network (BSN) and associate pastor at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, will be held on October 19.

Church members and friends will celebrate Jerry's many years of worshipping with and ministering to the Bering Memorial family and wish him well in retirement, explains the church's senior pastor, Rev. J. Ernest "Ernie" Turney.



"At 3 p.m., we'll offer Jerry words of appreciation, share stories, and present him with a love offering," says Turney, who credits Goree with introducing him to many Houstonians when Turney and his wife moved to Montrose in 2008.

"Going to lunch with Jerry, you will see at least two people who know him. That's always fun," says Turney. "It might be people from real estate, someone he sold a house to, or one of many people who received care through Bering Support Network. Jerry is just a delightful person."

Goree plans to continue in real estate when he retires and moves to his lake house in Livingston. "I'm not a fisherman," he laughs. "I will continue as a real-estate broker, and I'll work on my house and travel some. The hardest part of leaving Houston will be that I'll miss seeing people on a day-to-day basis. I've made some very strong connections, so I know I will continue these friendships."

The church's historian, Mark Albright, explains that Goree began attending Bering as a member in the early '90s. "He was very actively involved, especially with the Bering Support Network. The fact that he is an ordained minister led to him being hired, first in a part-time position as a member of the clergy staff," says Albright.

Goree holds a master's degree in religious education from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and a Master of Science in Social Work from the University of Texas at Arlington.

As an associate pastor at Bering, and minister of congregational care, Goree has assisted in worship services, made home and hospital visits to members of the congregation, attended committee meetings, and performed other duties at the church.

Goree has worked closely with the BSN board to supervise the overall BSN program. He's also directed and facilitated the Wednesday night Bering Spiritual Support Group, the Tuesday Lunch Bunch, and has been a frequent facilitator of Loss of Relationship groups.

One of his "most meaningful" duties at Bering has been serving communion, he says. "It's a time for you to get your life right with God. You're partaking of the body of Christ."

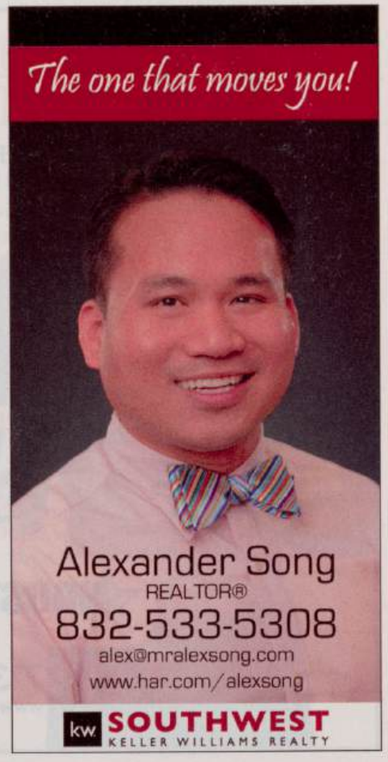
Goree also looks forward to Bering services on Sunday, October 26, when he will receive a "going-away blessing" and prayer.

What: Rev. Jerry Goree Retirement Reception
When: 2–5 p.m., Sunday, October 19
Where: SPIST Lodge, 1435 Beall Street
Info: call the church at 713.526.1017. Light hors d'oeuvres, desserts, and beverages will be served. Contributions to the love offering for Goree may be brought to the reception or to Bering Church; checks to help underwrite the cost of the reception should be made payable to Bering UMC.

–Donalevan Maines







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Seeing Music

Amber Galloway Gallego not only interprets for rock stars, she's one herself

by Megan Smith





Good vibrations: Amber Galloway Gallego has a talent for ASL music interpreting. *INSET:* she interprets rapper Wiz Khalifa on *Jimmy Kimmel Live.*

COURTESY AMBER GALLOWAY GALLEGO; INSET: ABC/RANDY HOLMES

Rapper Kendrick Lamar is spitting verses like no other during his performance at Chicago's 2013 Lollapalooza music festival. The bass is booming and the crowd is going wild. But Lamar isn't the only one killing it on stage—Amber Galloway Gallego, an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter who specializes in music interpreting, is right there along with him, giving it her all to provide the festival's deaf attendees with proper communication access so that they can have a concert experience just as fantastic as their hearing counterparts. And she's rocking Lamar's lyrics—expletives and all.

But little did Galloway Gallego know that an audience member recorded her performance and uploaded the video to YouTube. Four million views later, she can now say she's the star of a viral video—one that's been featured on numerous online outlets including Buzzfeed and Huffington Post.

A Houston transplant and a native of San Antonio, Galloway Gallego explains that she's grown up with deaf people from the time she was five years old, when her dad dated a woman whose son was deaf. She then had a babysitter who had two deaf children, and in high school she was the trainer for the football team when a deaf player tore his ACL and needed therapy.

When Galloway Gallego started community college in San Antonio, she befriended the school's group of deaf students, who began to teach her ASL. "I would finish classes and go hang out with the deaf community," she says. "They taught me every day."

"I see them jamming with their hearing counterparts, and that makes everything worth it."

Although she planned on studying physical therapy, a deaf counselor at her college encouraged her to pursue interpreting instead. "She said 'You have a knack for this,'" Galloway Gallego says. Having a hatred for English and grammar, she originally ignored the suggestion. Finally, her counselor drove her to the interpreting program and made her give it a try. "It's kind of like my stars were aligned," she says. "I just didn't really pay attention to them." She went on to earn her master's degree in ASL/English interpreting, and is certified on the state and national level.

Loving to surround herself with friends, Galloway Gallego explains it was at a house party that she first realized she had a talent for music interpreting. When she spontaneously got up and started interpreting a song that came on the stereo, her deaf friends looked at her curiously. She explains that they didn't know what she was doing because they had never seen music interpreted like that before—using whole-body gestures to relay the instruments, lyrics, and feel of the music. "They really didn't even realize that music has so many layers to it, and all the different rhythms that come about," she says. "So many interpreters base their interpretations [solely] off the words. That's not what moves us and evokes [an emotional response] when we listen to music."

Galloway Gallego then got involved with the San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo in 2002 after watching the show's deaf attendees during concerts. They were hardly paying attention to the performances, she says, because the interpreters looked more like they were interpreting for a city council meeting than for a concert—very stiff and word-for-word. "Just seeing words come across is boring," Galloway Gallego says. She approached rodeo officials, showed them what she could do, and inquired about helping coordinate interpreters →

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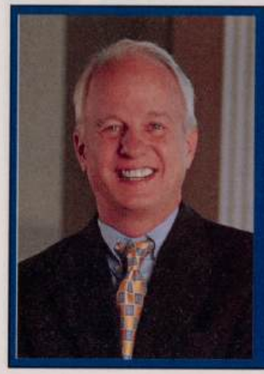
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for their concerts. They agreed to let her take over, and for the next few years Galloway Gallego and others she helped coordinate did interpreting at each of the rodeo's nightly concerts—including for Destiny's Child, Galloway Gallego's first live concert to interpret.

She first arrived on the music festival scene in 2005 after a friend brought her in to work as a volunteer for Austin City Limits—a festival that previously had little success with their interpreters. The deaf audience loved her interpreting, and she has been working with the Austin festival ever since—in addition to other festivals like Lollapalooza and Austin's SXSW. "Right now, our culture is just inundated with music, more so than it was 20 years ago," she says. "The younger deaf are all about music. My nephew, who is deaf, loves music. I download music to his iPod all the time. He's profoundly deaf, but he loves to feel the vibrations and he loves being part of that culture."

When asked what defines a good music interpretation versus a bad one, Galloway Gallego explains that most concert interpreters simply have the lyrics in front of them, signing off of printed pages. "It's like a bad stereo system where the speakers [have a lot of] static," she says. But Galloway Gallego spends hours researching an artist's background, their songs, and their influences. She then memorizes all potential songs that the artist could perform, as interpreters are rarely given a set list beforehand. "I memorize all the songs, and I figure out what they're trying to say, and I change it into ASL," she says. "Then I bring the message and its equivalent to where [deaf audience members] experience everything on the same level as all the hearing people. That's what interpretation is supposed to be. I see them jamming along with all their hearing counterparts, and that makes everything worth it—all the countless hours that I can't bill for and can't get paid for."

While the hearing population can simply purchase a ticket and attend a concert, it's not so simple for the deaf community. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that businesses—in this case concert venues—provide deaf customers with interpreters if requested. However, deaf concertgoers typically have to request an interpreter two to four weeks out, Galloway Gallego says, and then fight for the particular interpreter that they want. Venues will often hire the cheapest interpreter available without checking their credentials to see if they're qualified, she says. "When a deaf community member says 'I want this interpreter,' it's [a request] based on their language need," she says. "It's just like if you had to think about who was going to be your voice, and you had 20 people to pick from. You would know who would be the best voice for you. I just think the hearing community doesn't get it. They think they have to fill a gap and they're filling it with a body. And that's unfortunate because they're taking away that life experience from a deaf person every time they make that decision."

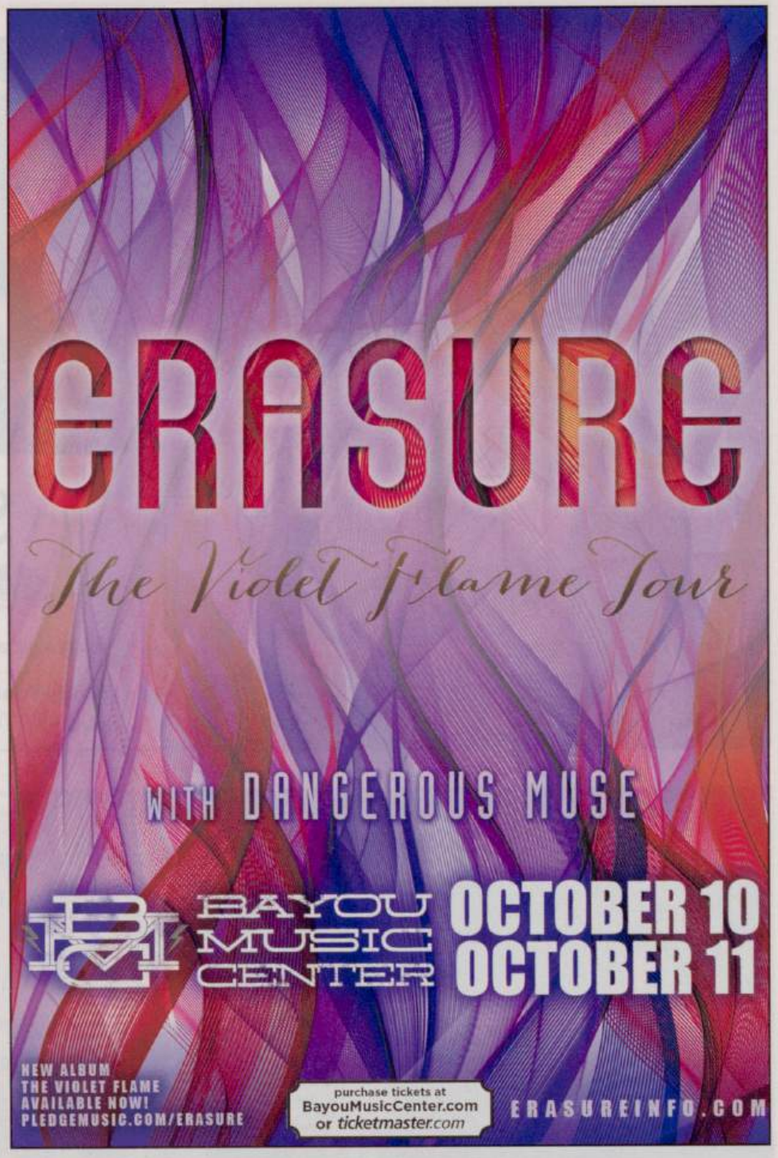
But Galloway Gallego knows she can't change the way concerts and other performances are interpreted all by herself. That's why she founded her own company, Amber G Productions, which she calls a network of music interpreters—both hearing and deaf—that "know how to rock it." "It's just like any other specialty," she says. "If you had a nose problem, you wouldn't go to your regular doctor, you would go to an ENT. It's the same thing with us—we are a specialty."

When asked about her viral video, Galloway Gallego laughs. "They got me from the worst angle!" She says she couldn't care less about celebrity status, but is grateful the attention has given her the opportunity to share her work and advocacy for the deaf community with more people. "We're not just getting up there and flailing our arms," she says. "There's a whole process behind what we're doing, and this is my profession. I've received nothing but love from the deaf community because they've supported me 100 percent and have been behind everything that I've done. They know that my heart and my intentions are all about bringing the deaf community into light so there will be access for them."

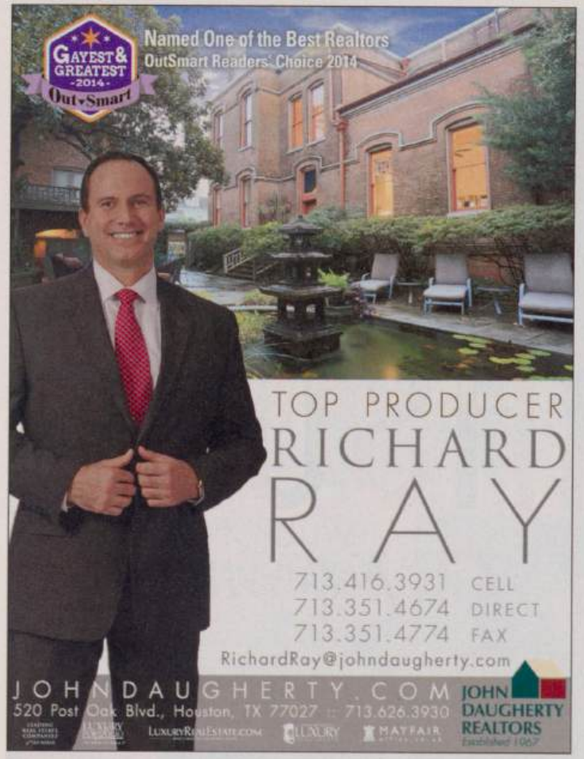
Galloway Gallego even got to share her work with Jimmy Kimmel, who had her—along with ASL interpreter Holly Maniatty and deaf performer/interpreter JoRose Benfield (who does contract work with Amber G Productions)—on his show for a "Sign Language Rap Battle" last April. The three women took turns interpreting for rapper Wiz Khalifa as he sang his song "Black & Yellow" live. "Wiz Khalifa was phenomenal," Galloway Gallego says. "He's really one of the sweetest people I've met. And his whole crew was just so kind to us. It was a lot of fun to be able to do that."

Rap isn't the only kind of music Galloway Gallego likes to interpret, either. "If you ask anyone, they'll tell you, 'Any song is Amber's favorite,'" she says. She loves interpreting Tegan and Sara, The Indigo Girls, Eminem, and Amanda Palmer, just to name a few.

Interpreting also led Galloway Gallego, who identifies as a lesbian, to the love of her life. After moving to Houston in 2005, she started teaching interpreting classes and interpreting for other college courses. She later reconnected with Ilija Gallego, whose psychology class she had interpreted for, at a friend's barbecue. "We hit it off and became best friends," Galloway Gallego says. "And it just accidentally happened that we fell in love." Ilija, who identifies as a transman, transitioned in 2009 and the two married legally →









Seeing Music

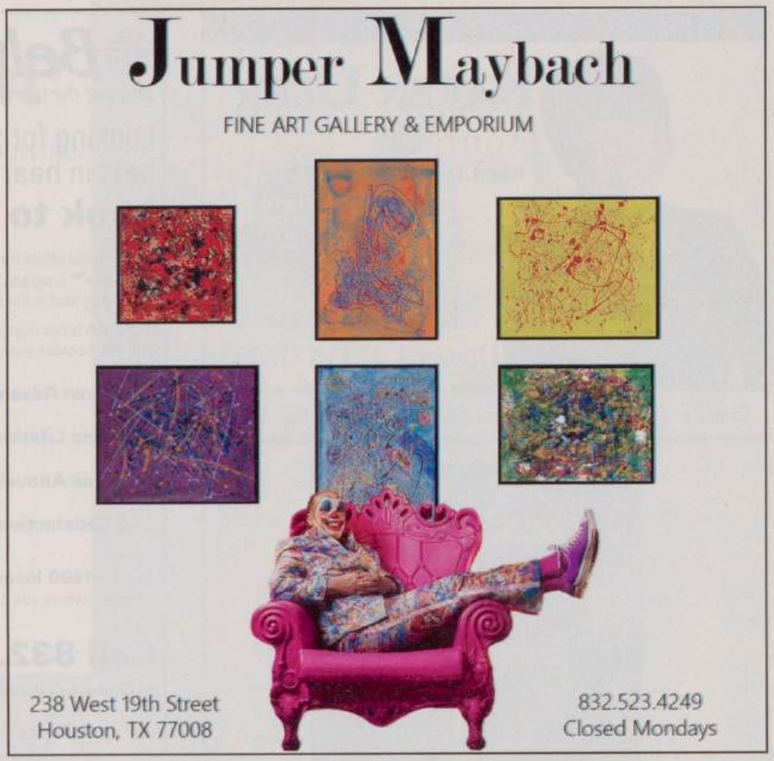
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in 2011. "So we definitely don't fit any of the stereotypical norms of who I'm supposed to be with," Galloway Gallego says. "But that's just kind of the nature of who I am."

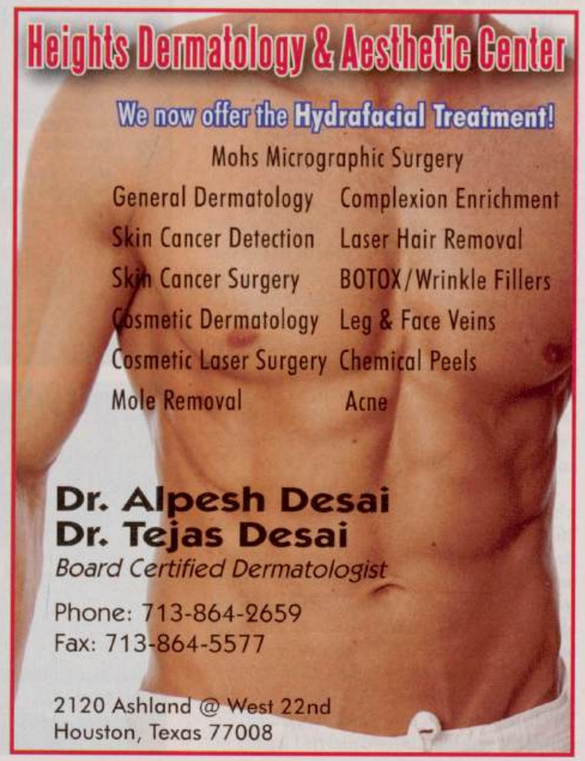
Galloway Gallego notes that she also does an LGBT workshop for the signing world, teaching appropriate sign and word choices to interpreters to ensure the deaf LGBT community is represented properly. And she works closely with Houston-based trans advocate Lou Weaver to provide interpreting services at many trans community events. "If you imagine the LGBT community and how underserved it is, now think about the LGBT deaf community," she says. "There is a large group of deaf that attend the [Houston] Pride parade, and Pride [organizers] never provide sign language interpreters. This is something that the community could make sure to do.

"Deaf people have to fight daily for their own basic human rights—for communication," she adds. "It's unbelievable to me that in 2014, they're still having to fight like this. That's what I'm trying to change."

Amber Galloway Gallego will be interpreting at the Austin City Limits music festival on October 3–5 and 10–12. For more information on Amber G Productions, visit ambergproductions.com.













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Open 'Heart'

An interview with out singer/songwriter Mary Lambert

by Gregg Shapiro

Photo by Autumn de Wilde



We heart Mary: openly queer singer/songwriter Mary Lambert bares her heart, tackling issue like mental health, body image, and lady-loving on her new album due out at the end of this month.

Mary Lambert is nothing if not grateful for her new-found popularity. The out singer/songwriter and performance poet's swift and meteoric rise to fame occurred via her collaboration with the duo Macklemore and Ryan Lewis on the groundbreaking song "Same Love." A YouTube sensation and hit single, the song received Grammy Award nominations and was performed live during the Grammy telecast that featured a mass wedding including several same-gender couples. Shortly thereafter, Lambert released the *Welcome to the Age of My Body* EP, featuring "She Keeps Me Warm," a song that expanded on her contribution to "Same Love." I spoke with Lambert last month about her career and new album, *Heart on My Sleeve* (Capitol), which is due out this month.



Gregg Shapiro: Mary, I'm sure you've been asked about your Grammy performance with Macklemore and Ryan Lewis a million times, but now that there is some distance between that night and now, what was the experience like for you?

Mary Lambert: It's a life-altering experience. Performing for that many people and being nominated for a Grammy is pivotal enough for an individual. But what the song stands for and what I'm singing about and what I've written—that to me is more gratifying. The actual content and the social impact; it was life-changing for me. I feel so fortunate that this is the song that will be remembered for years to come. I feel very lucky that it's the song for which I will be known, for sure.

"I'm so hungry for connection. I believe the way to achieve that is vulnerability."

I'm glad you mentioned the social impact. Your religious upbringing also plays a role in your artistic life. What kind of an impact do you think your work is now having, if any at all, on conservative religious organizations such as the evangelical church with which you have been involved?

I'm not sure if it has. I feel like I've been out of touch in terms of those actual communities.

Have they reached out to you at all?

I have been working with some churches that have reached out. I do think that Christianity and the whole evangelical sect is in a shift right now. But I don't know if I am solely responsible for that. I do feel that there is a shift towards the idea of gay marriage.

"She Keeps Me Warm," the full-length song that grew out of your "Same Love" collaboration with Macklemore and Ryan Lewis, is featured on your *Welcome to the Age of My Body* EP. What was involved in deciding what you wanted to include on that disc?

I wanted to make the EP an introduction to who I am. I wanted "She Keeps Me Warm" on there. There was a push to have it in a collection of songs and to have it out and make a statement about who I am and what I do. "Sarasvati" is on there too, and that's very confessional—a deeply emotional song to sing. "Body Love" is on there, and that's an encompassing idea of what I do. They all speak to those different forms.

I'm glad you mentioned "Body Love," because the EP opens and closes with the spoken-word tracks "Body Love Part 1" and "Body Love Part 2," and your new full-length album *Heart on My Sleeve* →

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Open 'Heart' *continued from previous page*

contains the poem "Dear One," while the new song "Sum of Our Parts" also puts your poetic skills on display. Who are some of your favorite poets?
I have so many! I was fortunate enough to do a little stint with Andrea Gibson, who is one of my favorite poets. Buddy Wakefield and Shira Erlichman, too.

***Heart on My Sleeve* opens with "Secrets," a song that does a fantastic job of exhibiting your sense of humor. How important do you think it is to maintain a sense of humor as an artist?**
I don't think it is for everybody. I know it is important for me. I think the topics I talk about can be really heavy. I'd like there to be some sense of relief through [my humor] so I'm not making everybody cry through an entire show. There's some joy in it, too. It's probably because I'm clinically bipolar. Part of being an extreme person is the capacity for extreme joy. Fun, tongue-in-cheek writing also has the capacity to be vulnerable, maybe heartbreaking writing.

Guest rappers on tracks are nothing new, and your song "Ribcage" features K. Flay and queer rapper Angel Haze. Why did you choose to work with them?
I'm a huge fan of both of those women. I met K. Flay about two years ago in Austin during SXSW. I was such a fan of hers already, and I was so excited to meet her. We really hit it off. I guested at a couple of her concerts and surprised the audience. That was pretty fun. She and I have been friends. I have equal admiration for Angel Haze. I think she's one of the fiercest MCs making music today. I think she's so on-point with her writing and emotional intensity. I resonate with her. What really solidified it was her song, and video, for "Battle Cry," which I thought was so vulnerable. It was so open of her to discuss trauma in such a way. It shook me in a really beautiful way. That was when I knew I had to have her on the track as well. Throughout the recording process, I'd been asked to have multiple rappers on the tracks. I was hesitant to have any rap, because I would like to step out of that capacity in which people know me. But this felt like the absolute right thing to do. It felt so good to have two absolutely f--king fierce female MCs on it. [*Laughs*]

Hearts are a recurring theme on the new disc. You make mention of hearts in the title cut, "Ribcage," "When You Sleep," "Wounded Animal," and "Monochromatic."
Wow! I honestly didn't even realize it! I mean, I knew it was the title. [*Laughs*] I didn't even think about it! I talk a lot about my heart. The heart is a metaphorical thing we describe as the vessel in which we connect

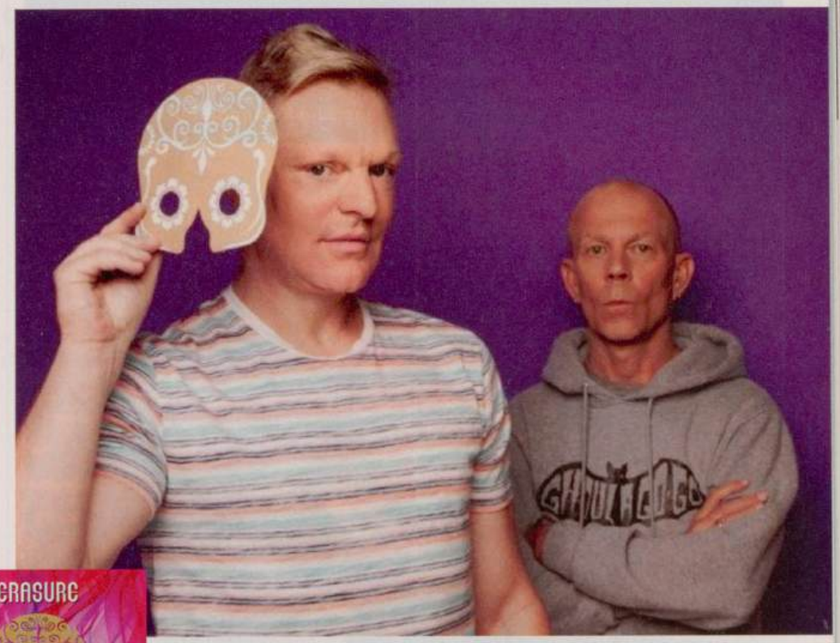
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Flame On!

Andy Bell discusses Erasure's dancey new album 'The Violet Flame,' being a bareback saint, and why Joan Rivers was so awesome

by Lawrence Ferber

Photo by Joe Dilworth



Gay and straight: out musician Andy Bell (l, pictured here with straight Erasure bandmate Vince Clarke) finds a fresh start with a new album and a new romance. Erasure comes to Houston's Bayou Music Center October 10 and 11.

Erasure's Andy Bell isn't one for trends. On the afternoon of Apple's crazily anticipated iPhone 6 announcement in early September, with the Internet and social media abuzz with details and consumer frenzy to buy one (and some anti-Apple snark), he simply couldn't care less. "People are just mad," he muses. "It's like the ice bucket challenge—it's ridiculous."

Dance music, however, is never out of style with the 50-year-old frontman. His recent single with Dave Aude, "Aftermath," hit #1 on Billboard's dance charts, while Erasure's new album, *The Violet Flame* (Mute), percolates with contagious ditties driven by the pulsing electronic melodies of longtime bandmate Vince Clarke. The pair is currently supporting the album with an international tour.



One standout is the opening track, "Dead of Night," an instantly catchy, clubby track that owes a debt to EDM pioneer Giorgio Moroder. "I was channeling Donna Summer for a while," Bell elaborates, "because I love Giorgio Moroder and love his early work. When Vince and I were talking about writing the album, I said I want to write with a synth instead of piano and guitar, because once I hear those guitar chords, it puts me into a folk frame of mind. You start sounding all folky. So having the synth as a backdrop gave it more of a dance impetus. I don't think you can do that too many times because it would wear out, but when I'm working with other people I love doing that, especially with DJs."

"Some of the songs don't reflect very well on the gay scene! One song is called 'This Gay Thing Isn't Working.'"

While Erasure's previous outing, the 2013 holiday album *Snow Globe*, was a comparatively somber affair that served as a goodbye prayer for Bell's late partner/manager, Paul Hickey (who died in 2012), *The Violet Flame* "is the flipside, almost like having a new page and fresh start," he shares. Happily partnered today with Miami-based Stephen Moss, where the album was written and recorded, Bell admits, "I feel fulfilled. I feel so lucky and fortunate, and we're really balanced. I don't find myself chasing my tail. I think that has to do with growing up as well, but when you've found your ideal partner you don't need to do that anymore. Which isn't to say you're not going to write an unrequited-love song, because that's just the way singers are, I think."

In fact, there's plenty of drama—relationship and otherwise—going on in *The Violet Flame*'s songs. "Smoke and Mirrors," Bell says, entails "a true showbiz story which is about how wicked you can be to the person that's helping you the most," while "Reason" represents "a promise to be faithful."

Bell credits producer Richard X →

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Flame On! *continued from previous page*

with helping him craft the lyrics for these songs, while modernizing and freshening up Clarke's signature electronic sound. "Richard's very disciplined, and it was good to work in a less haphazard way than usual," Bell says. He helped with the words as well, because my brain was fried. I had done the Dave Aude record, and also the 2014 *iPop* record with the two guys from Shelter, and I did all the vocals for *Torsten*. I was almost wringing my brain for words!"

The Torsten Bell refers to a one-man musical, *Torsten the Bareback Saint* (saint-torsten.com), which ran at Edinburgh Fringe Festival last month. Portraying the titular character, a century-old, possibly immortal polysexual, Bell sings his way through 22 songs (the album's available on iTunes) about lovers, dalliances, disappointments, and queerness.

"It was quite heavy," he shares. "One guy came from the theater in Manchester and said he hated it, so I'm not sure if it was too close to his own thing. Some of the songs don't reflect very well on the gay scene! One song is called 'This Gay Thing Isn't Working.' So I think it was probably a bit too close to the knuckles. But most of the people who saw it enjoyed it. It was very emotional and tearful to perform—it wasn't bells and whistles like Erasure."

Bell says that he hopes to eventually bring the show stateside to San Francisco and New York City for engagements, and that a Torsten part two and three are in the works. "One of my ambitions was to be like a living soap opera, and I think Torsten is that," he adds.

Bell, who is HIV-positive, regularly supports and appears at events for AIDS-related organizations like the U.K.'s Terrence Higgins Trust. He praises the late Joan Rivers for an occasion when he was slotted to appear at a London gay club, but when he got sick, she filled in and donated her fee to AIDS research. As for the "bareback" part of the musical's title,,which is as provocative and polarizing a term as there is in modern-day gay culture, Bell explains, "I don't think it's about barebacking as such, but it's about your own sexuality belonging to you. There should be no rules as long as you're not hurting anybody or putting them in danger, unless it's not a mutual-consent situation. Sexuality should be infinite. Even saying 'gay' and 'straight' becomes a pigeonhole."

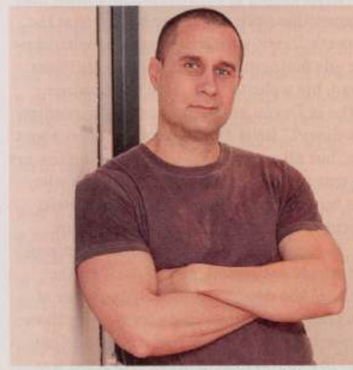
See Erasure in Houston on October 10 and 11 at Bayou Music Center. Details/tickets at erasureinfo.com.

Freelance contributor Lawrence Ferber is co-writer of the award-winning 2010 gay rom-com Bear City *and author of its 2013 novelization.*

A Restless Artist, Still Untamed

Devon Britt-Darby has packed a lot of living into 44 years, but he's far from done

by Brandon Wolf



Devon Britt-Darby, who is the public affairs director at Blaffer Art Museum at University of Houston, is seen here in 2013 when he was visual arts editor at *Arts+Culture Texas*.

Artist Devon Britt-Darby says the only thing he ever really wanted from life was to have an interesting one. Looking back on his 44 years, it's fair to say that he has accomplished his goal.

Raised in fundamentalist churches while growing up in Alvin, Britt-Darby has gone on to rub elbows with porn stars, politicians, and socialites, partying on yachts, and interviewing celebrated artists—from pop sculptor Claes Oldenburg to actress Tilda Swinton—along the way. He's also had thousands of doors slammed in his face, seen the inside of one psychiatric hospital and a couple of jail cells, and sat cross-legged and shivering in pre-dawn darkness at a Zen temple, staring at the wall and searching for enlightenment—or at least for the wherewithal to make it until the morning bell rang.

Growing up in Alvin, Texas

Britt-Darby was actually born Douglas Britt, in 1969, in Texas City, but mostly grew up in Alvin. His family attended fundamentalist churches, but Britt-Darby drifted toward agnosticism by age 16, around the time the family moved and he transferred to Klein Forest High School in northwest Houston. He came out during his last semester in high school, attending HATCH meetings at First Unitarian Universalist Church, and going on to serve on the board of the Gay and Lesbian Students Association at the University of Texas at Austin.

"My spiritual vision grew, and I learned how to be present in my body."

Despite doing well his freshman year, the restless Britt-Darby dropped out, got a British work permit, and moved to London, where he was a bartender in a gay pub. After a year abroad, he returned to Austin and found work as a door-to-door canvasser, which took him to dozens of cities around the country and sparked a lifelong love of the open road.

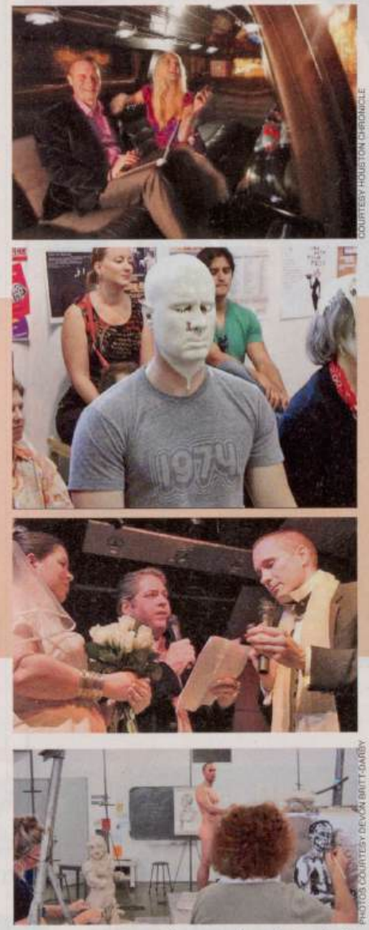
In 1994, the 24-year-old moved to Boston and took classes at Massachusetts College of Art and Design, studying photography, painting, and video. For the next three and a half years, he alternated classes with telefundraising shifts on behalf of progressive nonprofits.

In 1997, he moved to San Francisco, intending to transfer to the San Francisco Art Institute. But he soon gravitated to Zen Buddhism and, for the next year and a half, took up the semi-monastic practice of a live-in Zen Center student.

Britt-Darby says of this time, "My spiritual vision grew, and I learned how to be present in my body." He worked through the anger and guilt from his youth, and grew more at peace with himself.

A Really Dramatic Change

In 1999, Britt-Darby read the phrase "aging boy's body" in Michael Cunningham's novel *Flesh and Blood* and immediately joined a YMCA gym. Mainly "hoping to ward off gravity," he was surprised to see more dramatic →



PHOTOS COURTESY DEVON BRITT-DARBY

Top to bottom (pun intended):
• 2009 – Devon Britt-Darby, then known as Douglas Britt, is named new society reporter for *Houston Chronicle*, along with Lindsey Love.
• Britt-Darby at James Melchert's *Changes* at Contemporary Art Museum Houston, June 10, 2010.
• 2011 – Douglas Britt marries Reese Darby, at Tony's Corner Pocket, November 18, 2011, in a performance art entitled *Art Gay Marries a Woman*. He wanted to show how a gay man can inherit 1,200+ legal rights in a couple of minutes—by going through the charade of a straight wedding.
• Britt-Darby models for a class at the Glassell School of Art in 2013.



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A Restless Artist, Still Untamed

continued from previous page

changes to his body. He soon realized gay men were responding to his newly muscular physique. It was empowering—social currency that he had never before possessed.

In 2001, the owner of a San Francisco sex club took notice of him and asked if he had ever done sex work. He hadn't, but now he felt encouraged to try. He placed an ad in the *Bay Area Reporter* and became a male escort. "The artist-sex worker combo is very common in San Francisco," he says.

Britt-Darby separated himself from the competition with a popular blog, *Devon the Escort's Diary*, which he promoted with simple ads featuring nothing but his shirtless torso, his website URL, and the question, "Who is Devon and why is everyone reading his diary?" Britt-Darby wrote not just about sex, but all parts of his life, including the art he was seeing and making. Unlike Cowboy, the hustler in *The Boys in the Band*, Britt-Darby *could* talk intelligently about art.

Because the San Francisco market was extremely saturated, particularly in the wake of the dot-com crash, Britt-Darby often traveled to other cities (especially those where his online diary had a strong following) to expand his clientele. "Houston was definitely *not* one of those cities," he says.

Britt-Darby says he developed his critic's eye on those trips, visiting first-rate museum collections and exhibitions and often blogging about them. The downside was that in order to pay for his travel expenses and still make enough profit to live on, he had to see as many clients as he could—sometimes as many as five in a day.

He started dabbling in crystal meth on those long days. As he began to use more and more, the crashes became harder to endure. What had seemed to help was now undoing him. He was caught in Tina's powerful web.

A Breakdown of Tragic Dimensions

By 2004, Britt-Darby decided to take up a quieter life as an artist in Providence, Rhode Island. He found a two-bedroom apartment—for the same rent as his San Francisco efficiency—and shipped his largest paintings there. He loaded the remainder in a van and started on the journey eastward.

Although Britt-Darby intended to give up meth once he arrived in Providence, about halfway across the country, "I lost all contact with reality," he says. "The rest of the trip is pretty much a blur, but I must have barely missed getting arrested—and in some cases cheated death—half a dozen times between New Orleans and Brockton, Massachusetts."

Brockton, about 35 miles northeast of his new apartment, is where a pair of young carjackers ejected a ranting Britt-Darby from the van—but not before he helped them unload its contents, including all his artwork he hadn't shipped, into a dumpster.

After wandering around all night, Britt-Darby curled up on the back steps of a local Catholic church to sleep. When a caretaker told him to leave, Britt-Darby chased the man into the school on the property and hurled his shoe through a window. The police arrived immediately, handcuffed him, and threw him in the backseat of a cruiser. Still ranting incoherently, he kicked out the car window and was promptly pepper-sprayed in the face.

After that, he managed to calm down and even develop a rapport with the arresting officer, who recommended "professional mental-health help" in the arrest report. After spending three weeks in a forensic psychiatric hospital, he pleaded no contest and was given deferred adjudication and ordered to see a psychiatrist and a counselor during his six-month probation. He returned to Texas and enrolled as a transfer student at the University of Houston, studying communications—"the most practical-sounding major I thought I could stand," he says.

A Whole New Life—and 'Stardom'

Britt-Darby thrived at UH, started freelancing for the *Houston Chronicle* his final semester, and began working as an online editor in the neighborhood news division a few days before his May 2007 graduation. He filled in for longtime *Chronicle* art critic Patricia Covo Johnson when she went on vacation, and when she accepted a buyout offer from the downsizing paper, Britt-Darby was named her replacement. The art community accepted him as intelligent and hardworking, and his reputation grew—particularly in 2009, when he took on The Art Guys, a conceptual duo and Houston art-scene fixtures since the early 1980s.

What prompted one of his most popular—and controversial—articles was *The Art Guys Marry a Plant*, a performance in which they staged a mock wedding to a live oak sapling in the sculpture garden of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Annoyed by what he saw as the married heterosexual artists' tone-deaf insistence that "this is not a pretend wedding," Britt-Darby panned *The Art Guys Marry a Plant* in the *Chronicle*: "As far as Uncle Sam is concerned, [same-sex couples'] unions have no more legal standing than the Art Guys' marriage to a tree. Of course, it also inadvertently reinforces a slippery-slope argument that labels gay marriage as a gateway to marrying animals and other non-human partners."

That fall, Shelby Hodge, society reporter for the *Chronicle*, quit and moved to the popular online *CultureMap*. His editors added society reporting duties (which he shared with Lindsey Love) to his already-full plate as a way of securing a staff position for him, because technically he was still a contractor. A quote from Britt-Darby appeared on the full-page article announcing his and Love's hiring: "There I was, minding my own business as the *Chronicle* art writer, when my boss said, 'You'd look good in a tux.'"

Although he chafed at the toll it took on art writing, he did get a few scoops at museum galas, particularly after certain trustees had had a few drinks. While some events were undeniably spectacular, featuring performances by the likes of Hall & Oates and Bon Jovi, Britt-Darby insists, "It's not glamorous for long. When you see the same people four times a week—and sometimes four times a night—it gets to be old."

Nevertheless, in 2010 Britt-Darby, who had completed almost no paintings since his abrupt "retirement" from escorting, began secretly revisiting his past through art. Recovering photos from his long-defunct website through an online digital archive, he transferred them to unprimed linen or painted canvas using T-shirt iron-on paper, literally searing his memories into the canvas. "Sometimes I wouldn't even change out of my tux after getting home from a gala," he says. "I'd just kick off my shoes, plug in the iron, and get to it."

In 2011, a few months after hiring the curator who had commissioned The Art Guys' "wedding," the world-renowned Menil Collection quietly acquired the tree for its permanent collection, planting it near the Rothko Chapel, a human-rights sanctuary on the Menil campus where many AIDS memorials were held in the early days of the pandemic.

Britt-Darby decided another negative article wasn't enough this time. "To demonstrate what really marrying for art looks like," he staged a counter-wedding. His bride was Houston art publicist Theresa "Reese" Darby, who via Twitter accepted his open call for a female to enter into "a short-lived marriage."

Although the wedding was partly intended as an act of art criticism, the Darbys were also offering social commentary. Sardonically illustrating the "sanctity" of heterosexual marriage, Britt-Darby titled the performance *The Art Gay Marries a Woman*. Legally binding despite their inclusion of divorce vows, a random go-go dancer for a best man, and Ring-Pops for wedding bands, the ceremony took place at Tony's Corner Pocket, a gay strip bar, on November 18, 2011.

With a few words and a license, he now had 1,138 legal rights he could not have with a male partner—at least until their divorce, which took place the following spring. (Tiring of a controversy that wouldn't go away, the Menil deaccessioned the tree in early 2013.)

In addition to a marriage, Britt-Darby also had an unplanned nervous breakdown. Timed to occur the night before the Menil's dedication ceremony for The Art Guys' tree, the wedding also came at the height of the social and art seasons, when Britt-Darby was working up to 80 hours a week.

Throughout the week leading up to the wedding, he had also been shadowed by fellow art critic Mary Louise Schumacher, who has been filming him on and off since 2010 for a documentary about the precarious state of the profession. The night before the wedding, Britt-Darby told Schumacher on camera about his past as an escort and his psychotic breakdown, both of which he had hidden from all but a handful of people in Houston.

Tired of the secrecy, he wrote an essay for the *Chronicle* detailing his past, and announced he wished to be known as Devon Britt-Darby, uniting his escort name with his family name and his wife's. He requested an unpaid leave of absence for a road trip to Brockton to retrace as much of the 2004 road trip as possible, this time without meth. The paper denied his request, effectively terminating his employment. Britt-Darby posted his confessional on a blog he used as a travelogue for that road trip.

Healing the Past and Staging Exhibits

Britt-Darby traveled back to Brockton and visited all the sites involved in his

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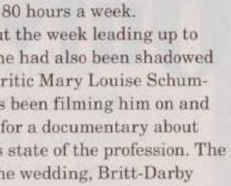


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Dessert Gallery Founder Sara Brook here!

This month, I celebrate my 31st year in business, and Dessert Gallery celebrated its 19th birthday! We've been lucky enough to have the support of the LGBT community for almost a quarter of a century—since before my daughter Jen came out to me, before Houston became the largest city in the nation to elect a lesbian mayor, and before standalone dessert shops were in vogue.

But after three decades in business, I've never gotten tired of walking through our kitchen, where the smell of baking cookies, cupcakes, and cake layers wafts through the air. We've always prided ourselves on using exceptional ingredients to make decadent desserts from scratch. Instead of using mixes from boxes, we use whole eggs, fresh fruit, bricks of butter, gallons of cream, and pounds of rich dark, milk, and white chocolate.



I asked Discovery Green President, Barry Mandel, who's been a customer for more years than I'm allowed to share, to tell us about one of his favorite desserts. "Growing up, my mom's Hello Dollies were a real treat," he said. "That was the first dessert I learned to bake. Well, actually, that was the only one I learned how to bake." Barry told me he's too busy to bake these days, but needs a trip down memory lane every once in a while. "Dessert Gallery's Monkey Bars do the trick," he said. "And they're actually better than mom's."



My daughter Jen grew up with the sights, sounds, and smells of Dessert Gallery's busy kitchen. She's 25 now and lives in Seattle, but rest assured, she still gets regular shipments of Dessert Gallery's Decadence Bars and Everyone's Favorite Mousse Cake from me. "You taught me what it means to be a strong, independent woman, and that's important," Jen told me. "But, you also taught me the difference between good chocolate and chocolate that's not worth the calories; real hot fudge and don't put that on my ice cream, thank you very much." That's music to this mother's ears.

In a city where trendy new bakeries come and go every week, Dessert Gallery's kitchen managers and I have collectively been baking together for over 75 years. We're proud of our roots—in Houston and especially in the LGBT community—that have allowed us to grow and flourish. Thank you from the bottom of my heart, and I hope to see you in the café soon.

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My name is Dr. Christie Cornelius, and I am the founder and owner of Last Wishes, a veterinary hospice service located in Houston. I am a 2004 graduate of Texas A&M's College of Veterinary Medicine, and I have been practicing in Houston ever since. In 2013, I was named Best Female Veterinarian Runner-Up in *OutSmart* magazine's Gayest & Greatest in Houston.

I have two dogs and two cats, and I've lived in the Heights for a majority of my time in here. I began thinking about offering in-home hospice care for pets in our community three years ago, and in November of 2012, we saw our first patient. We've helped nearly a thousand families and pets in the Greater Houston area with their end-of-life care by providing peaceful transitions in the comfort and privacy of home.

Last Wishes is staffed by compassionate, understanding, and GLBT-friendly veterinarians, technicians, and receptionists who believe every pet deserves a peaceful passing in their own environment, surrounded by loved ones. We offer medical as well as emotional support through a pet's final journey, and we are there for our clients when the day comes to say goodbye to their beloved companions. We educate our clients about pain, suffering, and quality of life. We are there to help them through their grief, sadness, confusion, feelings of guilt, anxiety, anger, worry, and indecision. Last Wishes helps bring families together to do what is in the best interest for their pets even though they may not agree on the degree of their pet's pain and suffering.

Our staff makes clay paw prints for our families that serve as a memento of the special bond they had with their pet. We also leave a grief packet of information and pet loss resources, including a booklet dedicated to the family in memory of their pet. We have special materials for children who are struggling with their feelings of loss. If a family wishes to have their pet cremated, Last Wishes will make all of the arrangements and provide compassionate handling and transport to the crematory. We send sympathy cards to our grieving clients after our visit, offer emotional support and resources if needed. We also send a memorial card one year after their pet passed away to let them know we are thinking of them on this difficult anniversary.

Our Last Wishes Fund was established over a year ago to assist families who would otherwise not be able to afford end-of-life care for their pets. Our beneficiaries have been senior citizens living on social security, disabled persons, war veterans diagnosed with PTSD, and people with terminal diseases who are having trouble paying their own medical bills.

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The updated interior will include a boutique hotel-style lobby, an event center for receptions, a contemporary space for modern memorial celebrations and catering facilities. Hendrickson says, "The new Pat H. Foley will look like the neighborhood around us – a blend of longstanding family legacies and younger professionals and families."

Funeral services are changing to meet the needs of a generation that has different ideas about life – and about death. This is not your grandfather's service. You can expect more and demand more. Pat H. Foley can meet the unique needs of you and your family.



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Saúl Armendáriz

(Mexican *luchador* [professional wrestler] who works under the ring name Cassandro)



(*The New Yorker*, 9/1/14, William Finnegan)

Homosexuals still have a big stigma. We're considered to be prostitutes, drug addicts, seducers, etc. But we're not all the same. Some of us are seen now as positive role models. I've had straight people tell me that they're more accepting of gay people because of me.

Noah Michelson

(executive editor, HuffPost Gay Voices)



(The Huffington Post, 9/19/14)

I'm so tired of people blabbering on about how we need to respect people's privacy. Sexuality shouldn't be a private matter. My being gay is a part of who I am—just like I'm 5'8" and left-handed and allergic to morphine. And sexuality certainly isn't a private matter for straight people, is it? How many straight people do you know who refuse to say that they're straight? . . . Contrary to what some people believe, being straight isn't something to be ashamed of either.

That's part of the reason I'm grateful for James Franco [pictured at right], a man who has made no secret of his heterosexuality. And still—he's one of the queerest men I know. He's helped to challenge stereotypes about what it means to be straight or gay and by doing so, he's providing another kind of example—another possibility—for who and how we can be.



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Margaret Cho on Joan Rivers

(The Huffington Post, 9/8/14)

Re: Joan Rivers's funeral.

We all wept—like professional mourners. We should have gotten paid! Tears fell as we listened to the dulcet tones of the Gay Men's Chorus with their rendition of "Hey, Big Spender." It was bittersweet and perfect . . . none of us could stop crying. You don't know heartbreak until you have seen John Waters in tears. I am sure stock went up in cucumbers, as we all needed them for our eyes [the next] morning.



Always in fashion: Joan Rivers flashes the audience at an NBCUniversal event in New York CIty on May 15, 2014. She appeared at the presentation to advertise her show *Fashion Police*, which aired on E!, whose logo just happens to show up on the inside of her cape.

From her book Enter Talking, *1986:*

There has been nothing nicer than 500 gay faces looking up at me onstage. Gay audiences have been the most loving, the most generous, the most forgiving, the most loyal. Their humor is everybody's humor, but to the nth degree, spicier, more paprika in it, the highest camp. . . . Gays are like many comedians—born into trouble, outcasts, living in trouble, not accepted. When you are an outsider, hungry for recognition, you can be noticed by being outrageous, and the more you ridicule your pain, the less it hurts, and that is why I love gays—they will go far, far out with me into silliness.

Sean Hannity

(*The Sean Hannity Show*, 9/16/14)

Re: NFL player Adrian Peterson's physical abuse of his four-year-old son.

I do believe Adrian Peterson went too far. . . . But my problem here is, do parents have the right to instill their values in their children? . . . You guys wanna tell parents what they can and cannot do. For example, is it gonna become illegal if a parent teaches the politically correct view that being gay is not normal?

Jon Stewart

(*The Daily Show*, 9/17/14)

In response to Sean Hannity's take on Adrian Peterson's abuse of his son (see above):

Your special brand of spiteful ignorance will always be legal . . . and profitable.

Queer Quotes

Compiled by Blase DiStefano

Josh Thomas

(actor, Pivot TV's *Please Like Me*)

(*Out*, 8/14)



"I am him," Thomas says of the on-screen Josh [in *Please Like Me*]. "Nothing is different. In real life I have more pimples, though, because I don't have a makeup truck."

Martine Rothblatt

(author and highest-paid female executive in America)

(*SiriusXM Progress*, 9/14, Michelangelo Signorile)



"I took a journey from male to female, so if I hide that, I'm, like, just replicating the closet of my past with another closet of the future. That made no sense, and that's why I'm open."



by Megan Smith

DVD Shorts

Penny Dreadful



Just in time for Halloween is this frightening psychosexual drama created and written by openly gay John Logan. The Showtime series stars Josh Hartnett, Timothy Dalton, and Eva Green. Even without that one scene of Dorian Gray (played by Reeve Carney) giving gunslinger Ethan Chandler (Hartnett) an especially lengthy lip-lock, the horror series is delightfully dreadful. CBS Home Entertainment (cbshomeentertainment.com). *–Blase DiStefano*

Corpus Christi: Playing with Redemption



This feature-length documentary focuses on Terrence McNally's controversial Broadway play *Corpus Christi*, which imagines Jesus as a gay man living in Corpus Christi, Texas. The doc follows the revival production around the world on a five-year journey that had a life-changing impact on the company, playwright, and audiences, as voices of protest and support collide on one of the central issues facing the LGBT community: religion. Available October 14 from Breaking Glass Pictures (bgpics.com). *–Suzie Lynde*

'Two: The Story of Roman & Nyro'

Redefining normal



A family portrait: *Two* follows couple Desmond Child (l) and Curtis Shaw through the surrogacy process as they add not one, but two new members to their family.

Let's face it—the nuclear family is no longer the norm, and that's not a bad thing. Healthy children are being raised in all types of families nowadays—by grandparents, by single mothers, by adoptive families, and by same-sex parents. The latter applies to Roman and Nyro, twin boys featured in director Heather Winters' (executive producer of *Supersize Me*) documentary *Two: The Story of Roman & Nyro*.

Living in Nashville, these preteen twins are being raised in what they call a "two-dad" family—a family that they see as no different than any other. Their parents, legendary songwriter Desmond Child (Bon Jovi's "You Give Love a Bad Name" and Ricky Martin's "Livin' la Vida Loca," among others) and his partner, Curtis Shaw, have been together for 22 years. Becoming a family, however, was quite the journey.

Two uses footage from over 12 years to tell the story of this modern family—preconception through the first decade of Roman and Nyro's lives. For years, Child and Shaw discussed having a child, but it wasn't until the pair met free-spirit Angela Whittaker during a Deepak Chopra spiritual retreat in India that their plan was set into action. Although initially hesitant, Whittaker reveals that once she saw herself carrying Child and Shaw's baby in a dream, she decided to go ahead and act as the couple's surrogate. The spirituality learned by all three during their time in India is a reoccurring theme throughout the film.

The documentary then follows Child, Shaw, and Whittaker throughout the pregnancy process, including finding out that their family will not just be adding a plus one, but a plus two. Beyond humanizing the issue of gay marriage and how it affects same-sex parents, the film touches on other problems that gay couples encounter when expanding their families—such as not having a place for both parents' names on their child's birth certificate, and various adoption complications. As the pair says in the film, a gay couple having children in the first place is a visible form of activism.

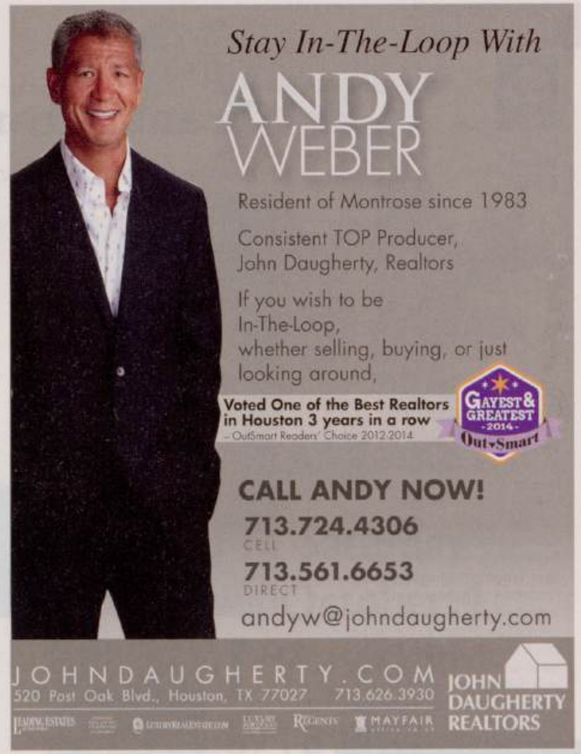
A particularly touching moment comes during an interview with Shaw's mother, when she discusses her son's coming-out process. A staunch Christian, she admits his being gay was difficult for her to understand. But with tears in her eyes, she says that she knows that her son has lived an exemplary life, and has no doubts about his well-being in the afterlife.

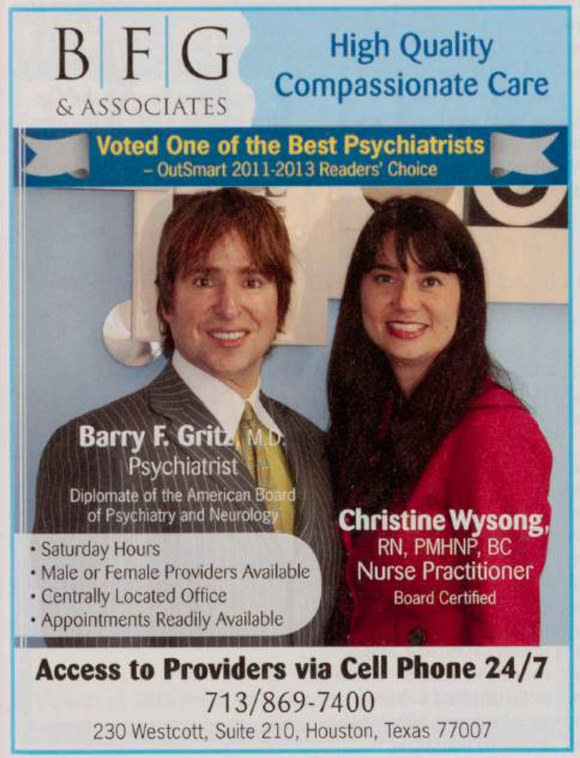
Whittaker's journey during her pregnancy adds an extra level of emotional depth to the film—one that I wish was explored more. We see glimpses of the internal battle she experiences while trying to determine her role in the twins' lives as a surrogate; she's not simply a vessel, but not a mother figure either. We also see how the surrogacy affects Whittaker's mother, who initially does not understand her daughter's decision and sees the situation as giving away "her grandchildren."

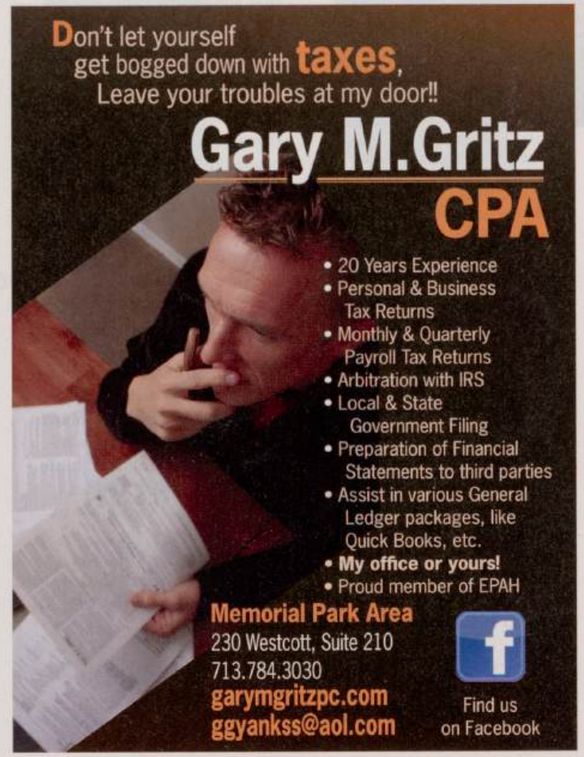
The film's flashbacks feel raw, as if looking at a family photo album, but set a pleasant, familiar tone that further normalizes the story being told. As the documentary goes on, it becomes blatantly obvious just how much love surrounds Roman and Nyro—they have two dads, grandparents, godparents (which includes godfather Bon Jovi), and too many friends to count. And no matter what, that love is what prevails. As the twins say in the film, "It doesn't matter if the government doesn't like us, because we like us."

This is the second release as part of the new "Morgan Spurlock Presents" label and is available from Virgil Films & Entertainment (virgilfilmsent.com).











by Megan Smith

'Transparent'

Amazon's first truly great series makes transitioning a family affair



Parent in transition: Sarah (Amy Landecker, l) is the first of the Pfefferman children to learn that the parent she's always seen as her father, a man named Mort, actually identifies as a transwoman named Maura (Jeffrey Tambor, r).

"I don't have cancer! You kids want me to have cancer!?," Maura Pfefferman shouts.

She's just announced to her three adult children over dinner that she's going through a big change, and needs to share it with them. But Maura's children don't listen; instead they talk over her—and each other. "I don't know how it is I raised three people who cannot see beyond themselves," she says.

What Maura needs is for them to see *her*; they still see her as their father, a man named Mort.

The appropriately named *Transparent*, Amazon Originals' highly anticipated new series from creator Jill Soloway (*Six Feet Under* and *United States of Tara*), follows 70-year-old Jewish transwoman Maura (Jeffrey Tambor) as she navigates transitioning late in life, coming out to her children, and finding her new place in the world.

Her three children are completely absorbed in their own dysfunctional lives. The eldest, Sarah (Amy Landecker), is a stay-at-home mom, bored in her marriage to husband Len (Rob Huebel). After discovering that one of her kids now goes to the same school as the child of her former lesbian lover, Tammy (Melora Hardin), the pair rekindles their college romance with what turns into a passionate, home-wrecking affair.

Ali (Gaby Hoffmann) is the genius child who doesn't know how to apply herself—brilliant but unemployed, with little to no goals. She fills the holes in her life with drugs and meaningless sex. Even her friends seem to stay one step away from her.

> "Here's somebody you already know and love who is trans."

From the outside, Maura's only son, Josh (Jay Duplass), a successful music producer, seems to have his life together. But underneath the surface, he's constantly riding the line between wanting to actually settle down with one of his many girlfriends (in this case, the one he's impregnated) and simply not wanting to be alone. It also comes to light that he's been having a long-term affair with his childhood babysitter.

Maura has her work set out for her, to say the least. And, as is the case with many coming-out narratives, things don't go according to plan. Daughter Sarah is the first to find out, after Maura comes home from a trans support group, presenting as female, and walks in on her and Tammy together. A particularly beautiful line follows, as Sarah asks Maura if she'll be "dressing like a lady all the time," and she responds, "No, honey, all my life, my whole life, I've been dressing up like a man. This is me."

Soloway's casting of Tambor, a cisgender man, to play a transgender role has raised some major concerns within the trans community. In response, Soloway, whose own father came out as trans several years ago, tells NPR's *All Things Considered*, "The world knows so little about being trans, and I know very little about being trans—I just know what it's like to be the child of a trans person. But there's so little trans representation [and] so few trans people who →

Television Short

Project Runway: All Stars

Get ready, fashionistas, because *Project Runway: All Stars* returns to Lifetime starting October 30 for its fourth star-studded season. All your favorite standout designers from previous *Project Runway* seasons are back at it again, competing for runway gold. The competitors are up for an extra challenge this season, as host Alyssa Milano (second from left) reveals that two past winners are joining the mix. Watch as our all-stars travel to London for a surprise challenge featuring British royalty, collaborate with the cast of Broadway's *Wicked*, and even host the first-ever



wedding ceremony live on the runway. TV fashion correspondent and *Marie Claire*'s senior fashion editor Zanna Roberts returns to mentor the designers as they are judged each week by openly gay fashion designer Isaac Mizrahi (far left) and Marchesa's Georgina Chapman (far right). The season is also packed with celebrity guest judges, including transgender actress Laverne Cox (second from right), Emmy winner Debra Messing, *Modern Family*'s Ariel Winter, and many more. Fashion extraordinaires Betsey Johnson, Elie Tahari, Ivanka Trump, and Michael Bastian (who made *Out* magazine's OUT 100 list in 2013) also make appearances. –*Megan Smith*

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Television *continued from page 106*

are creating content, so we really depend on the trans community to help us get it right. We're happy to be corrected." She has also cast trans actors and actresses for around 12 speaking parts, has hired trans consultants to help guide the show, and notes that at least 20 percent of the crew is LGBT.

It's obvious from watching the first episode that *Transparent* is groundbreaking. In 1998, *Will & Grace* shook the country by introducing gay people into homes nationwide. In 2014, *Transparent* is doing the same with transgender folks. While neither show is perfect (they both center around white, upper-middle-class people, *Transparent*'s Tambor is not transgender, and *Will & Grace*'s leading man, Eric McCormack, was a straight actor playing gay), the fact is, these characters become your friends, your neighbors, and your family. And for the majority of Americans who don't know (or don't think they know) anyone who is trans, that means a lot. "America already loves Jeffrey Tambor," Soloway tells *The Advocate*. "To watch him become Mort and then become Maura, it's like, here's somebody you already know and love who is trans."

All 10 episodes of Transparent *are available on Amazon Prime Instant Video.*

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by David-Elijah Nahmod

Spooky and Gay

A few queer Halloween delights

LGBT people are truly everywhere—you just never know where we might turn up next. We are your teachers, your grocers, your vampires, and your mad scientists. Yes, we even turn up in horror movies! Here are a few classic horror titles, all available on DVD, that are waiting to be unearthed for your Halloween viewing.

The Bride of Frankenstein (1935)
In 1931, director James Whale (1889–1957) terrified the world with his take on Mary Shelley's classic tale *Frankenstein*. The film was actually a bit of a collaboration between the filmmaker and a then-unknown actor named Boris Karloff, who played Dr. Frankenstein's tragic creation. Together they created a character who was a sympathetic man-child trapped in a monster's body. The poor creature never understood why people were so afraid of him, and some film historians have speculated that the monster was a metaphor for Whale's life as a closeted gay man.



In *Bride of Frankenstein*, Whale stepped out of the closet a bit. Audiences were introduced to Dr. Praetorius (Ernest Thesiger), with whom Dr. Frankenstein creates the Bride, a female monster. Dr. Praetorius was a screaming, effeminate queen who stared lovingly at his much younger pupil, and the stage-trained Thesiger played the role in all its giddy, limp-wristed, lisping glory.

Though the "word" was never said, it's clear that Dr. Praetorius was a gay man. Though he'd now be seen as a negative stereotype, the character was, in 1935, a very daring thing to present on screen. Whale and Thesiger pulled it off beautifully.

Voodoo Island (1958)
Another of horror-icon Boris Karloff's many films. This low-budget romp is the type of B movie that was enormously popular during the 1950s and '60s. Karloff plays Philip Knight, a best-selling author who's investigating voodoo myths on a desolate tropical island in hopes of debunking those myths as foolish superstitions.



His merry band includes Claire, played by a little-known actress named Jean Engstrom (1920–1997). Claire is a lesbian. She flirts openly with Knight's female secretary and expresses her disdain for men. Her lesbianism is so obvious that one of the male characters refers to it—without actually saying the L-word, of course (it was the 1950s, after all).

Jean Engstrom's acting career consisted primarily of guest roles on TV series. *Voodoo Island* was one of her very few theatrical releases. For having the courage to play a lesbian so long ago, we remember and salute Jean Engstrom.

The Haunting (1963)
This terrifying mood piece is a ghost story like no other. Robert Wise, an admitted fan of horror and science fiction, directed it in between his Oscar-winning musicals *West Side Story* and *The Sound of Music*.



Depressed and sexually repressed Eleanor (Julie Harris) is part of a small scientific research team investigating the alleged haunting of Hill House, a spooky old mansion. Theo (Claire Bloom), another member of the group, is a lesbian who's clearly attracted to Eleanor. Eleanor has another suitor: the ghost of old Mr. Crane, who built Hill House 90 years earlier.

The always-unloved, unhappy Eleanor suddenly finds herself at the center of a bizarre love triangle in this most satisfyingly scary old-fashioned chiller.

Bloom plays Theo with delightfully over-the-top panache. Unlike the independently produced, low-budget *Voodoo Island*, *The Haunting* is a big-budget, A-list studio production—which means that Theo is possibly the first out-and-proud character in a Hollywood studio film.

The Vampire Lovers (1970)
The Vampire Lovers is the most famous film version of *Carmilla*, Sheridan LeFanu's 19th-century novel about lesbian vampires. Considered shocking in its day, the book was banned in the U.K. for many years. It's currently in print in both the U.S. and the U.K.

Polish-born Holocaust survivor Ingrid Pitt had a brief brush with movie stardom after playing Countess Carmilla Karnstein in the wildly successful *The Vampire Lovers*. Carmilla goes to great pains to hide her vampirism, but she flirts openly with women throughout the film, leaving her telltale "vampire's kiss" upon the breasts of young ladies.



Produced by England's Hammer Films, which specialized in old-fashioned Gothic horror, the film offers all the trappings that genre aficionados love: drafty old castles and fog-shrouded graveyards are seen in abundance. Carmilla's lesbianism puts a fresh new spin on a formulaic tale that makes the film great fun.

Daughters of Darkness (1971)
Perhaps the kinkiest vampire film ever produced.

John Karlen (*Dark Shadows*) and Danielle Ouimet play a pair of swinging bisexual newlyweds honeymooning in a largely deserted yet elegant hotel in Belgium. The hotel's only other guests are a lesbian couple (Delphine Seyrig, Andrea Rau), both of whom are vampires. A bizarre game of cat-and-mouse seduction ensues, which becomes all the more fascinating when it's revealed that Seyrig's character is actually Countess Elizabeth Bathory, a real-life 16th-century noblewoman who bathed in the blood of virgins, hoping to maintain her youth.



Visually stunning, erotic, and hypnotic, *Daughters of Darkness* is a most unusual and unforgettable entry in the canon of horror cinema.

Happy Halloween!

David Elijah-Nahmod is a frequent contributor to OutSmart magazine.



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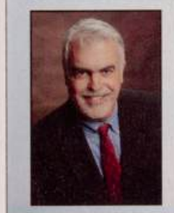
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by Gregg Shapiro

GrooveOut Shorts

Barbra Streisand
Partners



The inspiring new musical pairings on *Partners* include Andrea Bocelli, Michael Bublé, Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds, Jason Gould, Josh Groban, Billy Joel, John Legend, John Mayer, Lionel Richie, Blake Shelton, Stevie Wonder, and a virtual duet with Elvis Presley. Just in case you don't know—Jason Gould is Streisand's openly gay son. Columbia Records (columbiarecords.com).
–Suzie Lynde

Basement Jaxx
Junto

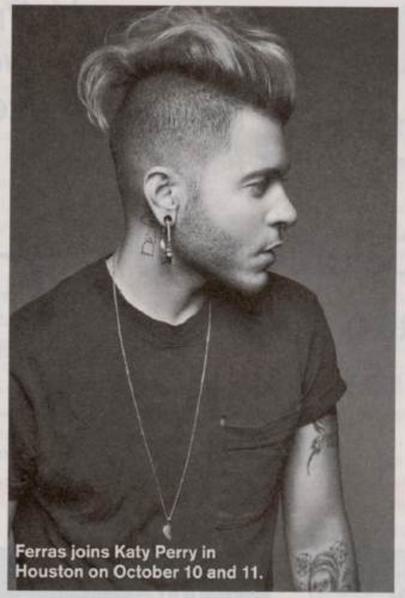


Two years in the making, this is the seventh studio album from long-term partners Simon Ratcliffe and Felix Burton. The spirit of the album is in the title, *Junto*, which means *together* in Spanish. It features vocals by transgender rapper Mykki Blanco and by singers the duo met in the car park of their studio, on the street at the Edinburgh Festival, and from amidst the ranks of their "Jaxx family" touring party. Atlantic Jaxx (atlanticjaxx.com). *–Troy Carrington*

More GrooveOut Shorts at OutSmartMagazine.com.

The Legend of Ferras

He's the first artist to be signed to Katy Perry's Metamorphosis Music imprint



Ferras joins Katy Perry in Houston on October 10 and 11.

You may remember Ferras from a few years ago. He put out a sweet debut album, *Aliens & Rainbows*, with catchy tunes such as "Liberation Day" and "Hollywood Is Not America." Around this time, Ferras met labelmate Katy Perry and they became fast (and best) friends. Perry, who has had what you might call a little success, has started her record label imprint, Metamorphosis Music, through Capitol Records, and Ferras is the first artist signed to the label.

That's what friends are for, right? Perry even joins Ferras on "Legends Never Die," one of the five songs on his new eponymous EP. I spoke with Ferras this past summer about the EP, Perry, and more.



Gregg Shapiro: Ferras, I first interviewed you in 2008, around the time you released your first album, *Aliens & Rainbows*, just before you performed at Lollapalooza. Do you recall what the experience of performing at Lollapalooza was like for you?
Ferras: It was one of my first festivals, [and] it was pretty frightening at first. [*Laughs*] I'm much more of a night person, so when you throw me out in the middle of the day, I'm kind of like, "What's going on?" But it was definitely a great experience, of course. Then I played a bunch of outdoor day festivals after that, and it became easy.

Would you mind saying a few words about your relationship with Katy Perry, whose Capitol Records debut album was released around the same time yours was in 2008?
Katy and I became friends in 2007 when we both got signed to the same record label at the same time. We were working with the same people at the label. They said, "Hey! There's this girl that we just signed. Her name's Katy Perry. She's amazingly talented. We think you guys could be friends." They introduced us, and we hit it off. We became best friends. We never really worked together until we did [a duet at] SXSW. Our friendship continued to grow, and here we are today.

You are the first artist signed to Katy's Metamorphosis Music imprint. What does that mean to you?
It's amazing! I never would have guessed in a million years that I would be signed to [a label founded by] one of my best friends, somebody that I've known for so long. Katy is a visionary, in a way. When she decides she wants to do something, she goes out and gets it and doesn't take no for an answer. It doesn't surprise me, but I never would have put it all together that it would happen this way. It's an amazing opportunity, and I think she's giving me a second chance, in a way. I'm grateful for that.

What was involved in writing and selecting the five songs for your new self-titled EP?
Since my first record deal fizzled out in 2008, I started writing songs for other artists. I decided that I wanted to be a songwriter for a while. I did that, and then I'd be in the studio writing songs for other people, and I'd think, "I want to sing that song!" When you're an artist, you never really give up the dream of singing your own material. I was writing the whole time, changing direction and sound multiple times. Finally, when I signed →

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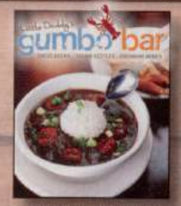
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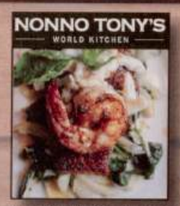
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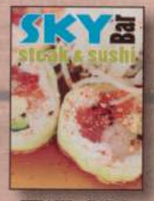
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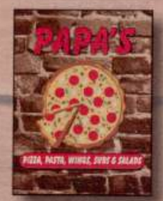
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GrooveOut *continued from page 112*

with Katy, she helped to hone it a little bit. I had so many songs that I had been writing for years. She helped to A&R it—pick out the ones she thought were the best. It was interesting because we have the same ideas in terms of direction. I don't have to fight for things. She gets it. When you're a songwriter, you often feel like your best material is happening at that moment. Things that I thought were going to be on record for the last three years are no longer on it, because my most recent material moved to the forefront. I'm very inspired by what's happening currently. I'm that kind of writer. I don't look back on past experiences and write about them. I write about what's happening in my life currently. These songs are a reflection of the most current state of my life. Whether that's good or bad [*laughs*], I don't know.

I'm glad you mentioned that, because the song "King of Sabotage" has some harsh words for the royalty in the title.
The song is about me. I wear the crown. I'm one of those people who feels more comfortable when things are chaotic. When everything is going well, I'm almost waiting for the moment for things to fall apart. If it doesn't fall apart naturally, I find a way to f--k things up. I'm getting better about that now. I've been in therapy for the last year. I go once a week, and I'm learning to take things a day at a time, not to worry, not to have so much fear of the future. The future doesn't exist and you can't change the past. It's about being in the moment. I haven't been the king of sabotage that much lately.

It's good to hear you've retired your crown.
[*Laughs*]

Katy joins you for a duet on the song "Legends Never Die."
I loved doing [that duet]—there is a mutual respect that we have for each other, and she really brought the song to life. I love doing music with her. It's an honor and a special moment on the EP for me.

You will be on the road with Katy's Prismatic World Tour through the early fall. How has that experience been for you?
It's amazing and mind-blowing! I still can't get over it. I don't want it to end. I feel like a Dorothy with my ruby slippers. The energy that's in a place like that is so vibrant and palpable . . . I'm sure every other performer who plays those kinds of venues feels the same thing. It's intense. You feel a connection with people. Katy's stage is so cool. It goes down into a V formation, with a point going out into the audience, which I take full advantage of. I walk down it and get into the crowd in the middle of the arena. It feels really good to feel the massiveness of it and also have the intimacy of being close to people.

As an out artist, do you feel like you are connecting with both your queer and straight fans?
It's interesting that you ask that. The answer I'm going to give you goes beyond sexuality. I sometimes say, "I don't know what's actually happening right now. Am I connecting with people? Are people loving this?" I think when you are in tour mode, you don't really have a gauge of what's happening beyond your immediate world every day. It's kind of like *Groundhog Day*—you wake up and do the same thing. It's hard to see the scale of what's occurring beyond that moment. I think in terms of gay and straight fans, people who are attracted to my music can see beyond all those things. I have a lot of kids who come up to me at my meet-and-greets and tell me that I've helped them get through hard times. I don't know how I've done it. I had this girl who had extreme anxiety issues, who couldn't go anywhere, tell me that she listened to my music and now she's getting better. I've had gay kids tell me that I helped them come out. Any time that I hear that I have made a difference in someone's life, that gives me incredible strength and inspiration to keep doing what I do, to write songs. I really feel that bond with my fans. It's a special relationship. That's one of my favorite parts of doing shows every night—going out and meeting people who respond and who have been waiting in a meet-and-greet line for an hour just to talk to me. That means the world to me. I hope I'm connecting with everybody. [*Laughs*]

It sounds like you are. Have you started working on a full-length album, and if so, will it include the songs on the EP?
I am working on a full-length [album]. I have a few songs that didn't make the EP because there wasn't enough space for them. I'm probably going to go back into the studio and get them recorded. They're really awesome. I'm going back into the studio in New York and continue chipping away at the record. I feel like I've got things I want to say now. Being away from writing and from being in my head for the last month has given me a lot of inspiration. There is a full-length in the works. I don't know if all of the songs from the EP will be on there. That's more of a technical record-label decision. If it was up to me, I would do a whole new record of all-new songs. [*Laughs*] I have so many, and I just want to get them all out.

Ferras joins Katy Perry on October 10 and 11 at Houston's Toyota Center.

Gregg Shapiro also interviews Mary Lambert in this issue of OutSmart magazine.


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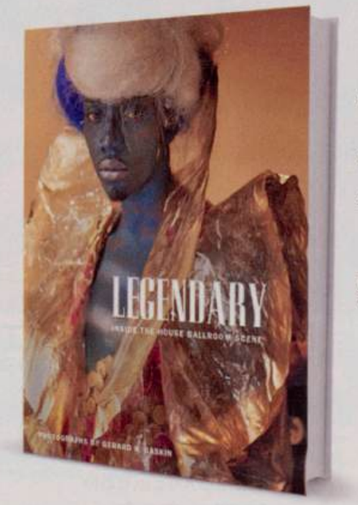

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by Kit van Cleave

Subtexts of Voguing

'Legendary: Inside the House Ballroom Scene'



Legendary: Inside the House Ballroom Scene
Photographs by Gerard H. Gaskin
2013 • Duke University Press Books (dukeupress.edu.com)
120 pages • $45
Hardcover

Miley Cyrus did not invent twerking. Elvis Presley was not rock 'n' roll's sole pioneer. And Madonna was hardly the first to vogue. Many fail to realize just how much of our nation's culture—fashion, dance, theater, film, music, literature, and language—is derived (or appropriated, as some would argue) from the African-American community. But yet, when white people copy these styles because they're "so cool," and propel them into mainstream culture, little credit is given to their African-American originators. This case occurs even more so when cultural identities intersect, like in the case of black LGBT folks.

"Voguing" was a booming part of black gay culture long before Madonna produced her iconic 1990 video. As Tim Lawrence points out in his introduction to *Voguing and the House Ballroom Scene of New York City 1989–92*, drag balls originated in the second half of the 19th century. By the time of the explosion of all the arts known as the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s, Langston Hughes reported that drag balls were the "strangest and gaudiest of all Harlem's spectacles" in the black community. Hughes called them "spectacles of colour" and noted that they were attended by white celebrities. "Harlem was in vogue" and "the Negro was in vogue," Hughes wrote.

In 1923, the New York legislature criminalized "homosexual solicitation," but the drag ball organizers could still hold an event if a neighborhood group applied for police sponsorship on their behalf. In 1931, despite this tradition, police began to target the balls for soliciting. "If the cops have their way, the effeminate clan will hereafter confine its activities to the Village and Harlem," *Variety* reported.

After World War II, gay soldiers returning from the battlefield started to settle in New York City. They quickly found fun and friendship competing in the drag balls; *Ebony* reported that in March 1953 some 3,000 contestants and spectators gathered in Harlem's Rockland Palace to compete and watch.

"By the early 1960s, the drag ball culture began to fragment along racial lines," Tim Lawrence reports. "The winners of these increasingly organized events tended to look white; competitors were expected to 'lighten up' their faces if they wanted to have a chance of winning the contests," he writes. "So black queens started . . . their own events, with Marcel Christian staging what may have been the first (modern) black ball in 1962."

Voguing, with text, photos, and interviews by Chantal Regnault, is the definitive book on this art of self-expression. It was published three years after Jennie Livingston's 1990 documentary film *Paris Is Burning* gave the world an intimate look into the world of New York's black ball scene, showing contestants "walking" in the balls, discussing "House" culture, and explaining lingo used within this community.

Twenty years after *Voguing* was published, Gerard H. Gaskin brought us *Legendary: Inside the House Ballroom Scene*. It has little text, and is filled with amazing stills of ball champions, their "children" (younger ball participants), and spectators. In an essay detailing Gaskin's work, Deborah Willis writes, "Storytelling is essential to ball culture, and reimagining new identities is an extension of this project." →

ReadOut Shorts

Vanessa: The Life of Vanessa Redgrave
Dan Callahan



The author is a fan of Vanessa Redgrave, but he is an impartial one who tells us what's great about her and what grates about her. One of the great things, other than her obvious acting talent, is her generosity. My favorite story tells of Redgrave doing a benefit for a woman being held in a detention center. Redgrave's assistant told her that she would have $500 for the benefit's production expenses, and she said, "Oh, but I need $5,000!" When he asked why she needed so much money, she said, "Well, I have to pay for the theater and the stagehands and the technicians and all that." When he said he thought she was doing a benefit, she said, "It wouldn't be a benefit if *they* had to pay for it!" Callahan also talks about the sexuality of her father (Michael Redgrave) and her husband (Tony Richardson): "When she spoke about her preparation for playing [transgender tennis pro] Renée Richards in *Second Serve*, Redgrave quite unguardedly said, 'I was really ignorant. I've always thought maybe I'm bisexual and I've never tried it out.' . . . Two of her first loves, her father Michael and her first husband Tony Richardson, were bisexual but leaning toward gayness. Part of still loving them, perhaps, was in wanting to feel what they felt, in the empathetic way that she functioned as an actress at her very best in *Second Serve*." Great read. Pegasus Books (pegasusbooks.com). **–Blase DiStefano**

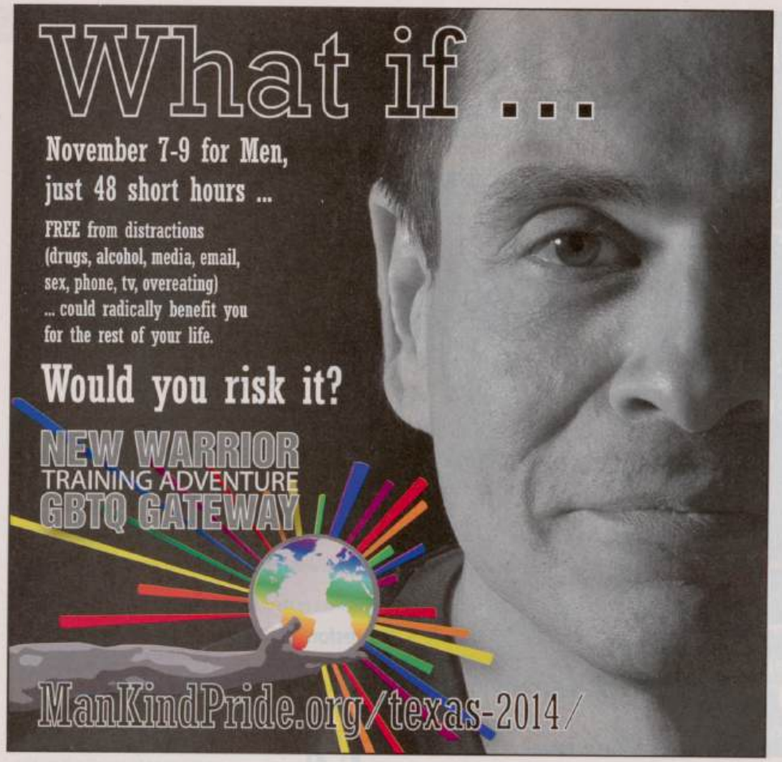
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ReadOut *continued from page 116*

One of the main points of the balls was to offer a competition in which black gays could express themselves in any way they wished—presenting as the opposite gender, creating intricate fashion, and imitating celebrities' glamour and fame— regardless of their situations in real life.

As Pepper LaBeija, "mother" of the House of LaBeija, put it in *Paris Is Burning*, "We prepare for a ball; a ball is our world, as close as we get to fame and fortune . . . walking [strutting] a ballroom floor is our fantasy of being a superstar, like the Oscars."

Just as today, the streets were then the only recourse for young gay men orphaned by drug culture that left parents in prison or dead, or rejected by parents after coming out. In New York, many of these youths sneaked into the competition drag balls. The Legends (the champion competitors) saw an opportunity to help these kids, and the Houses gave them shelter.

What is a House? Says LaBeija in *Paris Is Burning*, "A House is a family, a group of human beings in a mutual bond . . . it's a gay street gang," but a street gang "gets its reward from street fighting, while a gay House streetfights at a ball by walking in the categories." The "children" of the House needed "someone to fill the void [in their lives], as their real parents gave them such a hard way to go . . . these kids don't have two of nothing," LaBeija says. They would steal to get fabric for their costumes, and come to the balls hungry. There, for a few minutes, they could become anyone they wanted to be.

As the Legends began to age, they invited talented kids into their Houses, teaching them to design clothing, pose, and walk the dance floor as competitors. Multiple Houses formed, and after the House of LaBeija came the House of Xtravaganza, Ninja, Chanel, Pendavis, St. Laurent, and others. The kids, having no connection to real family, took the House names as their surnames.

As the ballroom scene grew larger, new categories developed; the younger folks wanted to compete in high fashion, winter sportswear, town & country, executive realness, butch queen, and military. Then two tough categories developed—realness, and face. Those in drag emphasized whether they could pass as "real" (whatever gender they were presenting as) on the street or in a job, like their straight counterparts. The beauty of one's face and the attitude shown on it became primary to "give good face." The balls were becoming big business and in the Livingston film, mainstream fashion, dance, and social commentators took notice; Gwen Verdon, Geoffrey Holder, and Fran Lebowitz are interviewed at the balls.

Gaskin's *Legendary* photography shows the promenade, the walk, the costume, and dress. "Evening gowns, dress suits, top hats, and high heels are not gendered if worn with authenticity," writes Willis. "Dandies" and "belles" vogued in styles from prior decades, emphasizing "the spectacle created by [the flair of] a group of people courageous enough to create their safe space."

When Madonna did release "Vogue," exposing this art form to mainstream pop culture, she cast many prominent ball competitors, most notably Luis and Jose Xtravaganza, as dancers in the accompanying music video. Although widely criticized for using people of color and gays as props to further her own career, Madonna does give homage to voguing's origins by addressing the escapist aspect of the ball scene and how it allowed homeless gay youth to express their true selves in the song's lyrics:

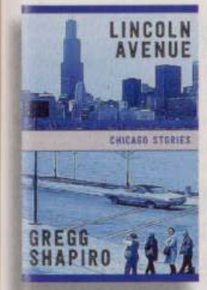
Look around; everywhere you turn is heartache.
It's everywhere that you go.
You try everything you can to escape
The pain of life that you know.
When all else fails and you long to be
Something better than you are today,
I know a place where you can get away:
It's called a dance floor, and here's what it's for, so
Come on, Vogue.
All you need is your own imagination,
So use it—that's what it's for.
Go inside for your finest inspiration;
Your dreams will open the door.
It makes no difference if you're black or white,
If you're a boy or a girl.
If the music's pumping, it will give you new life.
You're a superstar, yes, that's what you are, you know it.

Legendary and *Voguing* demonstrate how, as in the Harlem Renaissance, an oppressed minority can, when freed from oppression, create beauty and magic through art. Both books are musts to have and share. Perhaps Houston's gay community can begin its own renaissance of voguing balls?

Kit van Cleave is a freelance writer living in Montrose. She has published in local, national, and international media.

The Windy City . . .

the gay side



No sooner are you in the door, where the doorman glances at your fake ID with all the disinterest he can muster, than you can feel several sets of eyes on you. You find a wall to lean against and reach into your back pocket for your cigarettes. You have only recently mastered smoking without coughing or getting sick. It feels like an accomplishment, like learning a foreign language or losing a few pounds on a diet.

You don't need to diet or put on a few pounds. You are, as most of the daddies in the Glory Hole would attest, just right.

—From *Lincoln Avenue: Chicago Stories*

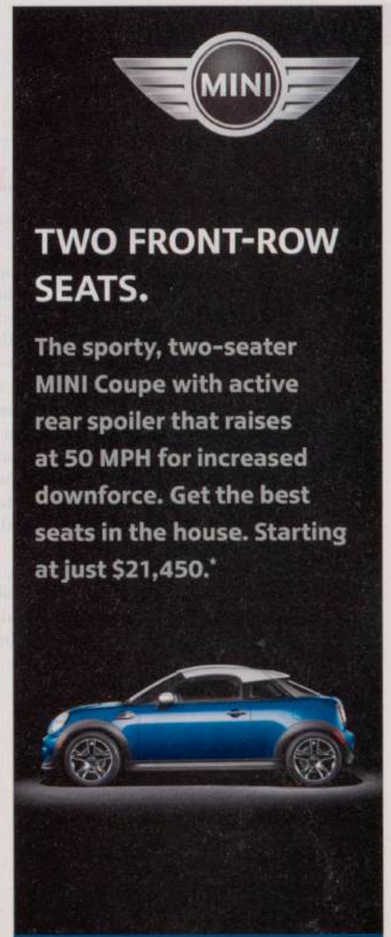
Gregg Shapiro's late 1970s/early '80s Chicago is one rich in pop-culture references, in all of the self-possessed swagger of a young man coming of age and realizing he not only has a place in the city, but a coveted spot as well. The above passage is taken from "Your Father's Car," the collection's pitch-perfect opener that also serves to represent a sort of ultra-insouciant *in medias res* for the seemingly semi-biographical protagonist loosely running through all of the collection's dozen tales. We see stories spanning this man's youth, from a fascination with his swimming instructor in fourth grade ("Swimming Lessons") to feeling uneasy about seeing an old boyfriend ("Your Mother's Car").

Shapiro is a seasoned contributing writer to various LGBT publications throughout the country, from those in Baltimore to this ol' publication right here, in addition to many literary journals. He has previously published a collection of poetry entitled *Protection* (2008) as well as a chapbook, *Gregg Shapiro: 77* (2012). This experience and diversity of writing skill shows in *Lincoln Avenue*, as it feels at times both like hearing a friend recount old stories and also like a quality portrait of life at a certain time and in a certain place.

At 91 pages, Shapiro's short-story collection is also a zippy read, never overstaying its welcome. You are left wishing you could spend more time in its universe. So pretend like it's still summer (because let's be honest—in Houston, it rarely feels like it's *not* summer) and spend an afternoon in Shapiro's Chicago. Later that night, share your own stories—while we might not all be as deft at writing as Shapiro, we've all got 'em.

Lincoln Avenue: Chicago Stories is available from Squares & Rebels, a Handtype Press imprint (squaresandrebels.com).

—*Tori Laxalt*



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Calendar of Events

Compiled by Marene Gustin

Halloween in Houston

No tricks to finding the treats this month

Look out! It's the month for spooks and thrills, gore and guts, and even a few sexy costumes. If Halloween is your holiday of choice, then this is the month for you. Break out the fake blood and hit the streets—we've got everything from family-friendly boo-fun to spooky art exhibits, a Halloween pup crawl (that's not a typo), and an outdoor screening of Bela Lugosi's cult classic *Dracula*.

Check out the calendar section SPOOKS AND THRILLS! on page 123 for all the details. You can head down to the island for Ghostly Galveston tours and fun events, or visit Houston's National Museum of Funeral History where scary exhibits like Dracula's Cemetery and a Halloween car show will run all month long.

And don't forget ScreamWorld, one of the biggest and best haunted houses in Texas. A little tamer—but not too much—is the Houston Zombie Walk's Halloween Festival and Horror Con at Discovery Green, October 19. Zombie Walk is a nonprofit group, and proceeds from this year's blowout benefit the Houston Children's Charity, Houston Humane Society, and Dove Key Ranch Wildlife Rehabilitation. Little monsters can enjoy face painting, a pumpkin patch, and trick-or-treating. Adults can munch out at food trucks, enjoy the stage shows, including headliner Vanilla Ice, plus a haunted house and a Halloween costume fashion show. And get this—AMC's *The Walking Dead* makeup team will be on site!

This could be the best Halloween party ever.

–Marene Gustin



Boo!: this skeleton was on view last year at the Health Museum's SIEGE OF THE SKELETONS. Will this year's be even creepier?

OCTOBER

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Queer Voices. Features, news, music, interviews, reviews, and commentary. Monday nights, 8–9pm. KPFT-90.1 FM • kpft.org • 713.526.4000.

PERFORMING ARTS

• THROUGH OCTOBER 5
Reefer Madness. It's a smokin' good musical farce based on the cult 1936 movie. Part of TUTS's Underground season. Info: tuts.com.

• THROUGH OCTOBER 11
Always a Bridesmaid. Theatre Suburbia presents this marriage-go-round romp. Info: theatresuburbia.org.

• THROUGH OCTOBER 12
Women in the Pit. Pulpit, that is. The Ensemble Theatre presents this dramatic regional premiere exploring the dynamics of church politics and female pastors. Info: ensemblehouston.com.

• THROUGH OCTOBER 18
45 Days: Experience the Arts in Houston. Houston Is Inspired is a citywide arts marketing campaign that hosts this first-ever event to encourage you to get out and support the arts this fall. See houstonisinspired.com for a full list of events and exhibits.
Detroit. Award-winning drama by Catastrophic Theatre. Info: catastrophictheatre.com.

• OCTOBER 1–5
Hurricane Nashville. Theater LaB Houston presents the story of a shy boy nicknamed Nashville Hurricane who becomes a country-music superstar. Info: thelabhou.org.

• OCTOBER 2–4
35th Annual Festival Chicano. A cultural celebration of Chicano music—including Tejano, Conjunto, Mariachi and Orchestra—in one of the oldest ongoing events of its kind in the world. Free at Miller Outdoor Theatre: milleroutdoortheatre.com.

• OCTOBER 2–12
The Playboy of the Western World is an Irish comedy produced by UH's School of Theatre & Dance. Info: theatredance.uh.edu.

• OCTOBER 4
Venezuela en Danza. Showcasing the beauty and traditions of Venezuelan dance, lively and rhythmic Venezuelan music will have audience members dancing to the beat. Free at Miller Outdoor Theatre: milleroutdoortheatre.com.
Sam Smith. Out British singer/songwriter Sam Smith's concert at House of Blues. This is part of his U.S. tour promoting the hit single "I'm Not the Only One" from his debut album *In The Lonely Hour.* Visit www.houseofblues.com/houston for ticket information.
The Fab 40 Perform the Beatles' *Revolver.* Forty Houston musicians recreate The Beatles' *Revolver* live on stage at Discovery Green. Free, at 8pm.

• OCTOBER 5
Love Me Do! Songs of the '60s. Houston Chamber Choir gives its debut performance at Miller Outdoor Theatre with songs from the 1860s and 1960s. Free at Miller Outdoor Theatre: milleroutdoortheatre.com.
American Dreams. String quartets by Dvorak & Schickele featuring the Houston debut of the Nyx Quartet. Info: aperioamericas.org.

• OCTOBER 7
Swing, Jive & Pop! Into Dance. MET Dance's event incorporates history, fashion, music, and the arts into an interactive blast of excitement. The company dances through the eras of the 1930s Lindy Hop, bops into the 1950s, grooves into the 1970s, and ends with the hip-hop music of today. Free at Miller Outdoor Theatre: milleroutdoortheatre.com.

• OCTOBER 8
Mulan: The Warrior Princess. A delightful adventure of heroism written by Alvaro Saar Rios and produced by Express Children's Theatre. Free at Miller Outdoor Theatre: milleroutdoortheatre.com.

• OCTOBER 8–19
Love, Loss and What I Wore. Like the popular book, the play uses clothing and accessories and the memories they trigger to tell funny and often poignant stories that all women can relate to. Theater LaB Houston: thelabhou.org.

• OCTOBER 8–NOVEMBER 2
Marie Antoinette. History gets an of-the-moment makeover in this raw, fantastical, and funny play by Stages Repertory Theatre: stagestheatre.com.

• OCTOBER 9–19
Chicago. "It's just a noisy hall where there's a nightly brawl . . . and All That Jazz!" Info: bayoucitytheatrics.com.

• OCTOBER 9–25
Red Death. Mildred's Umbrella presents this dark comedy of existential dilemmas, everyday fears, and ever-present anxieties. Info: mildredsumbrella.com.

• OCTOBER 10
Alchemia. A performance by Momix presented by The Society for Performing Arts. Info: spahouston.org.
KOKYO–Dialogue Between Hearts. Discover why Okinawa is known as an "island of performing arts" at this thrilling event of energetic dance numbers, thundering drums, and culturally unique costumes. Free at Miller Outdoor Theatre: milleroutdoortheatre.com.
Pianist Chick Corea. Da Camera kicks off the jazz series with the legendary Chick Corea in a solo piano performance. Info: dacamera.com.

• OCTOBER 10 & 11
Erasure heads to Houston on tour with the new release *The Violent Flame.* Info: erasureinfo.com.

• OCTOBER 11
National Acrobats of China. This dazzling company of 35 performers–the best in Chinese martial arts, illusion, and acrobats–will mesmerize and mystify with its stunning display of award-winning routines. Presented by The Society for Performing Arts: spahouston.org.
Lunada 2014. The Houston Symphony performs Latin American favorites for the entire family. Spend "the night of the full moon" under the stars at Miller! Free at Miller Outdoor Theatre: milleroutdoortheatre.com.

• OCTOBER 12
Dia de la Hispanidad featuring Siudy: Between Worlds. International sensation Siudy: Entre Mundos (Between Worlds), a first of-its-kind flamenco fantasia, explores a new form of storytelling that incorporates the raw, emotive power of flamenco dancing with pulse-pounding, cross-cultural percussion. Free at Miller Outdoor Theatre: milleroutdoortheatre.com.

• OCTOBER 14–19
Anything Goes. The Broadway revival of the Cole Porter classic. A toe-tappin' good time with all the great hits, at Broadway at the Hobby Center. Info: houston.broadway.com.

• OCTOBER 15–NOVEMBER 2
The Speckled Band: An Adventure of Sherlock Holmes. Directed by Classic Theatre Company veteran company artist Julia Traber, this production will capitalize on the Sherlock-mania that is gripping pop culture right now, while breathing new life into Doyle's century-old play. Info: classicaltheatre.org.

• OCTOBER 17
Rafal Blechacz. The Polish pianist offers deep, contemplative interpretations with underlying solid technique that no other young musician can emulate. Presented by The Society for Performing Arts: spahouston.org.
TG Sheppard and Kelly Lang. Montgomery County Performing Arts Society's opening of the 36th Christian Youth Theatre: cyhouston.org.

• OCTOBER 21
Conversation with the Artist: Patrick Feaster and Dario Robleto. In this discussion with Robleto, Feaster speaks about his work and their recent collaboration on "playing back" the earliest 19th-century attempts to visually record the human pulse and heart. Info: uh.edu.

• OCTOBER 23–NOVEMBER 1
The Addams Family. A new staging of the Addams Family saga–and it's every father's nightmare! Free at Miller Outdoor Theatre: milleroutdoortheatre.com.

• OCTOBER 25
Houston Arts Alliance's Transported + Renewed. Local marching bands, the University of Houston Cougar Marching Band, Austin High School Sonic Boom, and Milby High School Marching Thunder, ignite a spectacle of big sound. Info: uh.edu.

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY

• THROUGH OCTOBER 5
Robin Myers: Unknown Constellations* and *Keliy Anderson-Staley: On a Wet Bough–Contemporary Tintype Portraits. Galveston Arts Center is pairing with the Houston Center for Photography to present collections from two distinguished Houston-area photographers. Info: galvestonartscenter.org.

• THROUGH OCTOBER 12
Life: Survivor Portraits. This new series by local artist Kelly Lee Webeck includes 18 portraits of local survivors and 18 images that document the home space each survivor has created. At the Holocaust Museum Houston: hmh.org.

• THROUGH OCTOBER 16
The Left Bank on the Bayou: Avant-garde Art and Theatre in 1930s Houston. An exhibit produced by the O'Kane Gallery at the University of Houston-Downtown, intent on recreating the flavor of that early spark that set the tone for acceptance and tolerance for a broad range of arts that are apparent in today's thriving Houston art scene. Info: okanegallery.uhd.edu.

• THROUGH OCTOBER 18
Unwhole. Nicole Longnecker Gallery features a new series of sculptural work from Kelley Devine. The concurrent exhibition *Vinyl Voyage* shows new abstract expressionist work from Adam Nisenson. Info: longneckergallery.com.
Kenneth Noland Exhibition. Meredith Long & Company presents 20 handmade paper works by the American abstract painter. Info: meredithlonggallery.com.
The Tipping Point (Notes On). A sculpture exhibit by artist Troy Woods at the McMurtrey Gallery: mcmurtreygallery.com.
Exhibitions on View. Multiple showings from several artists on view at Box 13 ArtSpace: box13artspace.com.

• THROUGH OCTOBER 25
Artadia's 15th Anniversary Exhibition features several past winners of the nonprofit organization's unrestricted awards as part of its commitment to continuous support of artists throughout their careers. Info: artadia.org.
Parco dei Mostri. Miami-based Pepe Mar creates brightly colored and fantastical sculptures that flamboyantly reflect an eclectic fusion of cultures, at DiverseWorks: diverseworks.org.

• THROUGH OCTOBER 29
Air, Condition. Abinadi Meza's *Air, Condition* is a sound and video installation constructed from the invisible but omnipresent transmissions swarming in Houston's atmosphere. Info: blafferartmuseum.org. →

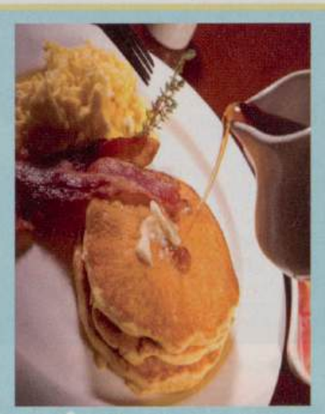
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Christine Salazar photographed by Bryan Anderson
Venue: Neon Boots Dancehall & Saloon
Make-Up: Aubrie Layne of Vanity Lounge

Calendar *continued from previous page*

• THROUGH OCTOBER 31
Hunter + Plum. Houston Arts Alliance exhibit with artists Allison Hunter and Susan Plum at the Alliance Gallery: houstonartsalliance.com.
• THROUGH NOVEMBER 28
Tracing Towers. Houston Arts Alliance exhibit with artist Jonathan Clark at the Alliance Gallery: houstonartsalliance.com.
• THROUGH NOVEMBER 30
Right Here, Right Now: Houston. The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston showcases artists living in the city and celebrates our region's vibrant creative community. Info: camh.org.
• THROUGH DECEMBER 6
Acclaimed Exhibition on the Urban Playground. Traveling exhibit hits the Blaffer Arts Museum this winter. Info: blafferartmuseum.org.
• THROUGH DECEMBER 19
In Residence: Work by 2013 Resident Artists is an exhibition of work created by the eight artists who began their residencies at Houston Center for Contemporary Craft in 2013. Info: crafthouston.org.
• THROUGH DECEMBER 24
CraftTexas 2014. Houston Center for Contemporary Craft presents this eighth in a series of biennial juried exhibitions showcasing the best in Texas-made contemporary craft. Info: crafthouston.org.
• THROUGH JANUARY 4, 2015
Dario Robleto: The Boundary of Life is Quietly Crossed. This exhibit at The Menil Collection examines the psychological and emotional ramifications of crossing unknown boundaries whether in space, the sea, or through exploring the human body by linking two undertakings in the 1960s: the space race and development of the artificial heart. Info: menil.org.
• THROUGH JANUARY 10, 2015
New Mural. Lawndale Art Center has a new mural up by Otabenga Jones & Associates as part of a yearlong commitment to health education. Info: lawndaleartcenter.org.
• OCTOBER 2–DECEMBER 7
Yusuke Asai: New Installation. Rice University Art Gallery is commissioning Japanese artist Yusuke Asai to create a new installation in conjunction with The Menil Collection's exhibition *Experiments with Truth: Gandhi and Images of Nonviolence*. Info: ricegallery.org.
• OCTOBER 4
Hands on Houston Family Festival. A day of activities and artist demonstrations at the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft: crafthouston.org.
• OCTOBER 4–30
When Wood Met Design. An exhibit at Archway Gallery by artists LeeAnn Gorman and Paul Haymond. Info: archwaygallery.com.
• OCTOBER 11, 18, 25, & NOVEMBER 1
Bonhoeffer Tours at Holocaust Museum. Tours focus on the life of Pastor Bonhoeffer and his attempts to rally the church against the Nazis and his efforts to assassinate Hitler. Info: hmh.org.

AND OTHER THINGS

• OCTOBER 4
Susan G. Komen Houston Race for the Cure. Downtown Houston welcomes the city's largest footrace and a wave of pink runners, all joining together to raise funds for lifesaving services and to help bring an end to breast cancer, forever. Info: komen-houston.org.
• OCTOBER 8
PR Day Conference. The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Houston Chapter hosts its annual one-day, fast-track professional development conference. Info: prsahouston.org.
• OCTOBER 9
Out for Good. A dinner and celebration of National Coming Out Day with The Montrose Center at the Rice Hotel. Info: montrosecenter.org.
• OCTOBER 9, 2014–JANUARY 16, 2015
Women in Architecture. An exhibition and events recognizing female architects. Info: aiahouston.org.
• OCTOBER 11 & 12
Autumn Art & Texas Wine Festival. This two-day festival features a variety of Texas-based wineries showcasing local white, red, and sweet wines and southern-style blends along with regional hand-crafted art, photography, crafts, fashion, and more in Old Town Spring. Info: winefesttexas.com.

• OCTOBER 18
Discovery Green Flea by Night presented by Green Mountain Energy. Food trucks, live music, and vendors selling vintage clothing, antiques, jewelry, art, and more under the stars and twinkle lights! Info: discoverygreen.com/flea.
• OCTOBER 23
Aurora Picture Show Award Dinner. 14th annual Aurora dinner honoring Carolee Schneemann. Info: aurorapicture show.org.
• OCTOBER 24
Opening Night Dinner Celebration for Houston Grand Opera. Enjoy a performance of *Otello* by HGO before a special black-tie dinner. Call 713.546.0242 for tickets.
• OCTOBER 28
Unleash Your Inner '80s Rock Star. This howling good time benefits K9s4COPs. You're encouraged to wear '80s attire. Info: K9s4COPs.org.

SAVE THE DATE!

• NOVEMBER 1
Great Houston Area Walk. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Greater Houston Chapter's fundraiser will be held in The Woodlands next month. Info: afsp.donordrive.com.
• NOVEMBER 1 & 2 AND 8 & 9
Southern Living Home for the Holidays Showcase. See a fabulous West U home decorated for the holidays. It all benefits Operation FINALLY HOME, a nonprofit that provides mortgage-free homes for wounded and disabled veterans. For tour info: stoneacorn.com.
• NOVEMBER 4
Quatuor Mosaïques. The most prominent period-instrument quartet performing today makes its first Houston appearance. Info: dacamera.com.
• NOVEMBER 5
Joshua Bell. Society for the Performing Arts presents violinist Joshua Bell. Info: spahouston.org.
• NOVEMBER 7
Fashion Fete Art of the Runway. Upcoming fundraiser for DiverseWorks: diverseworks.org.

ONGOING

For information on these groups, visit OUTSMARTMAGAZINE.COM

- **AssistHers**
- **Center HIV Support Group**
- **Coming Out Support Group**
- **Depression Bipolar Support Group**
- **Dignity Houston** (LGBT Catholics and friends)
- **Discovery Green Flea by Night**
- **Domestic Violence/Relationship Wellness Group**
- **EMBody: Introduction to Yoga**
- **EMBody: Mindfulness, Well-Being, Stress Reduction**
- **Fathers First** (gay dads)
- **First Saturday Arts Market**
- **First Saturday Queer Bingo**
- **Free Legal Consultations for PWAs**
- **Gay Men's Survivors of Sexual Assault Support**
- **Gulf Pride for Youth**
- **HATCH's Transgender Support Group and Speak Out for Youth**
- **HATCH Youth Group**
- **Helping TransGenders Anonymous** (support group)
- **HIV Support Group BSSG**
- **HIV Support Group Lunch Brunch**
- **HIV Testing** (Houston Area Community Services)
- **HIV Testing** (Legacy Community Health Services)
- **HIV Testing** (Planned Parenthood)
- **HIV Testing** (Thomas Street Clinic)
- **Houston Pride Band**
- **LGBT HIV+ Support Group**
- **LOAF** (Lesbians Over Age Fifty) **Meet and Greet**
- **Log Cabin Republicans**
- **Long-Term Survivor's Group for HIV+ Gay Men**
- **National Leather Association–Houston**
- **Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) Houston**
- **Queer Book Club**
- **Ryan White Planning Council**
- **Share with PFLAG Houston**
- **Share with the Clear Lake satellite of PFLAG Houston**
- **Southern Country** (free dance lessons)
- **SPRY** (LGBT persons age 60 and older)
- **Triple D: Dykes, Dinner, and Discussion**
- **WHAM! Whole Health Action Management**
- **The Women's Group**
- **Women's Survivors of Sexual Assault Support**
- **Zumba** (exercise class)



• THROUGH OCTOBER 31
Siege of the Skeletons. The Health Museum's 6th annual art competition for area students showcases Franken-skeletons, zombies, and mummies, and more. Info: thehealthmuseum.org.
Ghostly Galveston. Galveston Historical Foundation offers ghost tours of the island's harbor, cemeteries, and historic mansions, and this year offers a new roster of uniquely created events for adults and youth alike. Tickets for all events are available for purchase at galvestonhistory.org.
The National Museum of Funeral History. A month-long celebration of Halloween and Day of the Dead features a haunted house, Dracula's cemetery exhibition, a Halloween car show, and a Dia de los Muertos celebration. Visit nmfh.org for the spooky details.
• THROUGH NOVEMBER 1
ScreamWorld. Prepare to be terrified! The 26th haunted house event plans to scare more than 30,000 visitors this year with scenarios like the Swamp, Jake's Slaughterhouse, and the Zombie Graveyard. Info: screamworld.com.
• OCTOBER 4
Dracula (1931) with Bela Lugosi. Movie night on The Strand, with a special Halloween treat! Info: galveston.com.
• OCTOBER 19
Houston Halloween Festival and Horror Con. It's a day-long family friendly event complete with a kids carnival with a Ferris wheel, rock wall, inflatables, obstacle course, face painting, balloon twisters, a Fiesta pumpkin patch photo op, trick-or-treating, a seasonal crafts booth, and a Vanilla Ice concert! And a Zombie walk! See houstonzom biewalk.org for the gory details.
• OCTOBER 25
Mini Monster Bash. Family-friendly Halloween carnival with trick-or-treating, costume contest, games, and prizes in downtown Galveston. Info: galveston.com.
First Montrose Halloween PUP crawl. Friends of Cherryhurst Park present the first party in the park for costumed pups and dogs. Visit Friends of Cherryhurst Park on Facebook.
• OCTOBER 31
Scream on the Green. Have a spooky good time at Houston's seventh annual citywide costume contest and Halloween celebration! Prizes, music, and more! And see the film *Frankenweenie* at 7pm. Info: discoverygreen.com. ■

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Boys, Boys, Boys at Guava Lamp

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September 18










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Gayest & Greatest 2014 Out•Smart FINALIST BEST VIETNAMESE

Open 'Heart'

continued from page 92

to each other. That's why I write about it a lot. I'm so hungry for connection. I crave real, tangible human interaction. I believe the way to achieve that is vulnerability. The way you achieve vulnerability is to have an open heart. That's the basis of it. An openness of your soul, which I believe is your heart.

Your torch-song reinvention of Rick Springfield's "Jessie's Girl" is nothing short of brilliant. You take ownership of the song! Why did you choose to cover that song?

I love that song! "Jessie's Girl" is one of my favorite songs that has ever been written. [*Laughs*] There's the intensity behind it, when you break down the lyrics. When I broke it down and was trying to find the right chords to fit with it, I love that line "She's watching him with those eyes/and she's loving him with that body." That line is so poetic. There's poetry in that song. I know it's an upbeat, angsty kind of song, but I just thought, "If you're a gay person, you've undoubtedly had feelings for someone who's straight." I felt like those feelings were similar. I also love the non-gender-specific name Jessie. It was so awesome to sing it. To me, the intent behind it is a little subversive, in terms of wanting to connect with the gay community in that way. But I also think taking it down-tempo and adding strings to it gave it a different kind of life.

Do you know if Rick Springfield has heard it and what he thinks of it?

I think he has heard it. I would love to have a conversation with him. I think we're actually working on setting one up now.

Like Beth Ditto, you have become a body-image advocate, most recently launching The Body Love Campaign. What can you tell me about it?

The Body Love Campaign is something I feel very strongly about. It's just the idea of self-worth and self-care and propelling that in our culture that is so invested in breaking down women [and making] women ask for validation from men. I don't think it's anybody's fault, but I think it's perpetuated by both genders. Something I really wanted to attack was the fact that it starts before you are 16 or 17. That was the peak of it for me, when I felt pressured to be somebody that I wasn't and then feel really guilty about it. I wanted to make a declaration of "You are beautiful, just the way you are." But I also didn't want to [gloss] over it the way a lot of other people do. I think it's about girls' self-harming, heavy drinking, and escapism because of the pain we feel about our bodies and our self-destruction.

Gregg Shapiro also interviews Ferras in the GrooveOut column in this issue of OutSmart.

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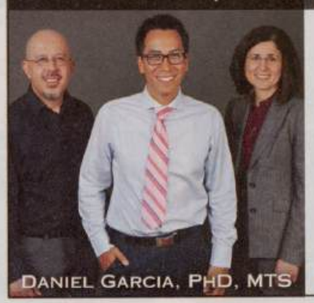
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Transgender Unity Banquet 2014 at Sheraton Brookhollow

September 20



Legacy Community Health Services - 12th Annual Luncheon Honoring Martha Turner

September 22



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A Restless Artist, Still Untamed

continued from page 97

breakdown, then decided to continue his trip in the opposite direction, to California, planning his stops according to which museums he wanted to visit along the way. Journaling his experience on his blog and seeing great art from coast to coast, the trip proved to be good therapy.

Back in Houston, he became the visual arts editor of the classy and popular *Arts+Culture Houston* magazine in 2012. He assumed the same title for *Arts+Culture Texas*, the statewide magazine formed when *A+C Houston* merged with its North Texas sister publication and added coverage in other cities.

In January 2013, Britt-Darby showed some of the iron-on paintings in a solo exhibition *Keepsakes from Several Occasions*, at Zoya Tommy Contemporary. Images from his sex-worker past comingled with scenes from the present, as if he were intentionally conflating the two.

Past and present met again that May, when Britt-Darby staged a two-part exhibition titled *Art Criticism and Reporting* at Art League Houston. The press release made clear that Britt-Darby had moved on from iron-ons: "The first part of the exhibition features a series of text paintings conceived as portraits of the authors whose words are contained therein. Painted against abstract, reflective backgrounds that cause the words to shift in and out of legibility with changes in the light and the viewer's orientation, the texts are appropriated from Internet forum posts and press articles written about Britt-Darby during two cross-country road trips—one in 2004, another in 2011–2012—that provoked alarm and public speculation about his mental state."

For part two, Britt-Darby took up residency in the gallery for a month and created a four-part mural-sized text painting that spread across three walls. This time every word came from his Brockton arrest report. "It was an absurd gesture in a way—all that work for a painting people only had one day to see in a complete state, and that is too big to read in its entirety," Britt-Darby says. "And then the next day I rolled it up and carried it home. But the show touched a nerve for a lot of people. At the closing reception, one person after another came up and told me really personal things about their experiences with meth, or mental illness, or sex work, or getting arrested."

Having laid out his past so thoroughly in his art, Britt-Darby wasn't sure about his odds when he heard that the University of Houston's Blaffer Art Museum was looking for a new director of public affairs. "I may be too colorful for Blaffer," he emailed director and chief curator Claudia Schmuckli. "But I'd be interested in talking . . . if you would." Schmuckli, who had attended Britt-Darby's wedding, replied succinctly from her iPhone: "No color too bright for us. Let's talk."

As he wrote his farewell *A+C* column, Britt-Darby got out a map and traced all his road trips and last-minute cheap flights since leaving the *Chronicle*. "By my count, I've visited 93 museums in 23 states in a few months shy of three years," he wrote. "To be honest, it's kind of made me want to go work at one." Now he does, on the very same university campus where he began rebuilding his life nearly 10 years ago.

At 44, Britt-Darby is comfortable as a matured gay male with a honed body and a honed mind. He is a career professional with bold ideas and creative media with which to express them. He is an artist capable of deeply touching the souls of others—a man free of secrets in a world full of spin and image control. And the only thing predictable about Devon Britt-Darby is that he is predictably unpredictable.

Brandon Wolf wrote about Pride marshals Christina Gorczynski, JD Doyle, and Sarah Walters and Fernando Aramburo in the June 2014 issue of OutSmart magazine.

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Seamus Kraham, owner of the Urban Resort, Galveston's newest home-design store, is pictured at his store's grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony on September 10. The new design store offers custom furniture, home accents, and more. 411 25th Street, Galveston. INFO: 409/443-5410, urbanresorthome.com

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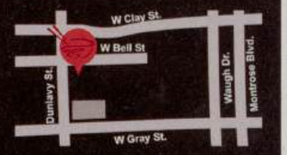
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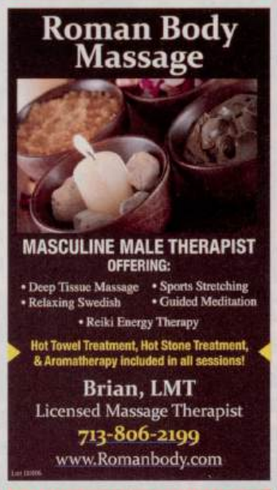




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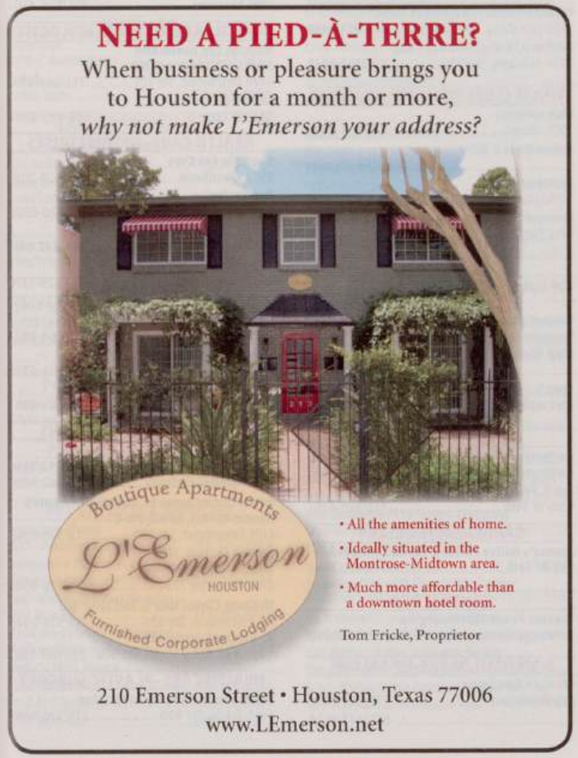
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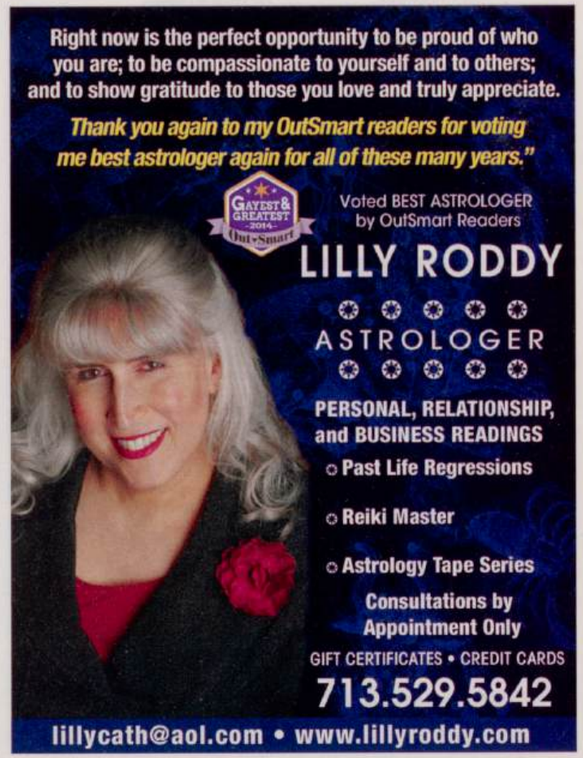


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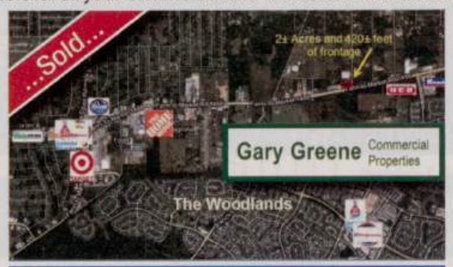
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Bar & Club Guide

Houston

13 ENTERTAINMENT

Formerly In-N-Out, this comfortable club located in the northern Heights is a convenient alternate to inner-Montrose haunts. Patrons journey past the comfy seating and romantic lighting to find a spacious patio where they sometimes fire up the barbecue grill. 1537 N. Shepherd • 713.426.1313.

BAYOU CITY BAR & GRILL

Right in the heart Montrose, this cozy bar is the new home for the famous Breakfast Club (which dates back to 1986), opens at 7am, and continues throughout the day with a full kitchen and menu along with late-night dancing! Known for Drag Bingo on Tuesday, Steak Night on Wednesday, and Wing Night Thursday. DJs nightly. 7 days a week (Mon.–Sat., 7a–2a; Sunday, noon–2a). 2409 Grant St. • bayoucitybar.com.

BLUR

This multi-level dance club features an expansive patio upstairs lounge and balconies that overlook the Pacific St. traffic. 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 8–10pm; free cover before 11pm. 710 Pacific St. • blurbar.com.

CLUB 2020

Located downtown near the Toyota Center, this urban club features Clubbers Friday with male and female dancers. Its 6,400 square feet also offers theater-sized viewing screens and VIP rooms. 2020 Leeland • 713.227.9667 • club2020houston.com.

CLUB 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 • 713.278.2582 • crystaltheclub.com.

CROCKER BAR

Resident DJ Johnny spins on Fri. and Sat. nights at this comfortably remodeled Montrose nightspot that also offers karaoke on Tuesdays and Thursdays and extended happy-hour prices throughout the week. 2312 Crocker • 713.529.3355.

THE EAGLE

The Eagle has landed at its new location in the heart of Montrose, and it looks great. Sexy bartenders, lots of outdoor deck space, and even a gift shop to check out. Mon.–Sat., 4pm–2am; Sun, noon–2am. 611 Hyde Park • eagle houston.com.

F BAR

Award-winning DJs spin nightly at this "boutique nightclub" that offers elegance without arrogance and features a stage, dance floor, VIP area, glass-encased quiet bar, and attractive patio. Tues. and Sun. drag shows feature frequent special guests. 202 Tuam St. • fbarhouston.com • 713.522.3227.

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 3pm with dart and pool tournaments; Steak Night is Sun., 3–7pm. 617 Fairview • 713.528.8102.

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BEHIND THE BAR

WHO: Alex Gregory and Josh Mills

WHERE: Splash Bar Galveston • 3102 Seawall Blvd. splashbargalveston.com • 409.974.4176

WHAT'S UP: Splash Bar is Galveston's new gay nightclub and beach bar featuring the Splash Divas drag shows and Houston's hottest dancers and DJs, including DJ Melle Mel on Fridays and Saturdays, as well as the best Sunday tea dance party hosted by Carmen Can-Too and DJ Debbie Boyd. Daily Happy Hour specials 'til 9 p.m.

GUAVA LAMP

This trendy and friendly video and cruise bar gets busy during happy hour and stays busy 'til closing. Karaoke on Wed. and Sun., sometimes offering prizes, always packs the place. 570 Waugh Dr. • 713.524.3359 • guavalamphouston.com.

JR'S BAR & GRILL

With house emcee Kofi, *OutSmart*'s Gayest and Greatest reigning drag champion, this Montrose standard offers drag and strip shows throughout the week, karaoke Thurs. and Sun., plus pool tables, male dancers, and award-winning cocktails. 808 Pacific St. • jrsbarandgrill.com • 713.521.2519.

METEOR

The men of Manwatch and Muscles in Action rinse down in the "Meteor Shower" stall in this posh but comfy lounge on the downtown edge of Montrose, accompanied by DJ Chris on Friday and award-winning DJ Eddie E on Saturday. Open Thurs.–Sat. 2306 Genesee St. • meteorhouston.com • 713.521.0123.

MICHAEL'S OUTPOST

Jerry Atwood, Clay Howell, Neil Massey, Steve Wheaton, and Roger Woest take turns at the keys at this comfortable neighborhood piano bar. 1419 Richmond Ave. • 713.520.8446.

MONTROSE MINING COMPANY

Studly male dancers bump and grind every night at this leather/denim spot, offering Montrose's lowest vodka drinks with Trash Disco Sundays. The two-tier back patio bar provides a perch for viewing the Pacific Street scenery. 805 Pacific St. • theminehouston.com • 713.529.7488.

NEON BOOTS DANCEHALL & SALOON

Houston's only LGBT country & western dancehall is located at the Historic Esquire Ballroom and is open Thursday–Sunday. 11410 Hempstead Hwy • neonbootsclub.com • 713.677.0828.

PEARL LOUNGE

This LGBT-friendly lounge is open under "familiar" management in the Washington corridor. Daily highlights range from open mic night to steak night to appearances by DJ Kittie and DJ Ben Phoenix from KRBE. Drink specials and more. 4216 Washington.

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. • 713.521.2792 • theripcord.com.

RUDYARD'S

The eclectic British pub is known for its craft beers as well as for the burgers. Most weekends you'll find up-and-coming local bands rocking the house. 2010 Waugh Dr. • rudyardspub.com • 713.521.0521.

SOUTH BEACH

This mega-dance club is a frequent winner of *OutSmart*'s Gayest and Greatest awards, with DJ Eddie E spinning on Fri., and DJ Joe Ross playing pop & dance music videos on Sat. No cover before 11pm. 810 Pacific St. • sobehouston.com • 713.529.SOBE.

TC'S SHOWBAR

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 • tcshowbar.com.

TONY'S CORNER POCKET

This comfortable club located close to downtown has one of the friendliest bar staffs in town, both inside & outside at its patio bar. The raised stage where local charities perform also features an amateur dance contest each Thurs., Fri., & Sat. at 11pm. Opens daily at noon. 817 W. Dallas • 713.571.7870 • tonyscornerpocket bar.com.

VIVIANA'S

This club, in a new location, appeals to fans of Latino music and drag alike. 4624 Dacoma • 713.681.4104.

Beaumont

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The place to hang for food, fun, and booze in a newly renovated pub, in good weather or bad. Open every night from 7pm–2am. 650 Orleans • 409.835.4243.

Bryan/College Station

HALO VIDEO BAR

The only LGBT 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.

Galveston

3RD COAST DOWNTOWN

Just because its owners moved the club from its longtime Seawall location, it doesn't mean it's not still one of the most popular spots for Galveston's LGBTs. Its new "urban chic" look maintains its tropical flair. 2416 Postoffice St. • 409.765.6911.

PINK DOLPHIN

A familiar name returns to Galveston's roster of gay bars, with new owner Tom Long. The friendly, neighborhood BYOB spot offers affordable setups and an off-the-Seawall, downtown-based island escape. 1706 Tremont St. • 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.

SPLASH BAR GALVESTON

Galveston's newly opened and only gay bar on the beach is making a huge splash on the island. Now under new ownership, the new club's Happy Hour and entertainment line-up sizzles with Hot Fridays and Saturdays featuring its "Splash Divas" drag shows, amateur strip contests, and the areas hottest DJs spinning your favorite tunes. Sunday's Tea Dance features Happy Hour from noon 'til 8pm, and you can count on lively entertainment every weekday. 3102 Seawall Blvd. • 409.974.4176 • splashbargalveston.com.

Spring

RANCH HILL SALOON

With its two pool tables, 52-inch plasma televisions, and large dance floor, this popular northside spot also offers DJs Thursday–Saturday. 247041 I-45N Suite 103 • 281.298.9035 • ranchhill.com.

THE ROOM

Northside LGBTs relax on couches and enjoy multiple television screens, pool tables, & an ample dance floor where famed local DJs Triple-S and Dylan Barnes rotate to provide the music on Retro Fridays, New Mix Saturdays, & Trash Disco Sundays. Open daily. 4915 FM 2920 #148 • theroombar.net. ■

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by Lilly Roddy

Take Care of Old Issues . . .

and visit old friends and lovers

As the month opens, we are under the influence of the Mercury retrograde until October 30. This retrograde is a good time to take care of past problems and old issues, and also to visit old friends and lovers. But it's just not a good time to start a new project. • We also have a lunar eclipse on October 8, the Full Moon and solar eclipse on the 23rd—the New Moon. These eclipses focus on relationships and intimacy, much like the Mercury retrograde. The energies are very erratic on the 8th! Partnerships—both personal and in global politics—are tested this month. • Days to get up early and greet the sun are the 10th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 20th, 27th, and 28th! Days to stay in bed are the 4th, 7th, 8th, 11th, 23rd, and 25th.

ARIES (March 21–April 19). With the eclipse on the 8th taking place in Aries, relationships are highlighted for you this month. You want more freedom and personal expression, and it's a good time to connect with people from your past for business or personal reasons. Bosses and coworkers could get on your nerves toward the end of the month. Try to take some time to get away from it all.

TAURUS (April 20–May 20). You are focused on getting your work and your life in order this month. You have been (and still are) on a quest to achieve long-term goals, but this month you slow down a bit and take care of some details you have been neglecting. The solar eclipse on the 23rd could bring you some insight about new directions. Relationships are very active at the end of the month.

GEMINI (May 21–June 21). With Mercury (your ruling planet) retrograde, this is an especially good time to step back and survey the landscape. You have been busy, so this gives you time to take a breath. You are ready for some freedom from your routines during the first half of the month. In the latter part of October, you are more serious about your endeavors. Start your new projects after the 30th.

CANCER (June 22–July 22). Cancerians will be drawn to their own past and personal histories in October, as family energies are very strong this month. This can be a great time for a family reunion or just traveling back to an old neighborhood. With the eclipse on the 8th, there could be some good news about your work or career. You are ready to move forward at the end of the month, when you have extra energy to get your projects done.

LEO (July 23–August 22). You continue to be optimistic and open this month. You are generally in a good period until August 2015. Take some time this month to reflect back on what you have been working on. It's a great time to get away for a much-needed vacation. You are back on track and working on your future plans after the 26th, when home and family take the spotlight.

VIRGO (August 23–Septmber 22). As the month opens, you are paying attention to your financial picture. This is a very good month to look at your portfolio or to get those piles of financial papers in order. With Mercury (your ruling planet) retrograde, you are ready to clean things up. Projects at home are still taking up some of your time. Family members can seem edgy, but it's not about you. Make sure you take time for health and fitness routines.

SCORPIO (October 24–November 21). This has been a pretty heavy-duty year, with Saturn (planet of career and judgment) continuing to make her way through your sign. This continues to keep you focused on your assigned tasks. In October, you need some time to yourself, and a break from all of the work and expectations you have piled on yourself. By the end of the month, you are rested and ready to get back out there.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22–December 21). You continue to be busy and active this month as Mars, planet of action and adventure, moves through your sign. This is a great month to take care of old projects and get them out of your way. You are drawn to connecting with old friends this month. Your social calendar continues to be busy, but you want to slow that down by the end of the month.



ILLUSTRATION: DAVID EDUARDO FLORES PEREZ

LIBRA (September 23–October 23). Happy Birthday to the Librans! This is your yearly cycle of personal review. And with Mercury retrograde in your sign this month, you will be examining the past year with a magnifying glass. Relationship energies are tense and edgy this month, especially around the 8th. Home and family become more important at the end of the month, but wait until after the 30th to start any projects.

CAPRICORN (December 22–January 19). Your career sector is very active this month. And with Mercury retrograding through this part of your horoscope, you are reexamining some of your choices and decisions. Look for support from friends and coworkers if you feel overwhelmed. With the eclipse on the 8th, you are lightening your load at home. The past is holding you back. Mars, planet of action, enters your sign on October 26 for the next 45 days. Get ready, get set . . . !

AQUARIUS (January 20–February 18). You are feeling more open and lighthearted, despite the strong sense that you have to keep working at your task-oriented pace. During the Mercury retrograde this month, take some time to reexamine your current set of goals. Relationship energies continue to improve, whether you are single or connected. Make sure you give yourself the day off on October 8—you really need your freedom on that day. You will be back to your old driven self, but not until after November 4.

PISCES (February 19–March 20). Career activity seems to be on the top of your list this month. You need to express yourself in order to be distinguished from the rest of the pack. Your real feelings are on your sleeve and hard to mask. Seek the support of others in this process—it will really pay off after the end of the month. You need to get your point of view out there, but your presentation style is all-important! Support is just around the corner.

Read Lilly Roddy's 2014 forecast at OutSmartMagazine.com. For more astro-insight, log on to lillyroddy.com.



OUT IN HOUSTON

Photos by Dalton DeHart



Bob Strother, owner of Adam & Eve, poses center with The Ken Dolls at "Adam & Eve presents BOYS BOYS BOYS," an all-male cabaret show held at Guava Lamp on September 12.



Eliza Williamson, **Tyler Woods**, **Angela Wren Wall**, **Rosemary Hennessy**, **Muffie Moroney**, **Brian Riedel**, **Diana Strassmann**, and **Melanie Pang** celebrate at the opening reception for Rice University's Center for the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality on September 3.



The cast and crew of *Victor/Victoria* pose following their OUT at TUTS performance on September 18.



Texas gubernatorial candidate **Wendy Davis** (c) smiles with Brazos Bookstore employees at her "Forgetting to be Afraid" book signing on September 13.



JD Doyle, hostess **Sandi Glorfield**, **Pat Odom**, and **Arden Eversmeyer** attend a performance on August 29 as part of the House Concerts in a Comfortable Home Setting series, which features various artists.



Bruce Smith, **Sandy Hardwick**, First Lady **Kathy Hubbard**, Mayor **Annise Parker**, **Shirley Pettis**, and **Tony Carroll** celebrate at Carroll's birthday fundraiser for the Harris County Democratic Party on September 13.



PFLAG's September meeting, held on September 7, featured a transgender panel discussion. **Karen Carlson**, **Rose Bowen**, **Dee Dee Waters**, **Alistar Blucker**, **Steven Bratsen**, and **Jeffry Faircloth** were in attendance.



Teresa Lemerond, **Tina Berry**, **Shelley Finley**, and **Mary Beth Alsdorf** at the Alley Theatre's ActOUT performance of *The Old Friends* by Horton Foote held at the University of Houston on August 28.



Unity award winners and Houston Transgender Unity Committee members at the Transgender Unity Banquet held at the Sheraton Houston Brookhollow Hotel on September 20.



The Queer Queens of Qomedy Texas Tour, featuring comedians Sandra Valls, Poppy Champlin, and Vickie Shaw, came to Neon Boots Dancehall and Saloon on September 17. Pictured here are **Rodney Myers**, **Debbie Storrs**, **Shaw**, **Ron McElroy**, **Valls**, **Fernando Orozco**, **Jim Daily**, and **Champlin**.



Legacy Community Health Services honored Martha Turner at their 12th annual luncheon on September 22. Pictured here are **Katie Caldwell**, **Frank Campisi**, **Turner**, **Dominique Sachse**, and **Bryan Hlavinka**.



Jacob Burton, **Jen Bajorek**, **Clint Hudler**, **Rodney Morris**, **Synthia Walton**, and **Elaine Decanio** smile at the Bunnies on the Bayou & HRC brunch held at The DeGaulle on September 6.

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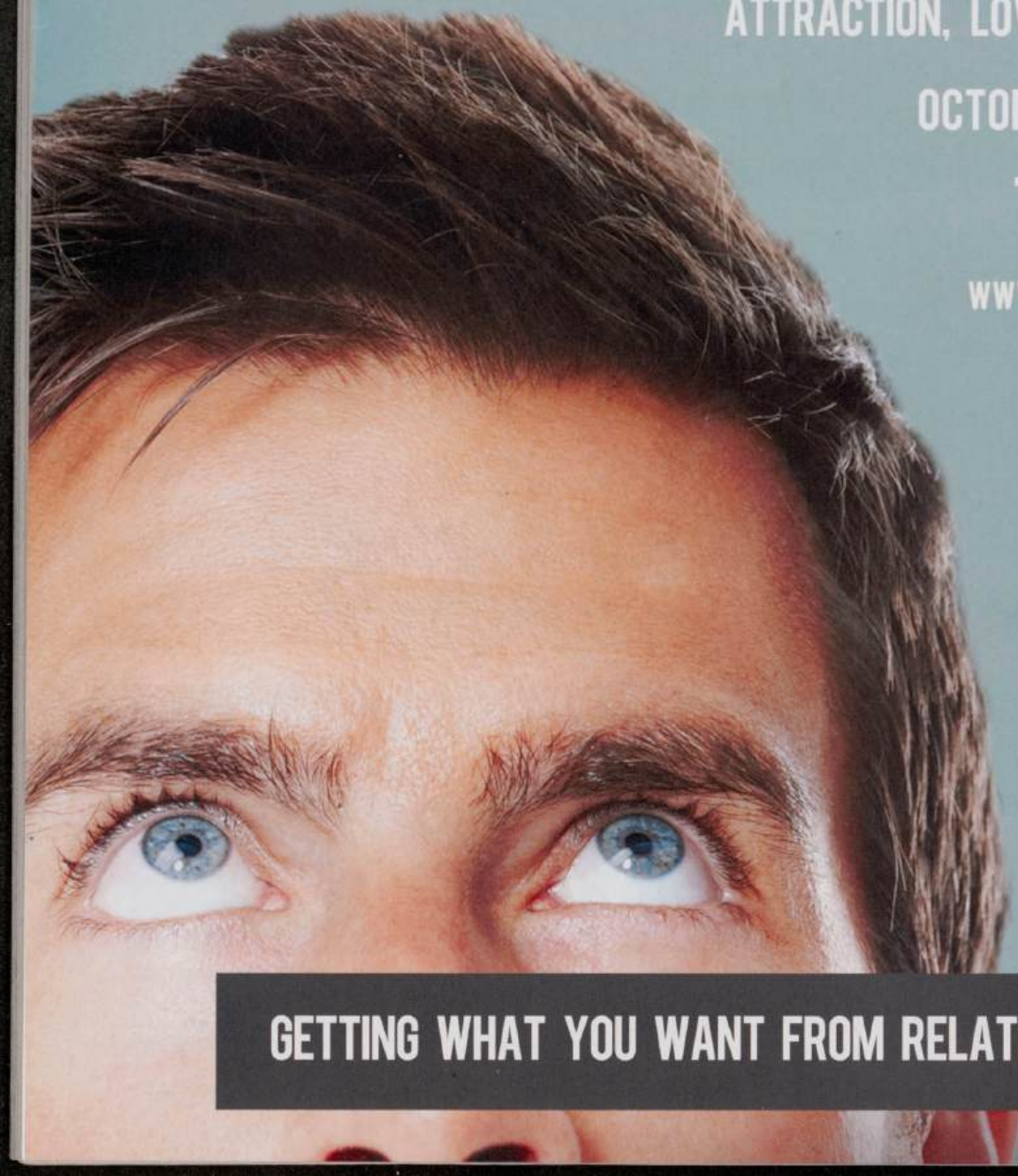
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