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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 breast-feed. 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.

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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 methylethergonovine maleate (Ergotrate®, Methergine®)
- lovastatin (Advicor®, Altoprev®, Mevacor®)
- oral midazolam
- pimozone (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 (Vasacor®, Bepadin®)
 - bosentan (Tracleer®)
 - buspirone
 - carbamazepine (Carbatrol®, Epitol®, Equetro®, Tegretol®)
 - clarithromycin (Biaxin®, Prevpac®)
 - clonazepam (Klonopin®)
 - clorazepate (Gen-xene®, Tranxene®)
 - colchicine (Colcris®)
 - medicines that contain dexamethasone
 - diazepam (Valium®)

- digoxin (Lanoxin®)
- disopyramide (Norpace®)
- estazolam
- ethosuximide (Zarontin®)
- flecainide (Tambocor®)
- flurazepam
- fluticasone (Flovent®, Flonase®, Flovent® Diskus®, Flovent® HFA, Veramyst®)
- itraconazole (Sporanox®)
- ketoconazole (Nizoral®)
- lidocaine (Xylocaine®)
- mexiletine
- oxcarbazepine (Trileptal®)
- perphenazine
- phenobarbital (Luminal®)
- phenytoin (Dilantin®, Phenytek®)
- propafenone (Rythmol®)
- quinidine (Neudexta®)
- 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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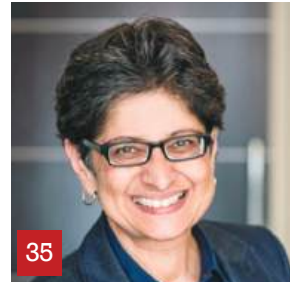
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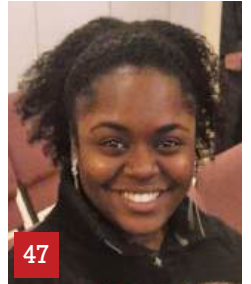
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Photo: courtesy Ty Herndon

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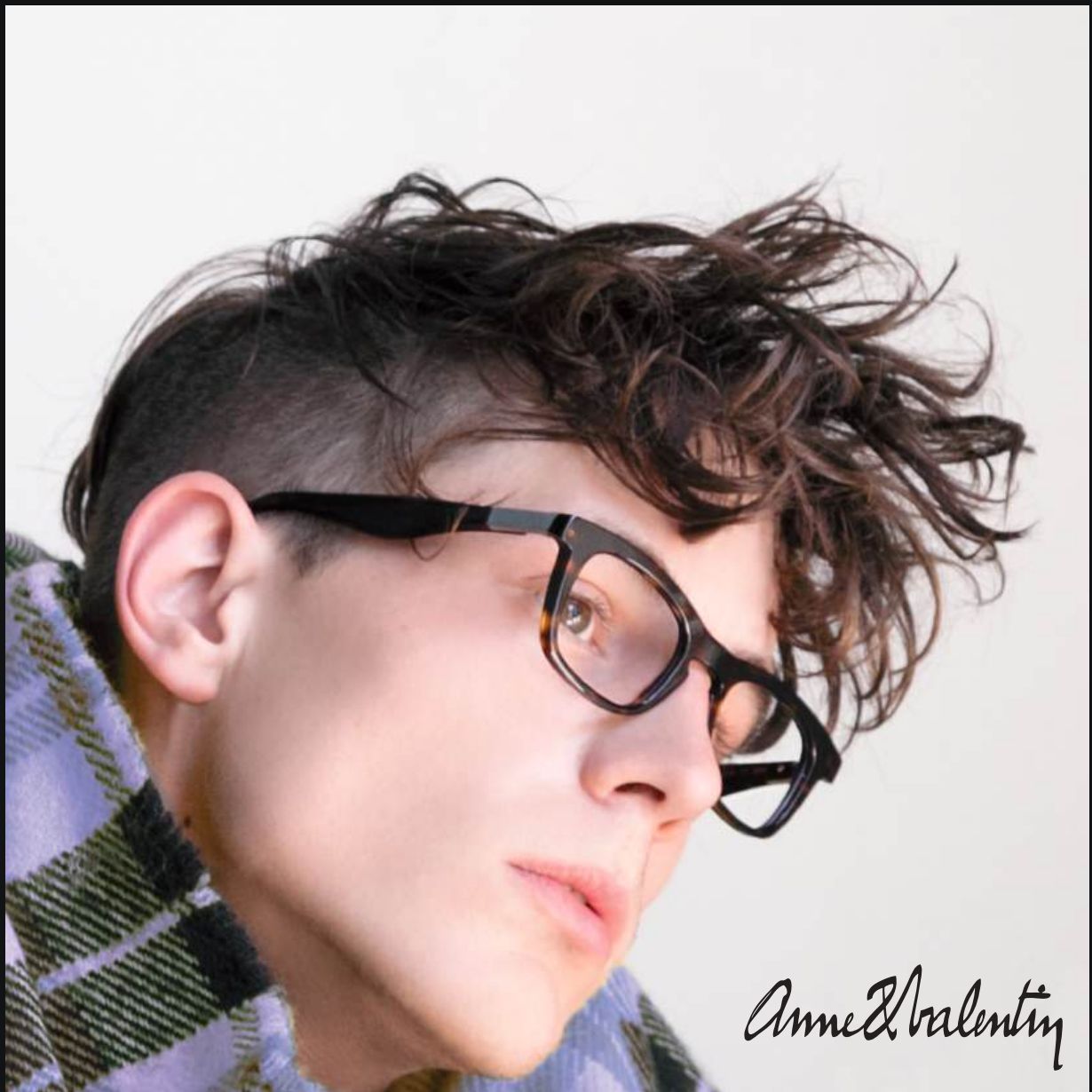


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Equality Texas Anticipates a 'Difficult' Legislative Session in Austin

by John Wright

Get ready to play some defense. That's the message from Equality Texas heading into the 84th Texas Legislature, which begins January 13.

Republicans picked up seats in November elections, further increasing their lopsided majorities in both the House and Senate. And anti-LGBT lawmakers are expected to respond to the spread of marriage equality to 35 states in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's June 2013 ruling in *Windsor v. United States* striking down the federal Defense of Marriage Act. "We've seen that nationally," said Daniel Williams of Houston, legislative specialist for Equality Texas. "There has been a backlash against the freedom to marry in states that have had legislative sessions since *Windsor*. We're going to see backlash. It's going to be a difficult session. It's going to be a lot of hard work, but we'll prevail."

In fact, the attacks have already begun, with the introduction of legislation in both the House and Senate that would enshrine a "license to discriminate" against LGBT people in the state Constitution. The proposed amendments from Sen. Donna Campbell (R-New Braunfels) and Rep. Jason Villalba (R-Dallas) are an apparent response to the small number of bakers, florists, and other business owners who've faced discrimination complaints in other states for refusing to serve same-sex couples.

In Texas, one effect of the proposals would be limiting cities' ability to enforce nondiscrimination ordinances by allowing business owners to claim religious exemptions. Williams said he also expects a bill to be filed that would bar cities from enacting nondiscrimination ordinances in the first place.

Rep. Jonathan Stickland (R-Bedford) has threatened to file legislation to prohibit the state from providing transition-related healthcare to transgender prison inmates, and Rep. Matt Krause (R-Arlington) is again expected to introduce a proposal that would authorize university clubs to discriminate against LGBT students.

For the third consecutive session, Williams said lawmakers are also likely



Sen. Donna Campbell (R-New Braunfels, right) poses for a photo with former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum in the Senate Chambers in Austin. Campbell's proposed "license to discriminate" legislation is one of the many challenges LGBT advocates like Equality Texas will face in the state's upcoming legislative session.

to target Texas A&M's LGBT Resource Center, which drew their ire by holding a Lavender Graduation to recognize and celebrate the university's LGBT graduates this year.

And to make matters worse, it could be more difficult to defeat anti-LGBT legislation in the Senate, which is expected to change its rules to allow legislation to be considered with the support of 60 percent of members, instead of the two-thirds majority currently required. "It would be easier to get legislation that's outside the mainstream onto the floor," Williams said. "That works both directions, but it would make it easier for Sen. Campbell to get her 'license to discriminate' legislation to the Senate floor for a vote."

Nevertheless, Williams remains confident the LGBT community and its allies can stave off the attacks. No anti-LGBT bill has passed since the marriage amendment in 2005. "We're very adept at stopping bad legislation, but the way that we stop bad legislation is by massive public outcry," Williams said. "I'm confident because these proposals are not in keeping with Texas values, they're not in keeping with the will of the people of Texas, and if the people of Texas get engaged and contact their lawmakers and continue to participate in the legislative process, we will be able to defeat these. The

only way any of this becomes law is if the people don't get involved."

On the bright side, the 84th Texas Legislature will be the first in history to include two openly LGBT lawmakers, Reps. Mary Gonzalez (D-El Paso) and Celia Israel (D-Austin).

In addition, the session has already seen several firsts when it comes to pro-LGBT legislation. On the first day of pre-filing in November, lawmakers in the House and Senate—including Rep. Garnet Coleman (D-Houston)—introduced measures that would overturn Texas' statutory and constitutional bans on same-sex marriage. "A full array of marriage legislation has already been filed," Williams said. "That's the first time we've had a statutory piece filed in the Senate, and the fact that all four pieces were filed on the first day of filing is telling."

Another first could come in the form of a proposal to ban so-called "reparative therapy" for minors. The Texas GOP added a plank endorsing "reparative therapy" to its platform in 2014, but Equality Texas has submitted petitions to the state's mental health licensing boards seeking to outlaw the practice. Depending on the outcome of the petitions, there could be legislation from either side. "We are positioned to counter any attempt to make the torture of reparative therapy mainstream or acceptable in Texas law," Williams said.

In addition to longstanding proposals to ban anti-LGBT discrimination in employment and insurance, Williams said he anticipates a measure targeting housing bias for the first time in 2015. He's also hoping to see a bill that would prohibit anti-LGBT discrimination in public accommodations for the first time since 2007.

Other firsts include a measure that would ban anti-LGBT discrimination by state contractors, as well as a Senate version of a bill that would allow same-sex couples to have both parents' names on the birth certificates of adopted children. The birth certificate bill was introduced by Sen. Sylvia Garcia (D-Houston), who joined the Legislature midway through the 2013 session. "She didn't really have a chance to flex her →

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ally muscles,” Williams said of Garcia. “The Houston legislative delegation has led the way for decades on issues that affect the LGBT community and continues to do so today. It’s important that we continue to support these lawmakers by telling them we appreciate their efforts, and also by contacting their colleagues and asking them to support those efforts.”

The LTR Lewis Cloverdale Foundation Announces Its 2014 Grant Recipients

On December 15, the LTR Lewis Cloverdale Foundation announced the deserving recipients of the organization’s 2014 grants. The foundation, which is a private philanthropic organization that is dedicated to improving Houstonians lives through charitable contribution, distributed a total of \$85,009 among this year’s beneficiaries.

The recipients and amounts awarded are as follows: The Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund, \$50,000; Out for Education, \$10,000; the Houston Symphony, \$7,509; Covenant House, \$5,000; Houston Chamber Choir, \$5,000; The Montrose Center, \$5,000; and Girlstart, \$2,500.

“We thank all the worthy organizations who took the time to submit grant requests and we regret we cannot fund them all,” the foundation said. Interested community organizations are encouraged to participate in the LTR Lewis Cloverdale Foundation’s next grant cycle, which will be held in fall 2015. For more information, visit ltrlewisclloverdale.org. —Megan Smith



Out Houston artist Kiki Neumann won first place in the art and furniture category of the 2014 Greater Houston Reuse Contest for her repurposed artist studio.

Local Out Artist Wins City’s Recycled Art Contest

by Megan Smith

Baseball-bat stair spindles, paint-brush drawer handles, doors made of funky tin, and a sliding door made entirely out of colorful yardsticks. These are just a few of the whimsically beautiful features that out Houston artist Kiki Neumann has created for her repurposed artist studio. They’re also some of the unique objects that caught the eyes of judges in the 2014 Greater Houston Reuse Contest. On November 30, Neumann was awarded first place in the contest’s art and furniture category.

Neumann has been collecting and repurposing cast-off materials found on Houston’s streets for over 17 years. The first item she ever created, Neumann remembers, was a garden bench built out of Hurricane-ravaged backyard-fence wood. She had recently lost her career in paper sales and needed to channel her frustration into something creative. “It’s an understatement to say I was furious, and my

mother wisely said, ‘Pick up a hammer, honey, and make something with your anger,’” Neumann says.

From there, she continued to use salvaged wood to make smaller creations, such as birdhouses and garden items. She estimates that over the span of 10 years, she has built nearly 4,000 birdhouses. “Let’s just say that I am not making any more right now,” she says. “Whew!”

When Neumann found herself with no employment prospects and fighting to stretch her money, she began to look on the side of the road for “furniture to paint, fence boards to build with—[I began] begging for cast-off tools and paint. It just amazed me that all sorts of friends, along with strangers that I met at festivals, had so much to share,” she says. “They were glad to help me, and

continued on page 85



On December 4, the Museum District Business Alliance (MDBA) presented its 2014 Community Improvement and Lifetime Achievement Awards at Hotel Zaza. Pictured here are the Museum District Business Alliance 2014 honorees, joined by MDBA President **Mark Davis**, MDBA Executive Director **Christina Gorczynski**, and Lifetime Achievement Award Winner **Jerry Blum**.



Kindred Spirits held its annual Holiday Cabaret Sing-a-long featuring performances by Charles Swan and friends, Patti Barnes, Ricky Comeaux, Glenda McGinnis, Terry Pierce, Jerry Roberts, and more at Meteor on December 7. Pictured here are Kindred Spirits President **Marion Coleman**, **Ann Robison**, **Linne Girouard**, Kindred Spirits Treasurer **Betty Tonnessen**, and **Danielle Sampey**.

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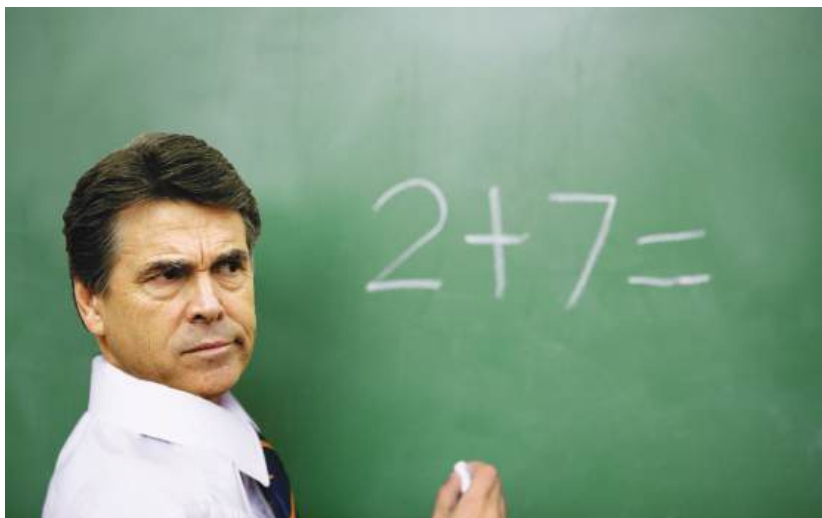
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by
Susan
Bankston

Texas, Our Texas . . .

All hell the mighty state



The goat rodeo that will become the 2016 Republican presidential primary has its bull's-eye right here in Texas. And, darlin', I use the term "bull" with all the irony I can muster.

I heard they were pondering just listing "Texan" as a ballot choice since so many old straight white guys from Texas were running that sorting them out required way too many laundry baskets.

If I didn't know better, I'd suspect all of them were

looking for any damn way to get out of Texas. In our defense, after I looked them over, I'd cheerfully buy all of them a one-way ticket anywhere outta anywhere near here.

You probably heard that Rick Perry announced on the electric teevee last month that running for president isn't an IQ test. Lucky for him, right? He thinks it's golf, where the low score wins. He's ready to put the big pot in the little pot and fry the skillet to prove even dumb guys have a constitutional right to make a damn fools of themselves.

And then, as if to prove his point about the IQ thing, he announces that he doesn't have to announce he's running for president, because everybody already expects him to run for president. (Warning: if you read that last sentence twice, you'll get dizzy.) Up until he said that, I did not know that his winkie was big enough for him to step on.

My Aunt Verdellia, a member of the

Rick Perry announced that running for president isn't an IQ test. Lucky for him, right?

Belles of Heaven Republican Women's Club, contends that Rick Perry is not dumb. "He just has real bad luck when it comes to thinking," she explains.

Then, to put a little misery into our tranquility, presidential contender Jeb Bush, another son-of-a-bush, says he's from Florida, even though he was raised right here in Texas along with his brother—Dufus Dubya Bush. Jeb's son, George P. Bush, just got elected land commissioner in Texas. Best I can figure, that means he's the boss of dirt. That'll be a big help if his dad runs for president. They say that Jeb is the smart one, but let's face it—the Bush family has set that bar about as high as a cockroach's belly. On digging day. In a wagon rut.

The next Texan at the presidential home plate is Ted Cruz. He thinks gay people are dandy, just so long as they don't do anything gay—and by anything I mean the wild thing. Hoochie koochie, mattress thrashing, the horizontal bossa nova, noddlin', or sparkin'. He also likes women just fine, so long as they don't want to control anything—mainly their bodies. Or government. He's as mean as 10 acres of snakes, and you can paint that on the barn with waterproof paint. As far as his time in the Senate, it can be easily summed up: he came, he went, he left a long skid mark.

And last, but certainly indeed least, is Rand Paul. I know he's representing Kentucky, but he was also born in Texas and visits his parents here. I have to tell you the dead-solid perfect guaranteed truth: I'd vote for RuPaul before I'd vote for Rand Paul.

Is Rand Paul kinda weird? Would a two-ton hog make a lot of bacon? He wants to do away with Social Security, health insurance, and your mother's favorite hankies.

Honestly, I'd rather wade through hell in quicksand than let another Texan in the White House.

The only hope we have is that they'll come after each other with intent to barbeque. Hell, I'll buy a ticket and tote the beer to that event.

But I have to admit that our neighbor to the east ain't helping the situation. Louisiana gover-

nor Bobby Jindal blamed LGBTQ acceptance for Hurricane Katrina and the devastating tornado that leveled the town of Joplin, Missouri. Damn, y'all, that's a lot of blow jobs. Well done.

Yeah, I said that, but don't tell Momma.

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

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by
Grace S.
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Bi-national Same-sex Couples

Challenges and solutions

In June 2013, the United States Supreme Court issued a decision that changed the lives of many in the gay and lesbian community. Yet, while the overturning of a portion of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) impacted LGBT Americans and their families in a number of different ways, bi-national same-sex married couples had a particularly large amount to gain from this decision.

This is because not only were these couples previously denied the overall range of federal benefits and

eventual movement toward United States citizenship.

Likewise, U.S. permanent residents have always been able to sponsor an opposite-sex foreign spouse for permanent residence via marriage. These rules, however, have traditionally forced same-sex bi-national couples to take other measures in order to continue and maintain their relationships within the United States.

In some cases, the non-U.S. partner has been able to obtain a temporary work, student, or tourist visa. Unfortunately, this route really only allows the couple to

meant that many U.S. citizens have had to leave their homeland and other family members and friends.

Providing Strategies and Solutions

Due to the 2013 overturning of a provision in the Defense of Marriage Act, same-sex foreign spouses of United States citizens and permanent residents are now eligible to apply for Green Cards. This means that the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services will now be required to treat same-sex married couples equally when it comes to administering U.S. immigration law.

Non-U.S. citizens have also been getting some help from President Obama and Washington DC. A potential upcoming overhaul of the nation's immigration enforcement system could protect several million unauthorized individuals in the U.S. from being deported—and could provide many with work permits, too.

Over the past several years, several organizations have also been active in assisting bi-national same-sex married couples

with the challenges that they face, as well as with outlining various strategies for moving forward. Some of these entities include: The Human Rights Campaign, Marriage Equality USA, Freedom to Marry, and Immigration Equality.

In addition, a number of projects have also been launched with a focus on overcoming the many hurdles that bi-national same-sex couples encounter. For example, the Uniting American Families Act was introduced into the U.S. Congress in a →



rights that are associated with marriage in general, but they also typically deal with the additional stresses of having to find the legal means to remain together in the same country.

The Additional Hurdles that Are Faced

Today, there are many thousands of bi-national same-sex couples who reside in the United States. Previously, based on the Defense of Marriage Act, neither a United States permanent resident nor a U.S. citizen was able to sponsor a same-sex spouse for immigration the way that an opposite-sex spouse can, with the



stay together physically for a set and limited amount of time. It can also be quite costly—and it leaves a lot of “loose ends” because it is not a permanent solution in terms of residency or citizenship.

In other instances, the non-U.S. citizen partner will simply take the chance of staying in the United States without having legal status. This, however, can cause a substantial amount of stress and anxiety, not to mention the difficulties that it places on obtaining employment, applying for loans, and participating in other types of activities.

For other couples, when the non-U.S. citizen spouse has been unable to obtain a visa, it may mean having to leave the U.S. altogether and move to another country. As of now, there are more than 30 countries worldwide that offer immigration benefits for same-sex couples—regardless of whether they are married or not. While this option has allowed numerous same-sex couples to stay together, it has also

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MoneySmart continued from page 20

variety of forms for several years. Its key goal is to offer a federal path for United States citizens to sponsor a same-sex spouse for the purpose of immigration.

Looking Ahead

As couples move forward, it will be important to keep other aspects of their relationships secure as well. For example, ensuring that both spouses are protected financially if something should happen to one of the partners is essential.

Working closely with a financial professional who has a focus on the LGBT community can help to put the proper plans into place in terms of growing your savings, creating and maintaining a retirement income for both spouses, and protecting assets from unnecessary taxation at the death of one or both individuals.

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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Chris Delphin and Roy Brooks took OUTSMART to the Buenos Aires Pride Festival in November.



Bridget Upton (l) and childhood friend **Laura Castle-Atkins** in Ochopee, Florida, doing research. The sign at the top reads SKUNK-APE RESEARCH HEADQUARTERS.



Ily Rivera and Mickey Mejia with OUTSMART at The Stone of the Americans (Piedra de los Americanos) in Guanica, Puerto Rico.

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INFO: montrosoftballleague.com

January 18: Bunnies on the Bayou presents **Snow Bunnies 2015** at F*Bar. Benefitting the organization.
INFO: bunniesonthebayou.org

January 22: LIVE Consortium presents **The Use of Truvada—Town Hall Forum** at The Montrose Center.
More info: liveconsortium.org

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

January 24: The Mystic Society of Isis and Osiris presents **Ball 2: As Seen on TV**, benefitting Out for Education.
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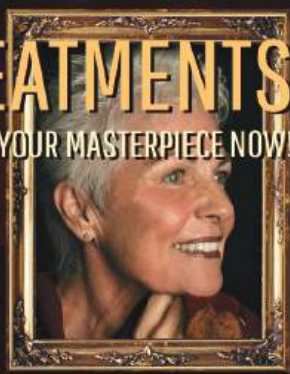
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Nothing but the Truth

An interview with Ty Herndon

by Gregg Shapiro

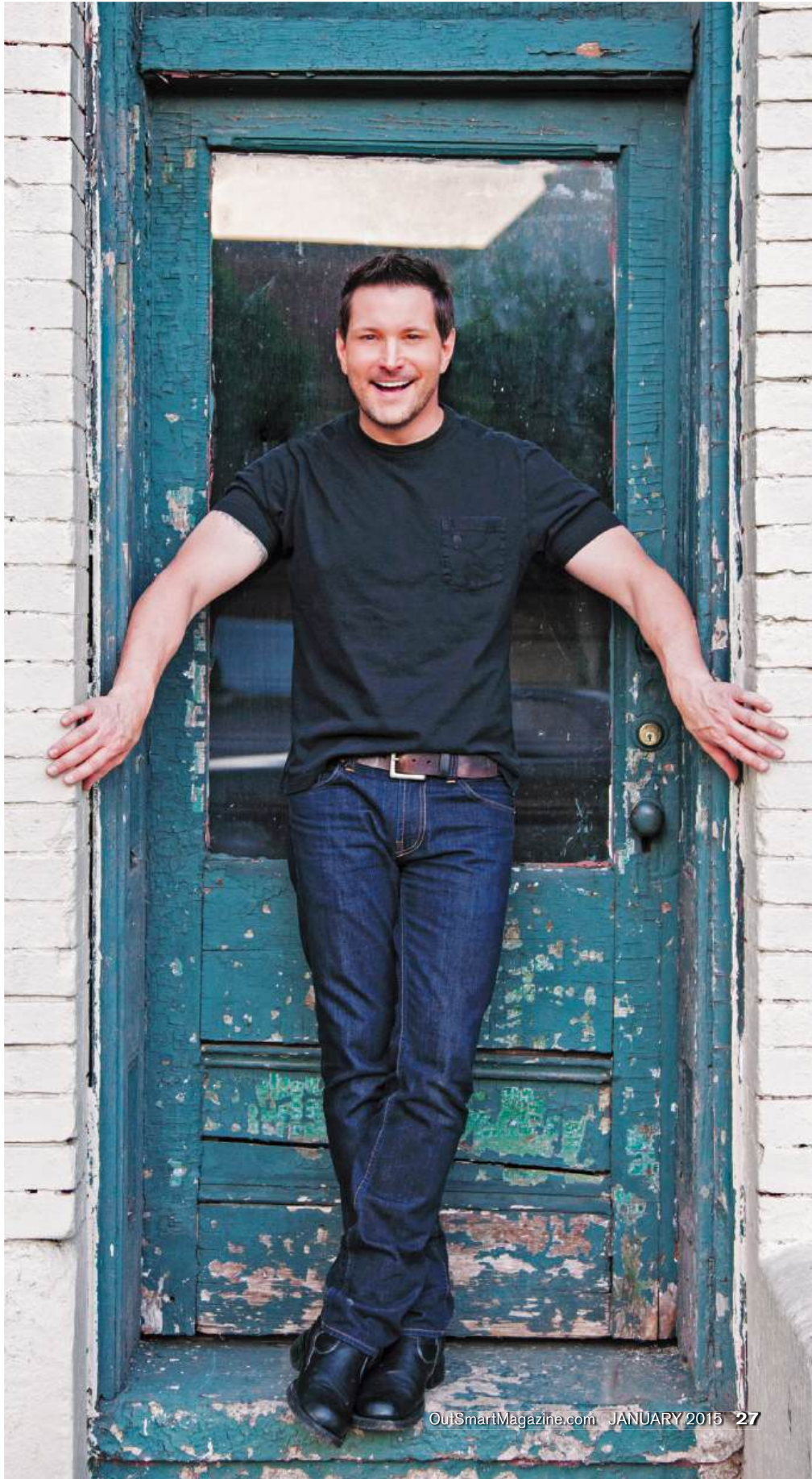
Country singer Ty Herndon, who began topping the country music charts nearly 20 years ago, came out publicly as a gay man just before Thanksgiving 2014. That's something for which country music fans—both gay and straight—can be thankful. A country chart-topper in the 1990s, Herndon's hits include "What Matters Most," "Living in a Moment," "It Must Be Love," and "Loved Too Much," to mention a few. An out and proud gay man, he has a partner of five years named Matty.

Herndon is one of Nashville's LGBT artists working to make the country-music capital a safe and productive place for queer musicians and queer followers of the popular musical genre. I spoke with Ty about coming out, his career, and more in late November 2014.

Gregg Shapiro: It's been about five days since your coming-out story ran on people.com and you were discussed on CBS's *The Talk*, CNN, and interviewed on *Entertainment Tonight*. How has the experience been so far?

Ty Herndon: I feel so incredibly blessed. I have struggled with being gay my entire career and life. Of course, I've had so much support from my friends and close family who knew I was gay. But it's been so freeing for the fans to know—the fans in country music, especially. They have really been supportive and awesome. There are always going to be the naysayers, and we've had a few of those, but 99 percent of the feedback from the fans and in Nashville has been incredibly supportive. It's blown my mind, to be honest with you. I feel extremely happy. And I feel →

In the famous words of Carrie Underwood: "I need that man."



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Nothing but the Truth

continued from previous page

extremely excited about the future, because really, at the end of the day, I just want to be authentic and continue to make great music. That's what I was put on this planet to do; that's my gift. I'm singing better than I ever have. There's lots of music coming in the new year. That really makes me happy.

You performed at the Grand Ole Opry last night. How was that show?

I was nervous walking into it. To my knowledge, no openly gay man has ever walked on the Ryman stage and performed. That is the Mother Church. I have so much respect for it. I've performed at the Grand Ole Opry 25 times in my career, but this one was a big deal to me simply because I am a part of the fabric of country music, and I was hoping that I would be accepted. I told my manager last night, "If there's security at the back door, I hope they're just there to shake my hand and say come on in." That's exactly what happened. All of the artists were extremely supportive. We walked onstage to a full house and a big, loving, cheering crowd.

Prior to going public, did you consult with other out country artists, such as Brandy Clark or Chely Wright, before making your decision to come out?

Chely Wright and I have been friends for many years. Our paths are so similar in country music. We went to great lengths to hide the fact that we were gay. Five or so years ago when Chely came out, I was so incredibly blown away by her bravery and courage. About six months later, we started talking about it. I didn't want her to be alone out there. It took a while for me to get my courage up, just to wrap my brain around it. I was really fearful about being able to continue working and doing my job, working 200 tour dates a year. That was my main fear. If I don't get to continue to do my job that I love, my passion, I don't know what I'd do.

Through Chely, I was able to get educated about all of the fans out there and the new landscape of what my life would be like. I became very comfortable with the fact that I wasn't going to let who I authentically am stop me from making the music I love. God gave me great courage, and Chely was my godsister through all of it, and we did it together.

Shortly after coming out, Chely was invited to be the grand marshal at the Chicago Gay Pride Parade. What would it mean to you to be the grand marshal of a Pride parade in any city?

I would be so incredibly honored. Just to know that my LGBTQ brothers and sisters would welcome me in that. I would be extremely

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blessed and honored to be a part of something like that. It would be very humbling.

Billy Gilman, who also came out on November 20, credits you with helping him with the coming-out process. What does that mean to you?

I have known Billy since he was 12. We were on the same record label, Epic/Sony. I had had a few hit records when they signed Billy. He has been like a kid brother over the years. We had lost contact, and all of a sudden, he's 26 years old. Last year, he reached out to me, and we started talking about his sexuality. I began mentoring him a small amount, because I was also mentoring myself—actually, Chely was mentoring me. I was trying to pay it forward. It's a big decision to take that step. I was really happy that he chose to do that—two hours after I did. That we could take this journey together and be a support system is pretty awesome. Between Billy and Chely and me, who knows, maybe we'll do us a little world tour next year.

That would be great. Do you see this as a potential domino effect or more of an anomaly in country music and Nashville?

I think country music's growing up. Nashville, in general, is growing up a lot now. Country is so big now—they're on the world stage. If you're going to be on the world stage, you have to be able to have a different mentality. I credit Nashville a lot now. They're moving forward at a great pace. I know one of the things I would love to see happen, and Chely would too, is starting a better coalition of affirmative hearts here in Nashville so we can get an LGBT center open. [By having] Pride and GLSEN come to town, all of these kids in these southern states that we're surrounded by in Nashville would have a place to go when they're kicked out of their homes and churches. [They would know] that suicide is not an alternative, and that they can come and find love and acceptance. That coalition is important to a lot of us in Nashville behind the scenes, as well as the few that have bravely come out.

You mentioned people being kicked out of their homes and churches. How much influence did your religious background have in your coming-out process?

I grew up in a great church, with a lot of affirming people. I never had to worry about being kicked out of anything. I grew up in bluegrass and gospel and country music. I had this amazing grandmother who had her own radio show on WPRN in Alabama. I have these strong women in my family. My grandmother was broadcasting live from the senior citizens' center at 90 years old, talking about controversial things. She was awesome. You didn't mess with Grandma Myrtle. But I had no one to talk to about my →



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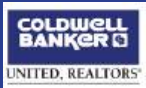


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Nothing but the Truth

continued from previous page

feelings of being gay at 10 years old. I was 20-something when I came out to my mom. I think moms always know. My mother was more concerned about the profession I had chosen to be in. Her main concern was that I [was living] an authentic, good life and that I was healthy. Of course, I went down some roads, and that was not the case. She was right to worry about that. But, to answer your question, I grew up with a very loving God in my life, and that's something I want to pass on to these kids that don't have that.

I'm glad you mentioned your mother's concern with the career you had chosen. You released your major-label debut almost 20 years ago and have been a country music mainstay since that time. Was there ever a point that you considered recording and performing in a genre, such as pop, where there are more openly LGBT artists?

I considered doing a pop record. I actually went to my record label and talked about it. But when you're a country artist through and through and it's in your blood, all you accomplish is a pop-sounding record with a country-singing fella. It just didn't fit for me. I just had to buckle down and fight harder. The harder I fought, the more lies I created, and it was uncomfortable to be in my own skin. At that point, I made a lot of mistakes, a lot of bad choices, and I take full responsibility for those choices. Looking at it from today—the addiction and the hard stuff I put myself through—it is now a part of the fabric of my story. God bless the broken road that has led me to sit here talking to you today. If it's fair to say, sometimes I'm grateful for my mistakes, because I don't think I'd be the man I am today if it wasn't for them.

If there was a movie version of your life story, who would you like to portray you?

There are very few actors who have great singing voices. I think Hugh Jackman or Neal Patrick Harris would do a great job playing me in a movie about my life. We would have to bring them to Nashville and teach them the cowboy ways. [Laughs]

You are embarking on a 2015 concert tour with Andy Griggs and Jamie O'Neal. What are you most looking forward to about that?

I love those two, number one. We're three very different people. Andy's very much the bow-hunting, beer-drinkin', redneck fella. He's got a great girlfriend, so he's not the woman-chaser. Jamie, on the other hand, is definitely our diva. She's not a diva-in-training—she's a full-blown diva. And I'm the gay guy who's probably just about as country as they come. The dynamic is the crazy friendship. Those guys will play a Pride festival with me, they'll

go anywhere I go. And I will go anywhere with them. I feel protected and loved.

You've been with your partner, Matty, for more than five years now. How did you two meet?

Matt and I are about to celebrate our six-year anniversary. We met through a mutual friend who thought we would be a great match. He was right! We actually talked on the phone for three months before we met in person.

Before you came out in *People*, did keeping your sexual orientation private put a strain on your relationship?

Keeping secrets and hiding my truth almost killed me more than once. So living an open and authentic life is something we cherish now. It was great to have Matt hold my hand on the red carpet in Los Angeles for the Trevor Live Event. I was really proud.

I'm sure many of your gay fans are quite jealous of Matty. Would you say you have a "type" when it comes to the men you date?

In the famous words of Carrie Underwood [on how she was never the kind of girl who needed a man until she met her husband]: "I need *that* man." He's amazing.

When other celebrities, such as authors or actors, come out as LGBT, they are often pigeonholed as "gay" authors or "gay" actors. Would it bother you to be labeled as a "gay" country music artist?

I would prefer to be known simply as a country music artist, but I don't think that's something you can get away from. The difference for me is that I'm proud to be out and represent our community for the next kid who wants to have a career in country music. I pray one day it's not such a big deal.

You mentioned that 99 percent of the feedback has been supportive. Is it printable what the remaining 1 percent had to say?

I do not give haters any energy at all. There is way too much good to focus on. There is way too much work to be done to waste time on hurtful comments. I choose to love no matter how closed off someone's heart may be.

Finally, Ty, as same-gender marriage continues to make strides across the country, if you and your boyfriend, Matty, were to marry, which song would you like to have sung as you walk down the aisle?

That's an easy question for me. There's a Rascal Flatts song that I referred to, "God Bless the Broken Road that Has Led Me Straight to You." That would be our wedding song. And if I had my wish, I would have my friend LeAnn Rimes come and sing it.

Gregg Shapiro also writes the GrooveOut column in this issue of OUTSMART magazine.

Country Outing

Billy Gilman adds his voice to the growing chorus of gay country artists

by Gregg Shapiro



National Coming Out Day is in October, but two country music artists waited until late November to share their good news. Ty Herndon was the first one out of the gate on November 20, followed shortly thereafter on the same day by Billy Gilman. Gilman, like fellow country diva LeAnn Rimes, got his big break when he was just a kid. Possessing a powerful voice and impressive vocal range, Gilman released his major-label debut album *One Voice* in 2000, at the age of 11. In addition to the titular hit, the album featured a shockingly spot-on reading of Tammy Wynette's "Til I Can Make It on My Own." That cover, sung with amazing authority, might qualify as an early clue that Gilman would someday come out as gay. Seriously, listen to the song.

Gilman, who continued to release albums through the early part of the 21st century, is in the process of mounting a comeback. OUTSMART spoke with Gilman about coming out and his career in late November 2014.

Gregg Shapiro: How does a Rhode Island native, a New Englander, become a Nashville star?

Billy Gilman: I grew up singing country music. Country music is so huge in my neck of the woods, believe it or not. People find

it hard to believe, but country music is big around here. There's no memory of not having country music in my life. The Grand Ole Opry and watching the awards shows that would come on and listening to Garth Brooks and Pam Tillis—it was just part of my life, and always has been. It's easier than you think. *[Laughs]*

As someone who got his start as a child star in country, did you ever cross paths with LeAnn Rimes, another country-music child star? Was she someone you looked to as a role model?

Absolutely! LeAnn Rimes was so great to me, and we are still great friends to this day. I met her first when I was 11. I'm sure she took a liking to me because she saw me going through what

she went through a few years before, being a child herself. There's a common factor with her, and whatnot. She's always been a great support system.

Do you have any advice for budding child stars?

The one thing I always go back to is that you really have to love it. It has to be what you are, because there are going to be many wonderful opportunities. There are going to be huge ups and corresponding downs to a career. You have to love it to sustain yourself →

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Country Outing continued from previous page

and to put up with what you're going to have to put up with. If it's what you are and you live and breathe it, like I have my whole life, you'll be fine. You're going to do well, because you have what it takes. You can't just wake up one day and go, "I'm going to be a singer!" It's tougher than that.

On November 20, history was made in Nashville and the realm of country music when you and Ty Herndon both came out as gay. You cited Ty in your coming-out message. How did he help you through this?

It was amazing! I've known Ty for a while. He was on the same record label as I was a few years back. He's a great singer. This was something that I have been going back and forth with for about a month. I was nervous and reluctant. You never know what's going to happen. I was set to do it that day and was reading Twitter and read the he had come out. I was like, "Oh, wow! This is very coincidental and very odd." But things happen for a reason. He really helped me push the pedal to further it. He put me into high gear. He gave me enough confidence to do what I needed to do. He's a very brave person and a courageous artist. He did help immensely in my situation. My hat's off to him, and I'll always thank him for that.

How has the response been from your fans?

My fans have been amazing. Even people that kind of followed my career a little bit have been amazing. No matter what you do in life, it doesn't matter if it was this situation, or [if I had] wanted to change genres—whatever, someone is always going to have an opinion. You have to brace yourself for a good opinion or a bad one. Everyone is entitled to whatever they feel. You have to keep a positive head and do your thing. So far, the comments and support have been amazing, and I'm so grateful for that.

How did your family react to your coming out?

My family was nothing but supportive. That was really amazing to me. They have not changed. Their support has stayed the same. I am so grateful for that. It's been nothing but positive in that respect. I've always been surrounded by support, and nothing has changed.

Would you ever perform at a Pride festival if you were asked?

Absolutely—if the situation is correct and it's in a respectful manner. That's how I've conducted my business for the past 15 years. I would have no problem doing that. It's for the greater good, and that's what it's about.

Gregg Shapiro also interviews Ty Herndon in this issue of OUTSMART magazine.



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After Gay Marriage, What?

Veteran activist Urvashi Vaid explores that question at a Rice-sponsored lecture in February

by Brandon Wolf

In a stunning turn of events for marriage equality in 2014, 35 states now have legalized same-sex marriage. The U.S. Supreme Court let stand decisions by several U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeal to invalidate state marriage bans in their circuits. This effectively voided the bans of all states within those circuits.

Only four of the 11 federal circuits still have bans in effect, and one of them recently decided in favor of marriage bans. When all federal circuit courts do not agree on an issue, the Supreme Court becomes the arbiter. Thus the issue may be on the Supreme Court's 2015 list of cases it will hear. Given the current tenor of the Supreme Court, it is highly likely that they would vote 5–4 against marriage bans. This would finally open up all 50 states to marriage equality.

It's a heady time these days for a community that has been fighting for their rights since the early 1950s. It's taken 65 years of activism to win what seems like the final prize. Understandably, the question in many minds is, "What next?" It's also understandable that for some members of the community, this is game point. What could possibly be left to fight for? The revolution has come to a successful completion, hasn't it?

A Gifted LGBT Leader and Thinker Speaks to the Issue

On February 5, Urvashi Vaid visits Houston to present "A Critical Look at the LGBT Movement," as part of Rice University's Gray/Wawro Lecture Series. This distinguished series is facilitated by Rice's Center for the Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality.

Vaid is a community organizer, writer, and attorney who has been a leader in the

"The movement is not 'over' until the weakest among us has seen the benefits of freedom."



Urvashi Vaid—Vassar grad, former Task Force director, and one of the LGBT community's great thinkers—is featured on the Rice University Center for the Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality's lecture series on February 5. The event takes place at Resurrection MCC.

LGBT and social justice movements for over three decades. She has written three books, and is considered one of today's great thinkers within the LGBT community.

Some of what Vaid will say can be derived from her 2012 book *Irresistible Revolution*, a collection of nine essays. Many of them are speeches she has given over the

years.

But there were only eight states with marriage

equality when she wrote the book, and Barack Obama had not yet been re-elected to a second term. Her speech will no doubt reflect the changes since the publication of that book.

Gay Activism 3.0

Vaid is pleased with the success of marriage equality, but for her it's far from the final chapter. It's another beginning—a time for re-invention. Marriage equality is a noble

goal, and probably a necessary one, but Vaid believes it was achieved by ignoring large segments of the national LGBT community in the short term—both the people themselves and their issues.

Persons attending her lecture should plan to bring a notebook and pen, because she will not be handing out wreaths of valor for the success of marriage equality efforts. Instead, she will be explaining what needs to be done now, why it needs to be done, and how it can be achieved. Vaid thinks far outside the box—a box many people may not have even realized exists.

Certain themes run through each essay of her book, and after finishing it, you pretty well have the mantra: racial →

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After Gay Marriage, What?

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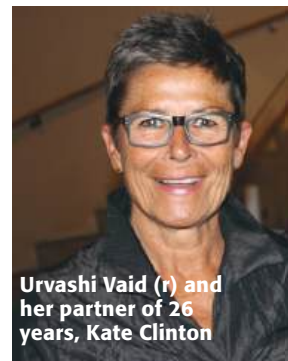
equality, economic equality, gender equality, coalition building, and re-inventing our national organizations.

Making Revolution Irresistible

"The responsibility of a writer representing an oppressed people is to make revolution irresistible," Vaid writes, quoting Toni Cade Bambara. Vaid believes that what has long made the LGBT movement "irresistible" was its honesty. "Truth may be unpleasant, unpopular, and sometimes unbearable to speak, but its power is undeniable," she writes.

"The fact that we have come out of the closet is the truth that has made us successful," she noted in a recent interview with OUTSMART magazine. "We have exposed reality and provided evidence. We have shown the nation a wide range of sexual orientation and gender identity—and the many different types of people within our community."

But Vaid feels great concern that today's LGBT movement is run by mostly white, mostly male, mostly affluent board members and CEOs. There is little involvement with the broader community to set an agenda. Instead, an agenda is set by an elite group and then told to the rest of us. "It's the national organizations' dirty little secret." She believes it's time to change this.



Urvashi Vaid (r) and her partner of 26 years, Kate Clinton

No Queer Left Behind

What would a re-invented movement look like? Vaid envisions organizations that include racial equality, gender equality, and economic equality in their mission statements, and in their staffing structures.

She evaluates today's national organizations: "We assure the wealthy and powerful that our admission to their club will not rock their privileges or their worldview; we demur that we are just like them, that we believe in what they believe. We are asked to prove our loyalty, and our adherence to their elitist values, by being willing to sacrifice part of our own souls, and our own people, in order to win short-term battles."

This has resulted in a leadership nearly devoid of diversity. Vaid experienced firsthand what she relates in her book. Because she had dark-brown skin, she had to organize a mail and phone campaign in order to win the position of executive director of the National LGBTQ Task Force.

It has also resulted in economic realities



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going unaddressed for a large segment of the community. The priorities of an organization are set by their board, and none of the major organizations have either racial, gender, economic, or social justice in their mission statements. Vaid is especially concerned about the lack of strong support for the transgender community and for homeless LGBT teens—a result of weak mission statements.

Vaid also believes that coalition building—like that of the early days of gay activism—is essential to our success. The national organizations need to take stands on issues of the day and actively link arms with others who are fighting for social justice—for example, timely issues such as immigration reform, minimum-wage increases, police

brutality against the black community, and sexual assault of both women and men in the military.

We cannot expect support from others if we do not offer it to them. She rejects the current attitude that “it’s not our issue.”

A movement in a vacuum does not gain sufficient momentum.

“An LGBT movement focused on more substantive notions of equality would fight for the broadest and most inclusive possible parameters of the issues on which it campaigns, and not the narrowest or safest,” Vaid says. She feels we should commit ourselves to the principle of “No Queer Left Behind.” For Vaid, “the movement is not ‘over’ until the weakest among us has seen the benefits of freedom.”

Out of India

In 1958, Vaid was born in New Delhi, India, and emigrated to the United States with her parents at the age of eight. An exceptional student, she won a full four-year scholarship to Vassar College. She went on to earn a J.D. at Northeastern University School of Law.

Vaid worked with the ACLU’s Prison Project as a staff attorney from 1983 to 1986. She was the public information officer for the Task Force from 1986 to 1989, and then moved into the position of executive director of the Task Force from 1989 to 1992. She returned in 1997 for four years as the director of their Policy Institute.

The next four years were spent at the Ford Foundation, followed by five years at the Arcus Foundation. Vaid is now director of the Engaging Tradition Project sponsored by the Center for Gender and Sexuality Law at Columbia Law School. She lives in New York City with her partner of 26 years, the comedian Kate Clinton. →



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After Gay Marriage, What?

continued from previous page

Learning to Live Boldly

Vaid sees activism as “an act of faith.” She ponders the bravery of the community’s early leaders such as Harry Hay, Del Lyon, Phyllis Martin, Barbara Gittings, and Frank Kameny, who were all living in a world where homosexuality was considered sick, criminal, sinful, and immoral.

Activists need a vision, and then the courage to act on that vision. Vaid knows about courage in the face of oppression. In 1990, the Task Force was involved with the HIV epidemic that had already raged for a decade in the community, and was only getting worse.

Vaid was invited to attend what would be President George H. Bush’s first and only AIDS policy speech, at the National Community AIDS Partnership meeting on March 29, 1990. The president was talking about funding for babies with AIDS when Vaid quietly opened her briefcase and took out a folded-up sign.

She stood up, faced the president holding the now-unfolded sign that said TALK IS CHEAP/AIDS FUNDING IS NOT on one side and REMEMBER GAY PEOPLE WITH AIDS on the other. She interrupted him,



in tandem with an ACT-UP member in the back of the room, and told him that he wasn’t doing enough. A security guard told her to sit down and remain quiet, or she would be ejected from the meeting. Once the guard left, she stood up and addressed the president again. The next day, she was front-page news in the *Houston Chronicle* and other media around the globe.

Looking back, she admits her heart was

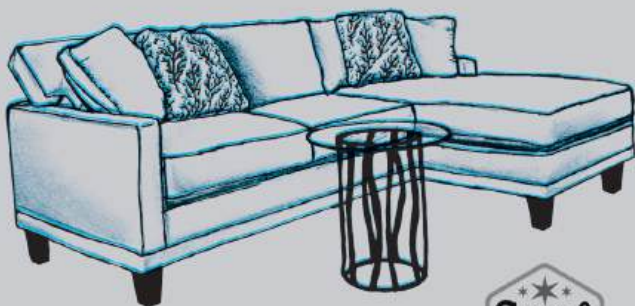
beating fast. “I was scared,” Vaid says. “But I knew what I was doing was right.” Her action had even more effect because she was scheduled to be part of a panel discussion at the meeting. Behind the table tent bearing her name was an empty chair. Time and again, organizers would look toward the empty chair and say, “Urvashi could have answered that question if she were here now.”



It takes courage: Urvashi Vaid made the front page of the *Houston Chronicle* in 1990 after she interrupted President George H.W. Bush’s speech addressing AIDS (Bush is pictured at far left in the above photo). While Bush talked about funding babies with AIDS, Vaid held up a sign that read TALK IS CHEAP/AIDS FUNDING IS NOT on one side and REMEMBER GAY PEOPLE WITH AIDS on the other.

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Moral Equality

Vaid believes that although marriage equality brings with it legal rights, it does not give our community “moral equality.” We are no longer considered “mentally ill,” thanks to the 1973 American Psychiatric Association’s reclassification of homosexuality. *Lawrence v. Texas* removed criminal penalties in 2003. And a

vigorous fight is now under way in almost every faith tradition challenging the demonization of the LGBT community.

“But full human rights is both legal and cultural change,” Vaid says. She feels that we must continue to contest the denigration of our lives by religious leaders who feel they are the sole arbiters of great moral codes. She echoes the words of former secretary of state Hillary Clinton, delivered in an address to the United Nations, that “punishment of homosexuals is not cultural—it’s criminal.” LGBT equality must be seen as an issue of basic human rights.

“Morality is about ethical choices,” Vaid says. “The morality we need at this crucial time is not the ‘faith of our fathers’ nor the ‘traditional values’ of our mothers. It will not be found in the exclusionary forms of

fundamentalist religions dividing the world today, even when it is disguised in the rhetoric of community and love. The moral values we need today can be found emerging from people who are creating movements for social justice around the world. These movements put their faith in imagination, not tradition.”

Know Your Enemy

Vaid has been involved as a careful observer of U.S. politics and the LGBT community’s struggle for more than three decades, and she understands our enemies. “The vision of the right,” she says, is “a national identity erased of color or class or gender or religious plurality. They want to ‘take this country back’ to pre-Civil War times, and they bannally invoke ‘doing good’ while acting really badly against anyone defined outside of the Christian nation.

“Progressives seem unable to face and answer the worries and anxieties of the rank-and-file followers of the right. To defeat the right culturally and politically, we have to offer a new and inviting vision.”

Vaid sees the movement at a crossroads: “Down one road lies the pursuit of narrow self-interest, single identity, and the old paradigm of LGBT politics as we have been practicing it for the past three decades. Down the other road lies the pursuit of a just society. Both roads are legitimate, but they

do represent a clear choice in tactics and strategy and goals.

“Standing against us on either side of the road is the same enemy: the theocratic right and supremacists of all kinds—racial, sexual, gender, religious—as well as powerful forces that place profit above human lives. Against these opponents,” she continues, “a politics of co-optation, adaptation, and friendship is not plausible. We need a practical politics of cultural engagement and resistance. We need to commit an act of faith.”

Vaid says that she looks forward to a political realization for the queer movement that does not limit itself to the status quo. She hopes to see “an emerging wave of liberation that is a multi-faceted movement, whose dominant symbol is not an ‘equal’ sign, but perhaps the ‘greater than’ sign, suggesting that we can be greater than the limits of the world in which we find ourselves.”

Vaid’s lecture will be presented on February 5, 6–7:30 p.m., in the sanctuary of Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church, 2025 West 11th Street, Houston, Texas 77008. Free and open to the public. A reception follows the lecture.

Brandon Wolf also writes about Andy Mills in this issue of OUTSMART magazine.



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Music Man

Fostering Houston's LGBT music scene has been Andy Mills' passion

by **Brandon Wolf**

He's played the piano for First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy's White House soirées, marched in her husband's funeral procession, managed the hottest bar on Fire Island as well as Mary's Naturally in Houston, bar-crawled with Judy Garland, and was honored as the 1982 Houston Male Pride Marshal. "But I've remained the same person, living and enjoying life one day at a time," Andy Mills says, as he reflected on his memorable life recently with OUTSMART magazine.

As he sits in his modest but comfortable apartment on Heights Boulevard, wearing oxygen tubing that gently hums, he is in a happy mood, not one of regrets. He has survived AIDS, and still holds his own against the lung cancer that has left him with but 20 percent of one lung. He is a grateful person, and surprisingly independent despite his delicate health.

A Pivotal Figure in Houston's Early Gay Musical Groups

Mills founded the Montrose Symphonic Band (now the Houston Pride Band) in 1980 and the Montrose Singers (the forerunner of what is today known as Bayou City Performing Arts) in 1979.

In honor of his distinctive place in Houston's LGBT community, "A Concert and Tribute to Andy Mills" will be presented by the musical groups he founded on January 31 at 7:30 p.m. in the sanctuary of Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church, 2025 West 11th Street.

In 1981, Mills co-founded the national Gay and Lesbian Chorus Association with four other conductors. Later he helped form the Lesbian and Gay Band Association. Today they have grown into international associations that keep choruses and bands around the world connected. "The first com-



From the White House to Fire Island to Houston: Andy Mills has always loved music. On January 31, a combined concert by the Houston LGBT music groups he founded will honor him with a combined concert and tribute. Mills is pictured here (kneeling, left) with The Montrose Singers, circa May 1980.

bined chorus concert brought together 900 singers in New York City at Lincoln Center," Mills says with pride. "The first combined band concert was 250 musicians in the Hollywood Bowl."

Mills has chosen to turn his tribute into a salute to all LGBT musicians around the

parents turned to teaching school—his father teaching history and coaching, and his mother teaching English.

At the age of 15, Mills lost his father unexpectedly to a brain tumor. That left his mother a single mom with three kids.

She knew fine china well and got a job in an upscale china shop. Since she was also an excellent pianist who could play by ear, she earned additional money playing

at popular piano bars at night.

"If everyone in the world sang and played an instrument, we'd never have any more wars."

globe. "There are now over 200 choruses with 12,000 men," Mills says with amazement.

"Also a complete orchestra and 25 bands, representing another 1,000 musicians.

"I love all these people," Mills continues. "Whether I've met them or not, they are all my children." For the first and only time during the interview, his eyes fill up with tears. It's obvious that music and Andy Mills are synonymous.

Mills' Early Life

Mills was born in 1936 in Freemont, Ohio. He was the middle child, with an older sister and younger brother.

When he was three, his parents opened a horse-riding school near Columbus. "They were both excellent riders," Mills says. When the business venture did not work out, his

Piano Lessons

In the ninth grade, Mills began to take private piano lessons, and he practiced on his mother's upright grand piano. Although she did not give him formal lessons, now and then she would look up from her reading to correct a wrong note.

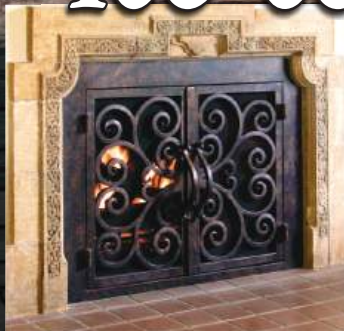
At school, he sang in the choir and played in the marching band. "I played →

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Music Man

continued from previous page

the tuba," Mills says. "That's the only instrument that was still available." He had hoped to play the saxophone.

In the tenth grade, Mills became the band's drum major. "Big tall hat and tails," he laughs. This gave him his first experience as a conductor, something that he gravitated toward instinctively.

In the summers he worked at the local yacht club, filling boats with gas and washing them. He was able to earn up to \$500 per week in tips. With this financial independence, he started visiting piano bars downtown.

In 1952, at age 15, he walked into the Scenic Bar in Toledo. "All I could see was a sea of men," Mills says. The management knew he was underage, but Mills had already learned how to impress people with his maturity and gentility. They liked him and watched out for him.

He began dating men in the their 30s. "I learned early what the meaning of 'chicken' was," Mills laughs. One night, when he was 17, a date dropped him off at home and his mother happened to see them kiss goodnight.

She told him he needed to see a psychiatrist. He responded, "No, mother, you're the one who needs to see one. Before I came out, I was barely passing. After I came out, I've had straight A's. I've been the student council president for two years, the drum major and assistant band director, a member of the choir and its student director."

College Life

In 1955, Mills graduated from high school. He won a full four-year college scholarship. "It was called 'The Dairy Football Scholarship,' but they were unable to find a football player in the area who qualified academically, so they picked me."

Mills began attending the University of Toledo. "The music department was two rooms upstairs," he says. "It was not very challenging."

But during his first semester, Mills met a 6'9" basketball player, and they fell in love. His new lover had a basketball scholarship at Ohio State, so Mills moved into an apartment with him in Columbus and enrolled in the Ohio State music program.

Mills was excited with the opportunities and facilities at this new educational venue. Because he was working his way through school—and also practicing 30–40 hours each week—he spent six years earning his music degree.

Into the Military

Mills decided that joining the military would be the best way to continue his education. He enlisted in the Navy, and was guaranteed a



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position as the concert pianist for the Navy Band. He was required to attend the Army's music school first, to learn the basics of military music. Following that, he attended the Navy's music school in Washington DC.

By 1962, Mills had gotten his foot in the door and was impressing his superiors. When a substitute teacher was needed for music theory, he was assigned the job. Finally he was ready to become a member of the Navy Band. As promised, he was a concert pianist for their symphonic band, and was also appointed an assistant conductor. Being one of the 125 members of the Navy Band was an honor—in 1962, only one in 100 applicants was accepted.

Each member had to play two instruments—one for the symphonic band and one for the marching band. Mills played drum in the marching band. As the official band of the U.S. Navy, their uniforms were custom-tailored. Located in Washington DC, they were often requested to provide music for diplomatic events.

During his four years in the prestigious band, he was twice requested to play the piano at the White House, as background music for social hours. "Mrs. Kennedy always came up afterwards and personally thanked me," Mills says.

When President Kennedy was assassinated, the marching band was included in the funeral procession on Monday, November 25, 1963. It was a bitterly cold day, Mills remembers. "We wore our peacoats and dress hats. Underneath we had as many layers of undergarments as possible."

The band members assembled at 6 a.m. and were bussed to the U.S. Capitol. They waited in the cold until JFK's body was removed from the rotunda and placed on a military caisson. About 10:30 a.m., the band began marching the route to the White House. From there, they marched to St. Matthew's Cathedral and waited for the hour-long mass to end.

Their final duty was to march in the magnificent procession of military units to Arlington Cemetery. Since the Navy Band was not included in the graveside services, they marched down a side street inside Arlington's gates and were bussed back to their starting point. For nearly 10 hours that day, they were constantly on their feet, standing or marching, all without food or benefit of restrooms.

Mills says that 50 percent of the band's time was spent on the road, as a public relations tool of the U.S. Navy. At the time, there was a new nuclear submarine that the Navy was taking to ports around the world, and they often performed at those events.

Life in Germany and New York City

In 1965, Mills' enlistment was up, so he left the Navy to follow his new lover, Sam →



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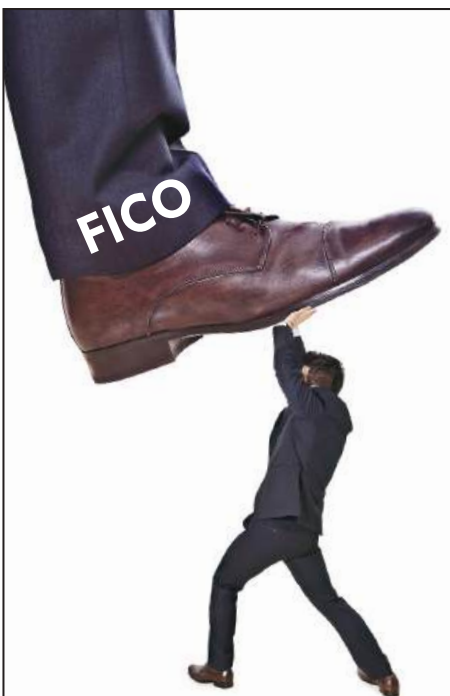
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Music Man

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Cannon, to Germany where Mills worked part-time as a cook. Now a civilian again, he won an opportunity to study under conductor Herbert von Karajan of the Berlin Philharmonic.

In 1967, at the age of 31, he fell twice and dislocated his wrist. His future as a pianist was over. He dreamed of becoming an opera conductor, but that card was not in the deck that life dealt him. He moved to New York City and began working in restaurants and bars.

Mills quickly distinguished himself, and began managing a restaurant on 13th Street. After the restaurant's bar became the new "in" place to go, he became friends with Judy Garland, who showed up regularly with such friends as Martha Raye and Kaye Ballard. After closing time, he would join them as they bar-crawled until 5 a.m. in the morning.

In 1970, his partner settled in Houston to sing with the Houston Grand Opera. By this time, Mills was managing the Ice Palace, a wildly popular gay disco in Fire Island's Cherry Grove. He spent the off-seasons in Houston.

Moving to Houston

In 1973, Mills moved to Houston permanently and found a job as the dining room captain at the Plaza Club. He was then hired by a club corporation to develop new clubs in such places as Chicago, Las Vegas, and Baton Rouge.

By 1977, he wanted to stay full-time in Houston, and was hired by Jim Farmer to manage Mary's Naturally. This was the beginning of his involvement with LGBT activism.

A small gay band had organized in 1978 and marched in the 1979 March on Washington. The members wanted to do more, and they asked Mills to help them form a symphonic band. He agreed, and the Montrose Symphonic Band was born in 1980.

The year before, Mills had organized the Montrose Singers. The success of an existing San Francisco choir proved that gay choruses could be an effective cultural outreach to the straight community, and Mills wanted to do the same in Houston.

During this time, Marion Coleman was operating her legendary lesbian club, Kindred Spirits. In typical fashion, she offered her bar during off hours as a rehearsal venue.

Mills' growing involvement and visibility in Houston earned him the honor of 1982 Male Pride Marshal—the same year his friend Coleman was elected Female Pride Marshal. Coleman loves to tell a story of how their parade car was passing by Mary's



From top: Mills was part of President Kennedy's funeral procession to Arlington Cemetery on November 25, 1963; The Montrose Singers at intermission of their 1980 Christmas concert (Mills is pictured on front row far left); Mills was the Male Pride Marshal for Houston's 1982 Gay Pride Parade.

as Mills' friends on the roof were yelling for him to throw them souvenir doubloons that bore the profiles of Mills and Coleman on them. Several attempts failed before Coleman finally smiled and lobbed a copious supply of the trinkets up to the roof with her softball arm.

In 1985, Mills entered into a relationship with a third partner, whose parents were Baptists. Although they visited once a year and acted cordially, when his partner died in 1988, they literally threw Mills out of the house they had shared. It was a heartbreak-

ing and much-too-common occurrence in those days.

Mills suffered a nervous breakdown, and moved to Los Angeles. He found a job managing a four-star restaurant, and especially enjoyed his friendship with MCCR's Rev. Troy Perry, who lived in the city.

A New Direction

In 1991, Mills returned to Houston, and was hired on as the dining room captain at the very exclusive Doctors Club in the Medical Center. The late Gary Van Otteghem was the financial director there at the same time.

1994 brought a diagnosis of full-blown AIDS to Mills. He was approved for disability income, and regretfully retired from the active and involved lifestyle that he so loved. For the next two years, he tried working as the bar manager at Renata's Restaurant before finally accepting the fact that it left him too fatigued.

Mills did have enough strength to work a few hours a week at Resurrection Church's former location on Decatur Street, tending to the yard and planting flowers. He continued this until the church moved in 2000.

In the early 2000s, the Pride Band went through a quick succession of directors, and found themselves faltering. Mills took time to help them plan several events while they regained their footing.

Every four years, the GALA Choruses group that Mills helped create in 1981 holds an international festival, with thousands in attendance. Mills has always made it a point to be there. The next festival will be in July 2016 in Denver.

Mills also enjoys leisurely afternoons now and then, socializing at familiar clubs such as Brick and EJ's. And Mills tries never to miss any performance by the Pride Band or the Gay Men's Chorus. He utilizes a portable oxygen unit on his trips away from his apartment.

"My life has been exciting—the places I've been, the people I've met," says Mills. His love for music endures because he sees music as the great unifier. "If everyone in the world sang and played an instrument, we'd never have any more wars."

What: A Concert and Tribute to Andy Mills
When: January 31, 7:30 p.m.

Where: Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church, 2025 West 11th St.

Details: Donations accepted

Brandon Wolf also writes about Urvashi Vaid in this issue of OUTSMART magazine.



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Get healthy (and get covered) in 2015

by Liz James

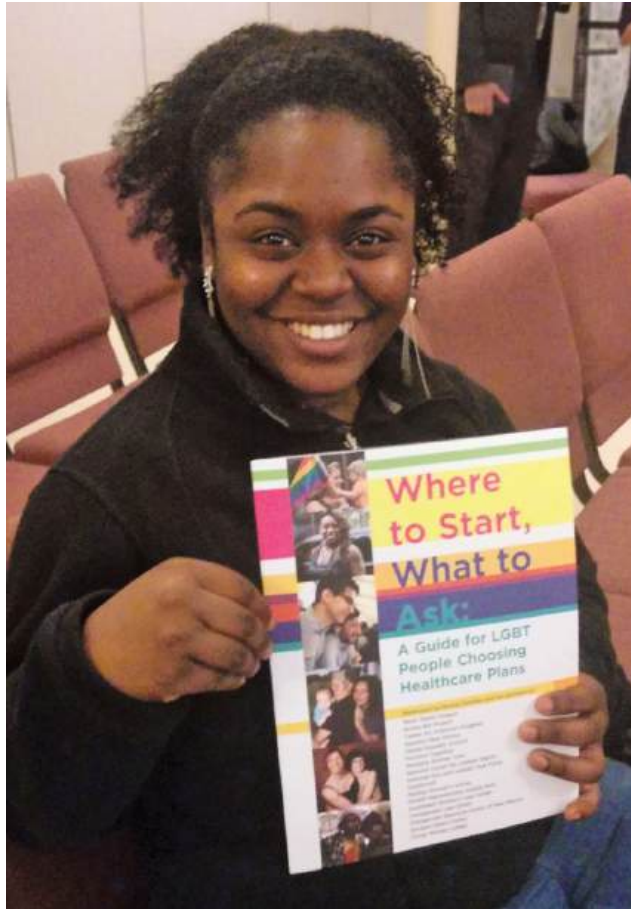
January is a big month for our community. On January 9, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals has agreed to hear marriage equality cases from Louisiana, Mississippi, and our great state of Texas. Even if we have to wait longer than our friends in, say, Oklahoma, marriage equality is coming. And for those of us who have been fighting for equality for decades, it can't come soon enough.

At the same time, many LGBT Texans are committing (or re-committing) to keep their New Year's resolutions to get healthy. Maybe you've pledged to lose a few pounds, get more exercise or sleep, or quit smoking once and for all.

The timing couldn't be more important for the Houston-area LGBT community. Why? Because health, too, is an equality issue. LGBT people are more likely to smoke and have higher rates of HIV and other STIs, mental health issues such as depression, and even cancer. We also face discrimination in the healthcare system: you may have been turned away by a doctor or nurse simply for being gay—or you may not be out to your doctor at all. And one in four low- and middle-income LGBT people do not have the health insurance they need to gain even basic access to a doctor.

This is why the Lesbian Health Initiative of Houston (LHI) is committed to eliminating barriers to healthcare and inspiring health and wellness for LGBT people—regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity—through integrated education, access, and advocacy programs. Our access programs include biannual LHI Health Fairs where uninsured and underinsured LGBTQ women and transgender men can get free mammograms, pap/well person exams, blood screenings, flu shot vouchers, and many other preventive services. Save LHI's 2015 Health Fair dates: June 6 and November 7.

LHI and Out2Enroll—a national initiative focused on LGBT outreach—is focused on the Affordable Care Act and what it



Healthcare is an equality issue: Houstonian Aurora Harris saved \$1,600 on healthcare costs in 2014 after signing up for coverage through health-care.gov. LHI and Out2Enroll host an event on January 17 to help others learn how the Affordable Care Act affects LGBT folks.

“The Affordable Care Act gives me peace of mind in knowing that I won’t go bankrupt if my cancer returns.”

means for our community. We are hosting an event in Houston on January 17 to answer questions about health insurance. Be sure to follow these groups on your social media to learn more. You can also visit Out2Enroll.org/find-local-help to get free enrollment help

from LGBT-affirming assisters at places like the Montrose Center, Houston Area Community Services (HACS), Legacy Community Health Services, and many more.

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Those who know me know that I'm passionate about improving access to healthcare. But the Affordable Care Act means more to me than that. That's because—for the first time in years—I was able to get covered

through the Health Insurance Marketplace. As a cancer survivor, I've been repeatedly denied health insurance or charged prices that I couldn't afford. The Affordable Care Act changed that by giving me peace of mind in knowing that

I won't go bankrupt if my cancer returns.

And it's not just me. Millions of people—young and old, gay and straight, trans and cis—are getting health insurance through the Marketplace.

My friend and colleague Aurora Harris, 26, also got her health insurance through HealthCare.gov and saved at least \$1,600 in healthcare costs in 2014. “I wouldn't have been able to pay that,” Harris said. “If it wasn't for the Affordable Care Act, I wouldn't be able to breathe easier, knowing I have health insurance.” →

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• **The Affordable Care Act may be the most significant piece of federal civil-rights legislation for LGBT people.** For the first time, it is illegal to discriminate in the healthcare system based on sexual orientation and gender identity. This means that insurance companies—and many hospitals, clinics, doctors, nurses, and other providers right here in Texas—can no longer discriminate against you simply for who you are or whom you love. You have new rights under the Affordable Care Act—make sure you understand them, and educate your friends and family.

• **The Affordable Care Act recognizes your marriage, even if Texas doesn't.** After the *United States v. Windsor* decision, President Obama made it a priority to ensure that our families were treated as families. Because of this, all legally married same-sex spouses can enroll in a family insurance plan *and* receive financial help as a family, no matter where they live. As long as you were married in a state that recognizes it—I'm looking at you, Oklahoma—and you file (or plan to file) a joint federal tax return, you will get these benefits because the Affordable Care Act recognizes your relationship.

• **The Affordable Care Act ends discrimination based on preexisting medical conditions and requires insurance companies to cover the treatments you need.** Before health reform, insurance companies could charge you more or refuse to cover you altogether if you (or anyone in your family) had asthma, cancer, HIV, high blood pressure, or were transgender. Now, every American has guaranteed access to a health insurance plan, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or medical history. And every plan in the Marketplace has to cover a minimum set of essential benefits that include doctor visits, hospital stays, preventive care, prescription drugs, and mental health services.

• **The Affordable Care Act helps make health insurance more affordable by offering financial help.** We know our community wants health insurance. The real question is whether or not we can afford it. Luckily,

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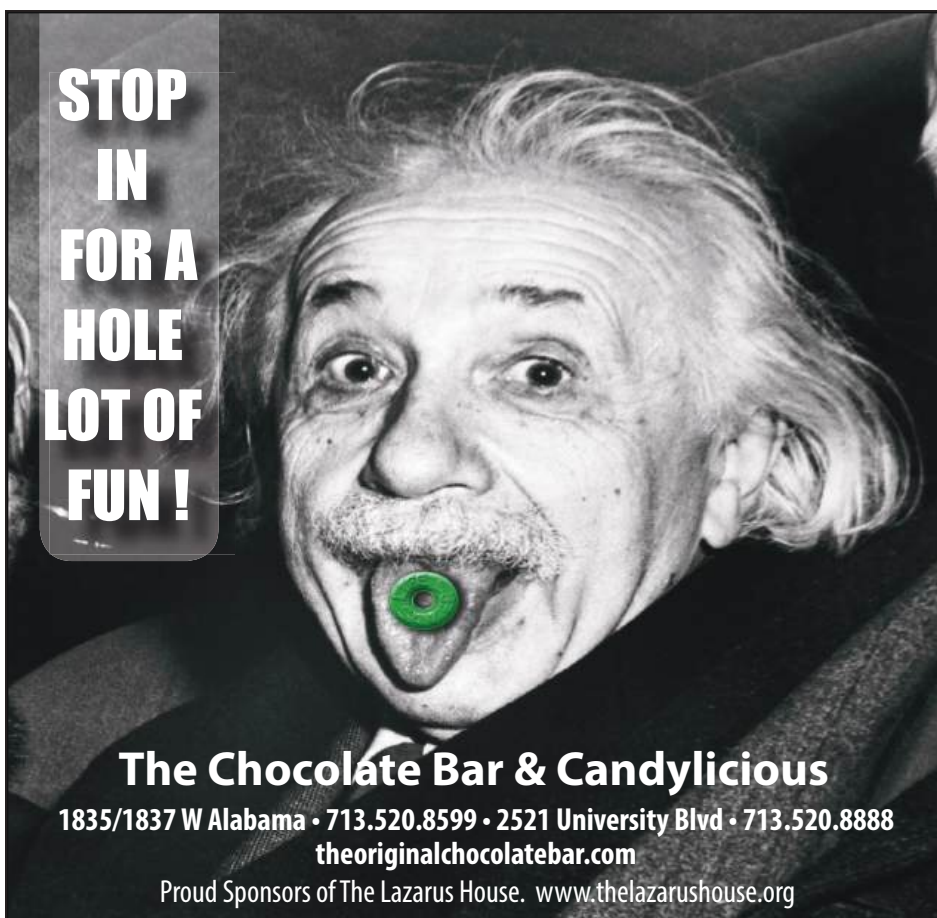
the law provides financial help so you can find a plan that fits your budget. Individuals whose annual income is between \$11,670 and \$46,680 (or between \$23,850 and \$95,400 for a family of four) will be eligible for financial help to purchase health insurance through the Marketplace. So far, the vast majority of people who got covered—more than four out of five people—qualify for some financial assistance. Visit HealthCare.gov to see what you qualify for.

The deadline to sign up for health insurance is February 15, 2015. If you don't get covered by then, you may have to pay a fine—and 100 percent of your medical costs if you get sick or injured.

Millions of Americans have already enrolled in health insurance, and millions more have the opportunity to do so this year. We need to make sure that LGBT people are well-represented in those millions of people. We owe it to ourselves, our friends and family, and our community to be out, be healthy, and get covered.

Liz James, CEO of the Lesbian Health Initiative (LHI), is committed to the continued and growing collaborative pursuit to ensure all Texans, regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity, have culturally appropriate, geographically accessible, and affordable access to the healthcare they and their families need and deserve. You can reach her at liz.james@lhihouston.org

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COMPLERA is a prescription medicine for adults who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before and who have no more than 100,000 copies/mL of virus in their blood. COMPLERA can also replace current HIV-1 medicines for some adults who have an undetectable viral load (less than 50 copies/mL) and whose healthcare provider determines that they meet certain other requirements. COMPLERA combines 3 medicines into 1 pill to be taken once a day with food. COMPLERA should not be used with other HIV-1 medicines.

Just the **one**  for me

COMPLERA is a complete HIV-1 treatment in only 1 pill a day.

Ask your healthcare provider if COMPLERA may be the one for you.

Pill shown is not actual size.

COMPLERA does not cure HIV-1 infection or AIDS.

To control HIV-1 infection and decrease HIV-related illnesses you must keep taking COMPLERA. 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.

It is not known if COMPLERA is safe and effective in children under 18 years old.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

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

COMPLERA 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 COMPLERA 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 COMPLERA, your hepatitis may suddenly get worse. Do not stop taking COMPLERA without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to monitor your health. COMPLERA is not approved for the treatment of HBV.

Who should not take COMPLERA?

Do not take COMPLERA if you:

- **Take a medicine that contains:** adefovir (Hepsera), lamivudine (Epivir-HBV), carbamazepine (Carbatrol, Equetro, Tegretol, Tegretol-XR, Teril, Epitol), oxcarbazepine (Trileptal), phenobarbital (Luminal), phenytoin (Dilantin, Dilantin-125, Phenytek), rifampin (Rifater, Rifamate, Rimactane, Rifadin), rifapentine (Priftin), dextansoprazole (Dexilant), esomeprazole (Nexium, Vimovo), lansoprazole (Prevacid), omeprazole (Prilosec, Zegerid), pantoprazole sodium (Protonix), rabeprazole (Aciphex), more than 1 dose of the steroid medicine dexamethasone or dexamethasone sodium phosphate, or the herbal supplement St. John’s wort.
- **Take any other medicines to treat HIV-1 infection**, unless recommended by your healthcare provider.

What are the other possible side effects of COMPLERA?

Serious side effects of COMPLERA may also include:

- **New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do blood tests to check your kidneys before starting treatment with COMPLERA. If you have had kidney problems, or take other medicines that may cause kidney problems, your healthcare provider may also check your kidneys during treatment with COMPLERA.
- **Depression or mood changes.** Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any of the following symptoms: feeling sad or hopeless, feeling anxious or restless, have thoughts of hurting yourself (suicide) or have tried to hurt yourself.

- **Changes in liver enzymes:** People who have had hepatitis B or C, or who have had changes in their liver function tests in the past may have an increased risk for liver problems while taking COMPLERA. Some people without prior liver disease may also be at risk. Your healthcare provider may do tests to check your liver enzymes before and during treatment with COMPLERA.
- **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 COMPLERA.

The most common side effects of COMPLERA include trouble sleeping (insomnia), abnormal dreams, headache, dizziness, diarrhea, nausea, rash, tiredness, and depression. Other common side effects include vomiting, stomach pain or discomfort, skin discoloration (small spots or freckles), and pain. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that bother you or do not go away.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking COMPLERA?

- **All your health problems.** Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you have or had any kidney, mental health, bone, or liver problems, including hepatitis virus infection.
- **All the medicines you take**, including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. COMPLERA may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how COMPLERA 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 COMPLERA without first talking with your healthcare provider.
- **If you take rifabutin (Mycobutin).** Talk to your healthcare provider about the right amount of rilpivirine (Edurant) you should take.
- **If you take antacids.** Take antacids at least 2 hours before or at least 4 hours after you take COMPLERA.
- **If you take stomach acid blockers.** Take acid blockers at least 12 hours before or at least 4 hours after you take COMPLERA. Ask your healthcare provider if your acid blocker is okay to take, as some acid blockers should never be taken with COMPLERA.
- **If you are pregnant** or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if COMPLERA can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking COMPLERA.
- **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 COMPLERA 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.



COMPLERA®
emtricitabine 200mg/rilpivirine 25mg/
tenofovir disoproxil fumarate 300mg tablets

Brief Summary of full Prescribing Information

COMPLERA® (kom-PLEH-rah)

(emtricitabine 200 mg, rilpivirine 25 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 COMPLERA?

- **COMPLERA** is a prescription medicine used as a complete HIV-1 treatment in one pill a day. COMPLERA is for adults who have never taken HIV-1 medicines before and who have no more than 100,000 copies/mL of virus in their blood (this is called 'viral load'). Complera can also replace current HIV-1 medicines for some adults who have an undetectable viral load (less than 50 copies/mL) and whose healthcare provider determines that they meet certain other requirements.
- COMPLERA is a complete regimen and should not be used with other HIV-1 medicines. HIV-1 is the virus that causes AIDS. When used properly, COMPLERA may reduce the amount of HIV-1 virus in your blood and increase the amount of CD4 T-cells, which may help improve your immune system. This may reduce your risk of death or getting infections that can happen when your immune system is weak.
- **COMPLERA 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 COMPLERA?

COMPLERA can cause serious side effects, including:

- **Build-up of an acid in your blood (lactic acidosis).** Lactic acidosis can happen in some people who take COMPLERA 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
 - having stomach pain with nausea or vomiting
 - feel cold, especially in your arms and legs
 - feel dizzy or lightheaded
 - have a fast or irregular heartbeat
- **Severe liver problems.** Severe liver problems can happen in people who take COMPLERA. 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 COMPLERA for a long time.**
- **Worsening of Hepatitis B infection.** If you have hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection and take COMPLERA, your HBV may get worse (flare-up) if you stop taking COMPLERA. A "flare-up" is when your HBV infection suddenly returns in a worse way than before. COMPLERA is not approved for the treatment of HBV, so you must discuss your HBV with your healthcare provider.
 - Do not run out of COMPLERA. Refill your prescription or talk to your healthcare provider before your COMPLERA is all gone.
 - Do not stop taking COMPLERA without first talking to your healthcare provider.
 - If you stop taking COMPLERA, your healthcare provider will need to check your health often and do blood tests regularly to check your HBV infection. Tell your healthcare provider about any new or unusual symptoms you may have after you stop taking COMPLERA.

Who should not take COMPLERA?

Do not take COMPLERA if you also take any of the following medicines:

- **Medicines used for seizures:** carbamazepine (Carbatrol, Equetro, Tegretol, Tegretol-XR, Teril, Epitol); oxcarbazepine (Trileptal); phenobarbital (Luminal); phenytoin (Dilantin, Dilantin-125, Phenytek)
- **Medicines used for tuberculosis:** rifampin (Rifater, Rifamate, Rimactane, Rifadin); rifapentine (Priftin)
- **Certain medicines used to block stomach acid called proton pump inhibitors (PPIs):** dextansoprazole (Dexilant); esomeprazole (Nexium, Vimovo); lansoprazole (Prevacid); omeprazole (Prilosec, Zegerid); pantoprazole sodium (Protonix); rabeprazole (Aciphex)
- **Certain steroid medicines:** More than 1 dose of dexamethasone or dexamethasone sodium phosphate
- **Certain herbal supplements:** St. John's wort
- **Certain hepatitis medicines:** adefovir (Hepsera), lamivudine (Epivir-HBV)

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

- Other medicines that contain tenofovir (ATRIPLA, STRIBILD, TRUVADA, VIREAD)
- Other medicines that contain emtricitabine or lamivudine (ATRIPLA, Combivir, EMTRIVA, Epivir, Epzicom, STRIBILD, Trizivir, TRUVADA)
- rilpivirine (Edurant), unless you are also taking rifabutin (Mycobutin)

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

What are the possible side effects of COMPLERA?

COMPLERA may cause the following serious side effects:

- **See "What is the most important information I should know about COMPLERA?"**
- **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 COMPLERA. If you have had kidney problems in the past or need to take another medicine that can cause kidney problems, your healthcare provider may need to do blood tests to check your kidneys during your treatment with COMPLERA.
- **Depression or mood changes. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any of the following symptoms:**
 - feeling sad or hopeless
 - feeling anxious or restless
 - have thoughts of hurting yourself (suicide) or have tried to hurt yourself
- **Change in liver enzymes.** People with a history of hepatitis B or C virus infection or who have certain liver enzyme changes may have an

increased risk of developing new or worsening liver problems during treatment with COMPLERA. Liver problems can also happen during treatment with COMPLERA in people without a history of liver disease. Your healthcare provider may need to do tests to check your liver enzymes before and during treatment with COMPLERA.

- **Bone problems** can happen in some people who take COMPLERA. 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 taking HIV-1 medicine. These changes may include increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), breast, and around the main part of your body (trunk). Loss of fat from the legs, arms and face may also happen. The cause and long term health effect 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 if you start having any new symptoms after starting your HIV-1 medicine.

The most common side effects of COMPLERA include:

- Trouble sleeping (insomnia), abnormal dreams, headache, dizziness, diarrhea, nausea, rash, tiredness, depression

Additional common side effects include:

- Vomiting, stomach pain or discomfort, skin discoloration (small spots or freckles), pain

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 COMPLERA. 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 COMPLERA?

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

- If you have or had any kidney, mental health, bone, or liver problems, including hepatitis B or C infection.
- If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if COMPLERA can harm your unborn child.
 - 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 to 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 COMPLERA.
 - 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 COMPLERA can pass to your baby in your breast milk. It is not known if this could harm your baby.
 - Talk to 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:

- COMPLERA may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how COMPLERA works.
- If you take certain medicines with COMPLERA, the amount of COMPLERA in your body may be too low and it may not work to help control your HIV-1 infection. The HIV-1 virus in your body may become resistant to COMPLERA or other HIV-1 medicines that are like it.

- Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you take any of the following medicines:
 - Rifabutin (Mycobutin), a medicine to treat some bacterial infections. Talk to your healthcare provider about the right amount of rilpivirine (Edurant) you should take.
 - Antacid medicines that contain aluminum, magnesium hydroxide, or calcium carbonate. Take antacids **at least 2 hours before or at least 4 hours after** you take COMPLERA.
 - Certain medicines to block the acid in your stomach, including cimetidine (Tagamet), famotidine (Pepcid), nizatidine (Axid), or ranitidine hydrochloride (Zantac). Take the acid blocker **at least 12 hours before or at least 4 hours after** you take COMPLERA. Some acid blocking medicines should never be taken with COMPLERA (see "Who should not take COMPLERA?" for a list of these medicines).
 - Medicines that can affect how your kidneys work, including acyclovir (Zovirax), cidofovir (Vistide), ganciclovir (Cytovene IV, Vitraser), valacyclovir (Valtrex), and valganciclovir (Valcyte).
 - clarithromycin (Biaxin)
 - erythromycin (E-Mycin, Eryc, Ery-Tab, PCE, Pediazole, Ilosone)
 - fluconazole (Diflucan)
 - itraconazole (Sporanox)
 - ketoconazole (Nizoral)
 - methadone (Dolophine)
 - posaconazole (Noxafil)
 - telithromycin (Ketek)
 - voriconazole (Vfend)

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 COMPLERA without first talking with your healthcare provider.

How should I take COMPLERA?

- Stay under the care of your healthcare provider during treatment with COMPLERA.
- Take COMPLERA exactly as your healthcare provider tells you to take it.
- Always take COMPLERA with food. Taking COMPLERA with food is important to help get the right amount of medicine in your body. A protein drink is not a substitute for food. If your healthcare provider decides to stop COMPLERA and you are switched to new medicines to treat HIV-1 that includes rilpivirine tablets, the rilpivirine tablets should be taken only with a meal.

Keep COMPLERA and all medicines out of reach of children.

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

Issued: June 2014



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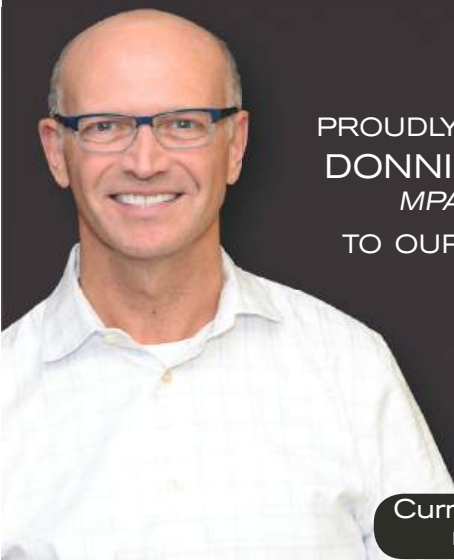
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Abomination or Inspiration?

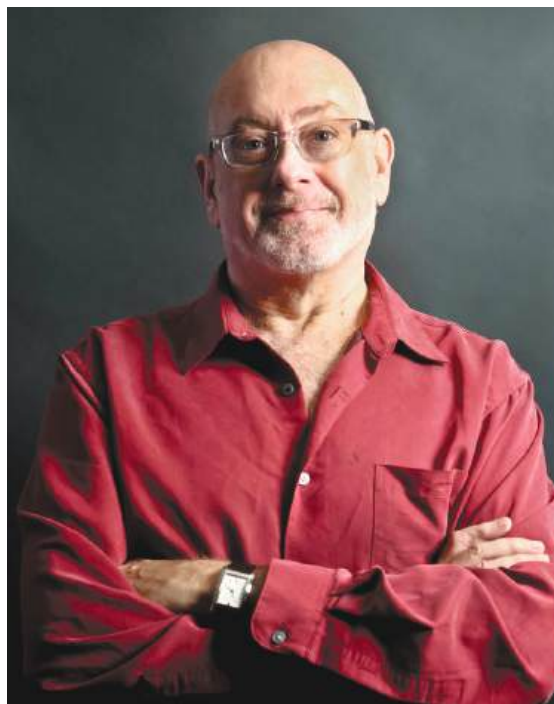
From “sissy boy” to AIDS activist to Sunday School teacher, therapist Ken McLeod prepares to teach adult classes about the truths and myths used to support religious attitudes toward LGBTQ folks

by Karen Derr

After growing up as “the designated sissy boy” in a southern coal-mining community, in adulthood Ken McLeod became a tenured professor, teaching theater at Louisiana State University—a life he left behind to get a master’s degree in clinical social work when he felt called to “do something for my brothers.” AIDS in 1985 and 1986 was, he says, “essentially gay men.” He was 38 when he went back to school to earn his degree at LSU, and his first job as a social worker was at a Catholic hospice for people with AIDS. Appointed by both a Democratic and a Republican governor, he served on the Louisiana Commission on AIDS, advising the Louisiana legislature about the disease. Now a therapist in private practice, he moved to Houston in 1996 to work with various AIDS organizations, including the Bering Support Network at Bering United Methodist Church.

McLeod has been a Unitarian for nearly 40 years, and for the past nine years has attended Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church, a gay-friendly religious community near the Galleria. “It’s a congregation that has completed The Welcoming Congregation Program, which is the LGBTQ affirmation program of the UU [Unitarian Universalist] Association,” McLeod explains. He points out that Emerson invites people of all gender identities and sexual orientations to join them, and Emerson co-pastor Dr. Becky Edmiston-Lange has been a visible and outspoken supporter of the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance.

According to McLeod, “The Welcoming Congregation Program is a process that UU churches can go through, and members vote to become a Welcoming Congregation. The program came about because, although Unitarian Universalists have been very supportive of these issues for decades, there was a time in the ’80s when they were doing a lot of visioning in the congregations and surveying to figure out what they thought about women ministers, black ministers in white congregations, and all



Teaching universal acceptance: starting in February, Ken McLeod—a Unitarian Universalist for nearly 40 years—will lead a five-week adult education series at Emerson UU Church on the intersection between religion and LGBTQ identity.

kinds of things like that. They came up with results that they didn’t like relative to the LGBT community, so they gathered about a dozen people from around the country to sit down and talk about what to do.” McLeod, who was then director of education at the Unitarian Church of Baton Rouge, was one of those chosen. In 1989 the UU denomination’s general assembly voted, and The Welcoming Congregation Program is the idea that came out of that vote.

“We are doctrine-free, dogma-free.”

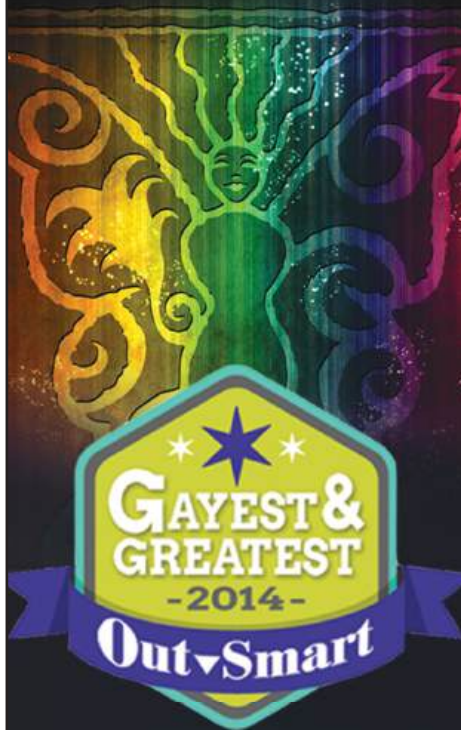
“One of the challenges for people [who are new to this church] is we don’t have the answers,” says McLeod. “You have to do the thinking, you have to develop your credo, etc. It’s all on you.” Thomas Jefferson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry David Thoreau were all known to be Unitarians, he says. “We as a denomination have no church-wide policy,” he explains. “We are doctrine-free, dogma-free. Part of what we believe is that everyone has to create their own theology and figure out their own path. Most UUs today would not call themselves Christians. Even though we might look to Jesus as a great teacher, he

wouldn’t be the only one and we wouldn’t call him the son of God.” McLeod says UUs use the term *fellowship* more often than *congregation*. It’s common for UUs to say, “Don’t tell me what you believe, tell me what you did today,” he says.

McLeod states that “a lot of people find their way to UU as their first step back to organized religion, and very often they use us as a transition back to their faith of birth or childhood, because what they learn from us is that you need to be responsible for your own theology. I have a friend who is Catholic who says, ‘I go to Catholic church for the ritual, and I go to UU for the community.’” He agrees that there is a comfort to going through the rituals you learned as a child.

Although there are marked differences between Unitarian Universalists and →

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Abomination or Inspiration?

continued from previous page

other mainstream churches, McLeod says there are similarities. “Our services would look very much like a Methodist service. Our services used to be very different, but now when people come in who have been unchurched for a long time, they say, ‘Well, this feels like a church. There are opening words, sermons, hymns.’”

Emerson has about 450 members. Community is one of the things McLeod talks about a lot. Compared with Houston’s Lakewood Church—arguably the largest church in America—Emerson is quite small and liberal. (Lakewood was the target of protests late in 2014 by Westboro Baptist members because Lakewood is tolerant of LGBT attendees—although Lakewood pastor Joel Osteen has made it clear through several recent interviews that he believes the homosexual lifestyle is a sin according to the Bible.)

In Emerson’s upcoming five-week series on attitudes in the religious community toward LGBTQ people, McLeod will lead the Emerson UU adult education classes in examining those same scriptures plus other sacred teachings. (Of course, he does not believe the scriptures support judgmental views like Osteen’s.) In the first week of the series, McLeod says, “I’m going to be talking about where we as a denomination have been and what ‘Welcoming Congregation’ means. It’s a UU community that, through education and discernment, has chosen to assert their affirmative welcome to people who are LGBTQ.

“The second Sunday is going to be about what the [Judeo-Christian] scripture really says, what Leviticus really means, and [the various ways that has been interpreted by different religions],” McLeod contin-

ues. “What have the churches done with this? In the Middle Ages there were same-sex marriages in the church, but then it was suppressed. There’s some really good research done on that by John Boswell out of Yale. The last two Sundays I’m going to look at ‘What about the World Religions?’

Over the last two years, as part of their “Living Text” series, Emerson has conducted a church-wide study of topics such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, the Hebrew Bible, the Christian Bible, earth-centered religions, women and religion, as well as both Unitarianism and Universalism. Last year McLeod taught about Taoism, which he says is an area of interest for him, and if he had to cite a book as his spiritual guide, he says, it would be the *Tao Te Ching*.

Now, beginning on the first Sunday in February, the entire Emerson congregation will be studying LGBTQ religious issues for a five-week period. During each of the five Sundays, the topic will be the focus of the youth and adult classes, as well as the topic of the day’s sermon. McLeod says, “I think this is a very significant move for a church not identified as a so-called ‘gay church’ but a denomination that has been gay-affirming since the very early 1970s and has been doing services of union since not long after that.”

Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church is located at 1900 Bering Drive in Houston. Each Sunday, adult education classes and activities for youth and children begin at 10 a.m., followed by a worship service at 11 a.m. To learn more about Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church or the upcoming study series, go to EmersonHouston.org.

Karen Derr is a frequent contributor to OUT-SMART magazine and a broker associate at Boulevard Realty.

A Universal Approach to Life

“**A**s Unitarian Universalists, we have no sacred text *per se*. In our search for what gives life meaning, what sustains us through the tough and tender moments of life, and what gives us a sense of our place in the universe, we think anything can be potentially instructive. And so we draw wisdom from a wide variety of sources—not only what are considered traditional scriptures of the world’s religions, but also contemporary literature, science, and art and music—and, perhaps most importantly, from personal experience.

“We think that any religion that is worth its salt has to make sense, to be real and true—for us as individuals and for human-

ity collectively. And so the life experiences of someone who is gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender can be just as revelatory of the sacred (that is, revealing to us what it means to live a life of goodness, integrity, and purpose) as a story from the Bible. The love that two people of the same gender feel for one another can be as illuminating and challenging as any classical love story [with regard to] what it means to cherish another person and to put that person’s well-being on a par equal to one’s own.

“In our quest to become better people and to help make the world a better place for all people, should we limit ourselves to only one source of inspiration?”

—Rev. Becky Edmiston-Lange, Co-Minister, Emerson UU Church



From Darkness to Light

A journey to healing

by Venita Ray

This is a story about hope, change, and transformation. Change, for me, is usually motivated by insight or pain. In my case, HIV was the catalyst.

My world came to a crashing halt when I was diagnosed with HIV in 2003. The day I was diagnosed, it was like someone turned off the lights and my world went black. I was consumed with shame, guilt, remorse, self-pity, and thoughts of suicide. I was a 44-year-old African-American woman living my dream life as an attorney in Washington DC. I had come a long way from where I started as a teenage mother, high school dropout, and drug addict. I stopped using drugs, went back to school, raised my daughter as a single parent, and completed law school by the age of 37. Everyone told me, "Fight, Venita! You have always been a fighter." But I was tired of fighting—HIV had been the final blow.

After my diagnosis, I withdrew from the world. I was preparing myself for death even though I knew HIV was not a death sentence. I did not want to live with the stigma and complications of HIV. In December 2004, I resigned from my job, sold my home, and moved to Houston to be near my family. I lived in darkness for four years before I made a decision to reclaim power over my life.

At first glance, this may not appear to be a story of hope and transformation—but it is. I do know that at some point during my journey, I chose to use HIV as a stepping-stone instead of a tombstone. I credit my triumph over darkness to the love of my family, friends, the Houston HIV community, my healthy lifestyle, and advocacy. This is my story about how fitness, nutrition, and advocacy became my stepping-stones to enlightenment, self-love, gratitude, and freedom.

The turning point came one day in 2007. I was having my usual thoughts of suicide



Listen to your body: after being diagnosed as HIV-positive in 2003, Houstonian Venita Ray found yoga to be a powerful healing tool in her journey to better health, spiritual growth, and acceptance of her status.

when I said to myself, "Either kill yourself or find a way to move on." My first thought was that I needed to exercise. I had always been physically active for most of my life. After my diagnosis, I went back and forth between wanting to exercise and feeling like "What's the use?" It was during this time that I went to my first yoga class. Even though I was not flexible and understood nothing, the first yoga class touched me in a place I had closed off for the past four years. I was hooked.

"I chose to use HIV as a stepping-stone instead of a tombstone."

The more I practiced yoga, the better I felt. After class one day, I asked the teacher, Daksha, to teach me how to meditate. I ended up studying yoga with Daksha in her home for the next year.

Since that time, I have had a number of wonderful yoga teachers who have taught me how to apply yoga principles in life both on and off the mat. Awareness of the simple art of breathing is one of the many benefits I learned from practicing yoga. I was also able to reconnect to a God of my understanding on a yoga mat. Yoga is so much more than a physical practice; it is a lifestyle.

It was also during this time that I began to experience menopausal symptoms, facial swelling, and extreme fatigue. I was tak-

ing five different meds to manage these symptoms as well as my HIV, but hadn't had any relief. In desperation, I sought out the help of a personal trainer, Shana Ross, who taught me the importance of nutrition. In yoga, I was learning how to listen to my body, and Shana taught me how to feed my body. I began to use food in a way that allowed my body to function at its best. This was not an easy process for me, but it has been worth all the time and effort.

I don't remember when I stopped having thoughts of suicide. But one day I realized that I no longer wanted to die. Soon, my menopausal and other symptoms had also disappeared.

I used fitness and nutrition as a way to exercise power over the things in my life that I could control. I could not cure myself of HIV, but I could control what I ate, how much I rested and exercised, and my spiritual growth. I went from being →

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From Darkness to Light

continued from previous page

passive in my healthcare to taking charge.

In late 2007, I informed my doctor that I would no longer take all of the meds I was being prescribed. I went from taking five meds to one. Although I developed an undetectable viral load soon after starting meds in 2003, my CD4 count improved at a slow pace in those first four years. By 2008, my CD4 count had doubled. One day, my doctor told me, "I don't know what you're doing, but whatever it is, you need to keep doing it."

The final step in my journey back to health was getting involved in HIV advocacy. It all began when I finally got the courage to attend my first support group. A number of people in the group were talking about an HIV advocacy training program called Project LEAP that was funded by the Houston Ryan White Planning Council (RWPC). In 2008, I completed Project LEAP and went on to serve on the RWPC for several years. As a lawyer, I used to pride myself on being an advocate, but lost my desire for advocacy following my diagnosis. HIV gave me another platform for advocacy on an issue that is near and dear to my heart. Houston has an HIV advocacy community with a long and proud history, and it is my honor to be a part of it.

Another critical part of my activism and healing was my decision to go public about my HIV. In 2011, I agreed to participate in a project called "We Choose to Climb." I was one of seven women who had overcome major obstacles in their lives who were brought together to train and climb Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Africa. The goal of the project was to inspire others to not give up on the "mountains" in their lives. In order to participate, I had to be willing to be open about my HIV-positive status. (There were still a number of family and friends who did not know I had HIV.) I still had some fear, but I knew I was ready. I was tired of living in shame and secrecy. It was during my trip to Africa as an openly HIV-positive woman that I finally got the courage to never be invisible again. I was finally free!

I went on to participate in a Centers for Disease Control (CDC) campaign called "Let's Stop HIV Together." I chose this campaign because of its anti-stigma message and inclusion of family members and supporters in the campaign. It gave me a chance to say thank you to my family, because I know I would not be here without their love and support.

Earlier this year, I joined Legacy Community Health Services as the Program Coordinator for the Positive Organizing Project (POP+). POP+ is an advocacy-training program designed by and for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). The goal of POP+



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is to promote greater leadership and involvement by the PLWHA community in decisions that impact their lives. Fifteen PLWHA have just graduated from POP+ after receiving trainings in community organizing, effective leadership, and advocacy. I am so honored to use my legal skills and passion to raise awareness about HIV, impact public policy, end stigma, and help others come to terms with living with HIV.

The last 11 years have made for an amazing journey of highs and lows. It's still bitter-sweet to think that without HIV, I may not have discovered the life I have today. I have continued to evolve in my yoga practice, understanding of nutrition, and overall fitness. My friends would probably call me a health-and-fitness fanatic. I love feeling good! Today, I eat a plant-based diet that includes daily juicing and supplements. I recently became a yoga instructor because I love sharing yoga with others. I know that traditional medicine is important, but yoga offers opportunities for self-healing that are not present or always encouraged in traditional medicine. I am on a mission to continue to educate myself and others about the importance of total wellness of the body, mind, and spirit.

I am a woman, mother, grandmother, daughter, sister, aunt, friend, lawyer, advocate, and yogi. In other words, I am so much more than HIV. ■



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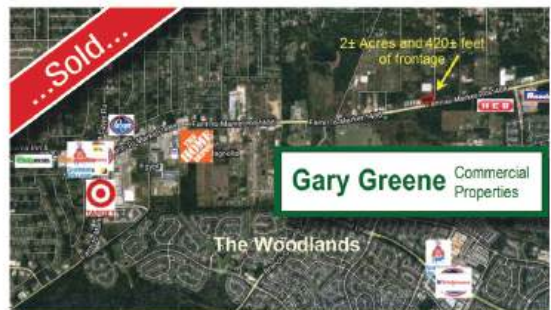
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Something for Everyone

We've got the scoop on this award season's LGBT characters

by Donalevan Maines

You know you're gay when you watch award shows to see "who" celebrities are wearing. You know you're *really* gay when the use of excessive force by the fashion police makes you cheer.

Was it just a year ago that Jennifer Lawrence's Christian Dior felony at the Golden Globes inspired selfies of fanboys swathed in white bed sheets and black ribbons?

At the same event, little-known Lupita Nyong'o larcenously lit up the red carpet in a red off-the-shoulder Ralph Lauren with attached cape. She lost Best Supporting Actress that night to Lawrence, but her awards derby debut launched Nyong'o's march to an Oscar as Patsy in *12 Years a Slave*.

Twelve years in the making was this year's Oscar favorite, *Boyhood*, written and directed by Bellaire High School graduate Richard Linklater. It's already been crowned Best Picture by the New York Film Critics Circle and the Los Angeles Film Critics Association, where the runner-up was *The Grand Budapest Hotel*. Its auteur, St. John's School product Wes Anderson, won for Best Screenplay.

While actresses attract most of the accolades on the red carpet, this year's most competitive race pits Best Actor hopefuls Steve Carell (*Foxcatcher*), Michael Keaton (*Birdman*), Jake Gyllenhaal (*Nightcrawler*), Eddie Redmayne (as Stephen Hawking in *The Theory of Everything*), and Benedict Cumberbatch as gay hero Alan Turing in *The Imitation Game*. Fighting to take one of them out is David Oyelowo, whose portrayal of Dr. Martin Luther King in *Selma* rounded out the field for Best Drama Actor at the Golden Globes.

Matthew McConaughey, who emerged from the pack of Oscar contenders when he won last year's Golden Globe Best Drama Actor for *Dallas Buyers Club*, is back in the hunt, this time in the Best Actor in a TV Movie/Limited Series category. He's joined



L, G, B, & T (clockwise from top left): lesbian Suzanne Warren ("Crazy Eyes" Warren (Uzo Aduba) in *Orange Is the New Black*, gay Alan Turing (Benedict Cumberbatch) in *The Imitation Game*, bisexual Cosima Niehaus (Tatiana Maslany) in *Orphan Black*, and trans Maura Pfefferman (Jeffrey Tambor) in *Transparent*.

by *True Detective* partner Woody Harrelson, *Fargo* co-stars Martin Freeman and Billy Bob Thornton, and Mark Ruffalo as Ned Weeks in *The Normal Heart*. As Ned's lover, Felix Turner, out actor Matt Bomer is nominated for Best Supporting Actor at the Globes.

Julia Roberts is a Screen Actors Guild (SAG) finalist as Dr. Emma Brookner in *The Normal Heart*.

Sugar Land's Allison Tolman was nominated for Best Actress in a TV Movie/Lim-

say, "Apparently, he's a big deal. He won a Golden Globe." Then Cam pipes in, "You win an Oscar, you *buy* a Golden Globe." (They didn't like that, did they?)

Julianne Moore heard her name called twice as a Golden Globe nominee: in the drama category for her Oscar-bait role as a professor with early-onset Alzheimer's in *Still Alice*, and in the comedy or musical category for *Map to the Stars*, which won her the Best Actress prize at the

2014 Cannes Film Festival. Double nominations are common at the Globes; in fact, Judy Holliday was nominated twice for the same performance in 1950's *Born Yesterday*. In the drama field, she lost to Gloria Swanson as Norma Desmond

in *Sunset Boulevard*; in the comedy or musical field, she beat Betty Hutton in *Annie Get Your Gun*, then won the Oscar a month later over Swanson, Eleanor Parker (*Caged*), and both Bette Davis and Anne Baxter in *All About Eve*. →

A welcome LGBT nominee for Best Motion Picture–Musical or Comedy at the Golden Globes is *Pride*.

ited Series for her debut in *Fargo*. Among her competition is Frances McDormand (*Olive Kitteridge*), who won an Oscar for the movie *Fargo*, and Jessica Lange in Ryan Murphy's *American Horror Story: Freak Show*.

Selma fans claim it didn't pick up any SAG nominations because not enough actors on the group's nominating committee saw it. In contrast, do *too many* members of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association watch TV's *Modern Family*? Is that why it was shut out at the Golden Globes for the first time in five years? You know the episode I mean: Pepper hires a director of photography to film the guys' wedding; Cam overhears Mitchell

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Something for Everyone

continued from previous page

Last year, Taylor Schilling was nominated at the Globes for Best TV Drama Actress as bisexual Piper Chapman in the Netflix women's prison series *Orange Is the New Black*. This year, she's nominated in the TV comedy category—go figure. *OITNB* is up for Best TV Comedy, along with Amazon's original series *Transparent*. It also scored a Best TV Comedy Actor nod for Jeffrey Tambor, who stars as transgender parent Maura.

In more category confusion, Uzo Aduba (who won a 2014 Emmy Award as Outstanding Guest Actress in a Comedy Series as lesbian Suzanne "Crazy Eyes" Warren in *OITNB*) is both a SAG nominee for Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Comedy Series and a TV supporting actress finalist at the Globes. She's also in the running for Outstanding Actress in a Comedy Series at the NAACP Image Awards, where *OITNB*'s supporting-actress contenders include Emmy nominee Laverne Cox (who is transgender in real life and in the show) and costars Adrienne C. Moore as "Black Cindy" and Lorraine Toussaint as villainous "Vee."

The cast of *OITNB* also competes for SAG's TV comedy ensemble award, along with *Modern Family*, which managed acting nominations for its three Emmy winners,

Eric Overstreet (as Cam), Ty Burrell, and Julie Bowen. (It's a crime that out actor Jesse Tyler Ferguson, as Mitchell, never wins an individual honor.)

A welcome LGBT nominee for Best Motion Picture—Musical or Comedy at the Globes is *Pride*, which scored big at the 17th British Independent Film Awards, winning Best Film, Supporting Actor (Andrew Scott), and Supporting Actress (Imelda Staunton). *Pride* is based on the true story of gay and lesbian activists who raised money for striking miners in a small Welsh village in 1984.

At the 30th Film Independent Spirit Awards, *Love Is Strange* is nominated for Best Feature, along with Best Screenplay for Ira Sachs and Mauricio Zacharias, and acting nods for both John Lithgow and Alfred Molina as a gay couple whose financial troubles force them to live apart.

Justin Simien, the out Houston native who won the U.S. Dramatic Special Jury Award for Breakthrough Talent at last year's Sundance Film Festival, won two Independent Spirit nominations for *Dear White People*, which he produced through crowdfunding. His categories are Best First Feature and Best First Screenplay.

In the upcoming televised awards season, some other nominees of particular interest in the LGBT community are the star-studded Stephen Sondheim musical *Into the Woods*; Jim Parsons in *The Big Bang Theory*; Guillermo Diaz in *Scandal*; bisexual Alan Cumming in *The Good Wife*; *The View*, co-hosted by Rosie O'Donnell; TV shows with gay characters, such as *American Horror Story: Freak Show*, *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, *Downton Abbey*, *Game of Thrones*, *Girls*, *House of Cards*, and *How to Get Away with Murder*; *Orphan Black* (in which one clone played by Tatiana Maslany is bisexual biologist Cosima Niehaus); *House of Lies*, which features two gender-fluid teenagers; and Cicely Tyson, whose performance in *The Trip to Bountiful* was directed by former Houstonian Michael Wilson.

Red carpets will also be filled with gay-friendly celebrities wearing their favorite gay designers, including Debbie Reynolds, who will be celebrated with the Screen Actors Guild 51st Annual Lifetime Achievement Award. She was OUTSMART's covergirl in September 1998, and you can read Blase DiStefano's interview with her at OutSmart Magazine.com.

- **72nd Annual Golden Globe Awards**
Sunday, January 11, NBC, 7 p.m. CST
- **21st Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards**
Sunday, January 25, TNT & TBS, 7 p.m. CST
- **46th Annual NAACP Image Awards**
Friday, February 6, TV One, 8 p.m. CST
- **30th Film Independent Spirit Awards**
Saturday, February 21, IFC, 4 p.m. CST

Donalevan Maines is a regular contributor to OUTSMART magazine.

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Queer to the Ear

'Queer Music Heritage' marks its 15th anniversary

by JD Doyle

It's all Jimmy Carper's fault. I really miss Jimmy. We lost him a year ago, and he was a good friend and in some ways a mentor to me. I also credit him for giving me my start in radio—something I wasn't even seeking. He had been hosting *After Hours* on KPFT for many years, and in late 1999 I began calling in during his shows, nudging him to play more gay and lesbian artists, as there was really no outlet for their music. After doing this several weeks in a row, he just said, "Well, why don't you come on the show and play some?"

So I did. With zero radio background, I put together two half-hour segments of old and new music, and I "put a little history" behind the songs. As I was very comfortable with Jimmy, we had a good time, and Jack Valinski, the producer of the station's Monday night show *Queer Voices* (then called *Lesbian & Gay Voices*) invited me to do a monthly segment. My first segment aired in January 2000, and it turned out to be a perfect outlet for my collection of LGBT music and my passion for digging into LGBT history.

Within a year I took my segments online in order to archive the shows, since history needs to be accessible. My fanatic approach has led to a website of over 2,000 pages and 560 hours of streaming music. As I have always considered our music history visual as well as aural, from the beginning I set up pages for each show that captured photos of the artists and recordings. I wasn't playing Top 40 artists, but mainly indie ones whose work was difficult to discover. They were not heard on the radio and struggled to make their music available in the few coffee shops and LGBT bookstores

"My fanatic approach has led to a website of over 2,000 pages and 560 hours of streaming music."



Explicitly gay: JD Doyle, pictured here in 2006 at Houston's KPFT radio station, is the producer of *Queer Music Heritage*, which is part of KPFT's *Queer Voices* radio show. He is surrounded with albums by queer musicians.

that agreed to carry them. And as the show's name would indicate, I loved going way back to feature the very early artists and songs that paved the way for the music of our culture. I am pleased to have been able to interview many of our pioneers, some of whom began in the '60s and '70s when recording explicitly gay songs was indeed brave.

In addition to the many interview shows, there have been a large number of "theme" shows and some that are centered on genres: country, jazz, hip hop, Christmas, gay musicals, and on my recent November show, "Obscure Queer Blues," covering mainly the '20s and '30s—some very deep material that I loved researching.

Other unusual themes have included: Music Inspired by Harvey Milk, Singing Drag Queens, Music Inspired by *The Wizard of Oz*, Songs about AIDS, Same-Sex Marriage, Stonewall, Matthew Shepard, Anita Bryant, Gays in the Military, Drag Kings, Music by Bear Artists . . . and lots and lots on women's music and transgender artists. There have been fanatically long shows of up to nine hours on gay choruses, Queercore, and gay Christian music. I am grateful that *Queer Voices* allowed me to air the first hour of these shows on KPFT every month. As

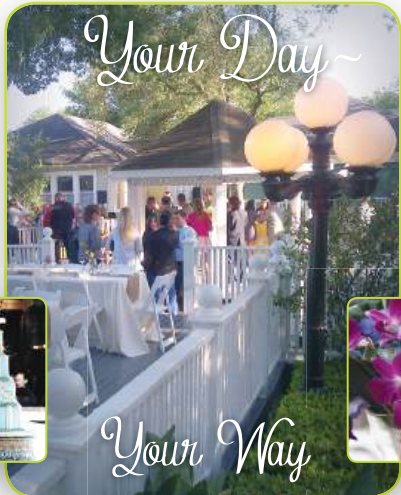
I lack the discipline to do just one hour, additional hours can always be heard on my website.

As the name *Queer Music Heritage* may imply, I was trying to cover the history while also including current music. Five years ago, that led me to start a second show (when I retired from my job and had more available time) called *OutRadio*, just for current music. So, it's the fifth anniversary of that show, and that one is online only.

For my *QMH* anniversary show, I am doing something I have never done—a show focusing not on our music history, but on my favorite songs that span over eight decades. So for those wondering about the music I personally adore, that's my January show that you can find at queermusicheritage.com/jan2015.html, or by coming through the front door of the website at queermusicheritage.com.

Tune in to Queer Voices on Monday nights, 8–9 p.m., on KPFT 90.1 FM.

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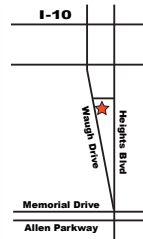


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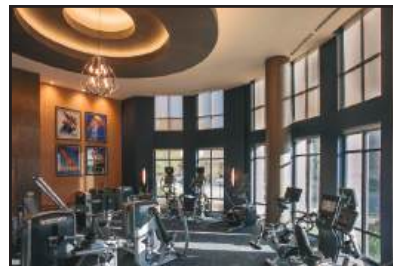
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2015 ASTROCAST

What does 2015 have in store?

by Lilly Roddy | Illustrations by David Eduardo Flores Perez

Photo of Lilly Roddy by John Conroy

The intensity that we have been dealing with, for what seems like forever, is due to the "Uranus-Pluto square." Ongoing since the end of 2007, this transit has profoundly disturbed long-established views and traditional governments, and is shaking us out of our complacency. We continue to experience this powerful transit through the end of 2015, when its potent effect will finally diminish somewhat as we enter 2016. We can expect to feel the stepped-up intensity of these two planets during March, April, and May. These are times of action and decision-making, and we are pushed to take action and make decisions whether we are ready or not. Let go of what holds you back and embrace your new and improved future.

Joining the party in 2015 is Saturn squaring Neptune! This planetary combination ushers in ongoing changes in the healthcare laws, better search engines for the Internet, and improved safety for our school systems. There is also cause to cast a watchful eye on any organization, public or private, that claims it exists to protect and serve. Expect new laws regulating cell phone and Internet usage. Saturn and Neptune force us to look at our own illusions; they do not allow us to live in ignorance. We feel the strongest influence of these two planets in the last four months of 2015.

As usual, there are three Mercury retrograde timeframes in 2015. The first one occurs from mid-January through mid-February, the second from early May through late June, and the third from early September through mid-October. The most positive use of Mercury retrograde energy

is to review, reorganize, complete, and take care of things we have been putting off.

Venus, planet of love and desire, turns retrograde from mid-July through mid-September. Venus retrograde causes us to reevaluate our investments and commitments. She just wants to make sure that each person is pulling their own weight.

As is usually the case, two sets of eclipses occur this year. The first *solar* eclipse is March 20; the first *lunar* eclipse is April 4. Both eclipses are "total" and have a strong impact on us.

The second set of eclipses begins with a *solar* eclipse on September 13 and ends with a final *lunar* eclipse on September 27. This *solar* eclipse is "partial," but the *lunar* eclipse is "total." The eclipse cycles drive the notion of individuality, equality, and greater compassion toward our fellow humans. And they test the bounds of our friendships and all close relationships.

Overall in 2015, we continue a growth-oriented experience that doesn't allow us to rest in place. We may feel tired of the constant pressure to challenge existing social mores and laws, but the need for equality won't let us rest. Our whole society is growing at a very rapid rate, but not everyone grows at the same rate. Personally, we feel better about what's going on if we participate in this movement promoting personal freedom, rather than simply letting others determine our fate. To paraphrase the sages, be a part of your own solution rather than a part of the problem!

continued on next page

Lilly Roddy has been an astrologer for the last 31 years. She counsels individuals in personal, business, and financial matters, as well as teaches classes in astrology. Her original interest in astrology, like most people's, was to come to a better understanding of who she was and how to make the most of her life. She continues to study all areas of astrology and metaphysics to expand her base of knowledge. Roddy's approach is to bring together a mental, physical, and spiritual combination that has real application in the world. Roddy can be contacted at 713.529.5842 or lillycath@aol.com.



ARIES (March 21–April 19)

This continues to be a year of massive change. Your career sector continues to be affected by downsizing and the phasing out of old practices. Nevertheless, the message is to reinvent yourself and not allow yourself to be trapped in the past. This could be the year to start your own business or go back to school for advanced training in your field. Many of you are feeling the urge to retire—even if you have not yet reached retirement age.

In your relationships, you are looking for revitalization, more fun, and a change from the way things have been in the past. This can put a lot of pressure on existing relationships that are too



rigid; however, it is a great time to communicate about these issues in order to find amenable solutions for everyone involved. If you are single, this is the impulse that has you out there looking for someone to connect with. Your relationship energies are most challenged in March and April, and once again in October.

You are continuing to work through financial challenges this year, and you may actually get some breathing room during the first half of 2015. You may have to revisit some financial issues between June and October. If you are investing, you should be very conservative. Keep your long-term goals as your guiding light.

In the first half of the year, you are more light-hearted. This can be a good time to travel, look for a new job, or go back to school for additional training and certification. You are eager to learn something new, and you make sure this knowledge is put to some practical use. The latter half of the year is also positive as you become much more interested in achieving your goals and using your time, love, and money in the most efficient way possible.

TAURUS (April 20–May 20)

Relationships continue to be a major theme for Taurus this year. You continue to evaluate your existing partnerships, looking for improvements and new long-term goals for each relationship—and looking to eliminate relationships that do not nurture you. You are striving for a better connection and more intimacy in all your relationships.

You are also working on getting your financial affairs in order. You are definitely in the mood to step up and take responsibility in order to clear these blocks.

Over the last few years, your inner or spiritual life has been quite active and has played a bigger role in your interests and the choices you make. With regard



to career choices, you are seeking a career that is more internally satisfying, rather than one that is solely aimed at financial security. Your intuition continues to remain strong, and you should follow your gut. This is a very good time for you to be involved in education, travel, or writing your memoirs.

Even in the area of friendships and business associations, you are definitely drawn to more spiritually conscious individuals. It may even be part of your own process to share and teach others about this.

Career opportunities continue to expand throughout the year. If you are looking to take on a new project, or even to start your own business, this is a very good year for it. Overall conditions continue to improve even more after mid-year.

Your ruler, Venus (planet of love and money), is retrograde from mid-July through mid-September. This is a more introspective time for you and an opportunity to look back at your choices and decisions. This is also a good time for review, but not a good time for committing to new projects. That needs to wait until after mid-September.

GEMINI (May 21–June 21)

For the last few years, the twins of Gemini have had a difficult time getting clear about long-term security and choices in their lives. You are feeling much more determined to take some action in your life as Saturn, planet of structure and discipline, makes contact with your sign. Saturn is an action-oriented planet and expects you to make some decisions and choices about your life, even if you are not sure that they are the right ones. This will definitely help lift your career energies and encourage new goals for the future. This energy is strong in the first four months of 2015, and even stronger in the last four months of the year. Career energies could be confusing, especially for those of you born in the first 10 days of the sign. You



need to express your creative and artistic side and find something that satisfies you, both internally and externally. Get ready to make some decisions!

Relationships take on a much more serious tone this year. Overall, you are examining the long-term worthiness of the relationships that you are in, or want to consider being in. This year is a very good time for making long-term commitments involving marriage or business partnerships. Some relationships may have outlived their usefulness, and you are ending those.

Friendships are hard to maintain this year because of your changing views and your improved ability to express a deeper perspective about your emotional side. You do not cater to people as easily, and you demand more integrity from others. This could be a good time to get involved in community activities geared toward social change. These energies will not diminish until 2016.

More ASTROCAST on page 68

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CANCER (June 22–July 22)

Cancerians have been under the powerful influence of the Uranus-Pluto square, an extended period of social upheaval and demands for social equality. Having begun its influence near the end of 2007, the tense energy of Uranus-Pluto continues well through the end of 2015.

Your career sector continues through a period of reinvention. You are interested in new projects, and you become increasingly bored with what you have already accomplished. If you are in school, this may make it hard to choose a degree plan. This is a time when you want to express your own uniqueness. It's a favorable time to start a new career, and your intuitive attraction to something makes that decision for you.



Evaluating relationships is part of this ongoing process. You are letting go of the previous ways you constructed relationships as you look for a new and more emotionally intimate connection than you have ever had. For your personal relationships, this is a period of review and renewal. This can be a time when you find a greater level of comfort in your relationships than you have ever known before, but this comes about through releasing fear and letting go of old patterns of interaction. In the process, some relationships may end up not being renewed. March and December are both strong times for this energy.

Lastly, this is an important time to pay attention to your health. You are more likely to have problems that are chronic, rather than developing new conditions or dramatically manifesting existing conditions. Don't wait for them to get drastic again. This is a very good time for you to renew or tweak your health regimens.

LEO (July 23–August 22)

In general, this continues to be a good year for Leos. You are getting good support for expansion and intellectual curiosity as you move forward with an intended goal in mind. You are experiencing a lot more positive flow of energy in your life. This is a great time to take action on the things that are important to you. The first half of the year has the most positive energy flow, and the latter half favors a more task-oriented approach. But either way, you are moving forward and making some decisions in your life.

Career-wise, this could be a very good time for you to be really clear about your own specific plans. This is a good time to lay down the foundation upon which to build things.

Your family-related energies are going through



a time when everyone seems to be aging. Longtime family roles are shifting as children grow up and are expected to take on more adult roles. Traditions that have always been a part of your life may no longer have the same appeal. This can be a good time to invest in real estate or do repairs on your home.

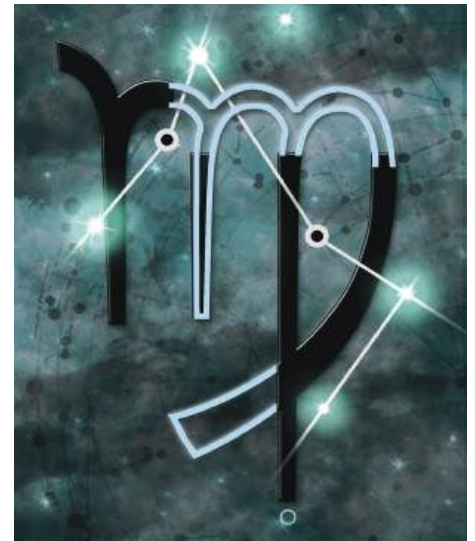
The last four months of the year will be a very good time for you to push forward with any plans you have been considering. Money doesn't seem to be a problem through 2015, except that you may want to spend more than usual in the second half of the year.

Your work and home routines (or what's left of them) continue to shift and change through the end of 2015. This can mean constant changes in your work environment, problems with computers and electronic media, or just the natural decay brought on by time. Because of all this, it may be difficult to stick with a health or exercise program. However, it is best to get out there and do something. You can worry about consistency later.

VIRGO (August 23–September 22)

You have been missing some of your usual drive and determination. You seem to have drifted off course and aren't sure what you want to do or how to get where you want to go. Nevertheless, during 2015 you are re-examining long-term goals, creating better personal boundaries, and creating a safer and more secure place to live.

In 2011, you had a shift in consciousness as you began to search for deeper meaning in your life. This distracted you from your normal desire to help others and increase efficiency in your own life. You've had to focus on, and rescue, yourself. This year, Virgoans, you begin to incorporate some of your newfound interests into your life, and even into your career.



Changes are occurring in the family. Family members are aging, and this may be your time to step into the role of family matriarch/patriarch. If you are a parent, this can be a time of cutting the cord with your children. If you are the child, this is a time when you will want to take on more responsibility and be treated like an adult. This is a great time to work on making your home a safer and more comfortable place.

Be sure to get all of your ducks in a row as Jupiter, planet of expansion and optimism, enters your sign in August for a one-year visit. This is an especially busy time in your life, and generally favorable for most things that you will want to do. It could be a good time to expand your business, go back to school, start a new relationship, travel, or even get married. Those things won't be a panacea with great rewards and benefits, but it does make everything run a little smoother. Enjoy the ride!



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Dan Stevens (former *Downton Abbey* star)

(*The Daily Mail*, 9/4/14, Sophie Jane Evans)



Stevens, a former star of the period drama *Downton Abbey*, was appearing on the ITV breakfast show [*Good Morning Britain*] to promote his thriller film *The Guest* [pictured].

But he was left in a fit of laughter after [Susanna] Reid used some unfortunate phrasing to ask him if he had to fight off competition from American actors to land the lead role.

The presenter asked: "This is you as an all-American and a big opportunity for you in Hollywood. You must have had to beat off a lot of American men to get this part."

Stevens immediately burst into giggles, while members of the studio could be heard laughing loudly in the background.

Seemingly oblivious, Reid then asked: "Why does that make you giggle? Did you not have to beat them off?" Her co-host Ben Shephard tried to salvage the interview, quickly adding: "Actually, to get the role, I can imagine there were quite a few men up for the role as well."

As Stevens continued to laugh, Reid appeared to realize her blunder and told him: "Compose yourself."



Brock Ciarlelli (actor, ABC's *The Middle*)

(*The Backlot on logoonline*, 12/3/14, Jim Halterman)

Jim Halterman: Having talked to [*The Middle*] creators Eileen Heisler and DeAnn Heline before, I know they've never set out to define [your character] Brad in terms of his sexuality. Do you agree with that?

Brock Ciarlelli: Yeah. I mean I think obviously the basis of the joke is that I think everyone kind of has this idea or suspicion, but Sue [Brad's ex-girlfriend, but they are still friends] and Brad are the only two people completely oblivious to it. I also think that tells so much in respect to Brad as a character—that that's not a defining thing for him and that's completely okay. The things that matter to him are his passions, his likes, his interests, and his friendships.



Kathy Griffin

Re: Griffin named to succeed Joan Rivers as the host of Fashion Police.

"I get it! These are some big shoes I'm going to fill. Joan was truly one of a kind. Now I hope you will accept me for me. I'm just Kathy. Did I say I'm just Kathy? I meant I'm Kathy F*ing Griffin, and you celebrities better strap yourselves in, as I am taking no prisoners. I am not holding back, so DAMMIT, let's have some fun!"**

EDITOR'S NOTE: Griffin's debut on E!'s Fashion Police is January 12, which is dedicated to the previous night's Golden Globe awards.

And the winner is: in a 2010 episode of *Kathy Griffin: My Life on the D List*, Griffin is a judge at a California Gold Coast Pageant for toddlers. Since there's no way she's going to miss out on winning an award, she enters the pageant and wins the "Elegant Lady" award. She says, "This is the happiest day of my life" . . . until now, when she's been named to succeed Joan Rivers as host of *Fashion Police*.

Greg Berlanti

(Entertainment Weekly, 12/5/14, Tim Stack)

"I really wanted a gay kiss between Jack [Kerr Smith] and another character [on *Dawson's Creek*]," he explains. "[The network and the studio] were like, 'If you take the job and it goes well, you can have a gay guy kiss another gay guy.'" Berlanti

*(out writer/director/producer who has been involved in *Dawson's Creek* and *Brothers & Sisters*, and who is now executive producing *Arrow* and *The Flash*)*

got his kiss, a major moment for the show and television history—not to mention a personal victory. "I grew up without any gay representation [on TV] except for the thinly veiled [kind]," says the writer, who will introduce a gay villain in the January 27 episode of *The Flash*. . . . The Flash

was the [superhero] I was the most emotionally invested in [as a child]," says Berlanti. "He was the first one to make me cry. He was the sweet one of the group, and at the end of the day, you never thought he would be the one to save everybody, but he was." To anyone who's worked with Berlanti, that description probably sounds familiar.

EDITOR'S NOTE: out bi actor Andy Mientus plays the part of The Flash's hearing-impaired and openly gay villain Hartley Rathaway, aka the Pied Piper. The Flash airs on The CW on Tuesdays at 7 p.m. CST.



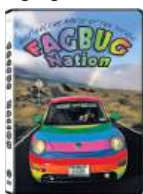
Flashy smile: Greg Berlanti (second from left) is pictured with other *Flashers* (from left): Tom Cavanagh, Grant Gustin, executive producer Andrew Kreisberg, and Jesse L. Martin at The CW's 2014 Summer Television Critics Association Session in California.



by
Megan
Smith

DVD Shorts

Fagbug Nation



In 2007, Erin Davies' VW Beetle was vandalized with a graffiti slur while she was at a Pride event. Rather than be ashamed of what happened, the art-teacher-turned-activist drove around with the word *fag* on her car for a year before getting it remodeled as the "Fagbug." She then hit the road with her loud, out, and proud message to raise awareness of LGBT rights. *Fagbug Nation* takes you behind the wheel of what it's like to drive the now-famous Fagbug. With six years of touring under her belt, the director and activist had her mind set on getting her car to all 50 states, Hawaii and Alaska being the final two. To pull this off, she went 54 days without a car as it traveled on five boats, and she flew on 14 planes. The Fagbug gets lei'd in Hawaii and drives into the midnight sun in Alaska. While on the road, Davies meets a diverse cast of characters and recounts what she's experienced over the past half-decade: praise (from those who have been helped to find their own voices), condemnation (from bigots and from those within the LGBT community who don't agree with her methods), confusion, and applause. Watch as this rainbow-striped Beetle serves as a catalyst for our national journey on the road to equality. Garden Thieves Pictures (fagbug.com). —*Suzie Lynde*

More DVD Shorts at
OUTSMARTMAGAZINE.COM.

'The Skeleton Twins'

Two-of-a-kind



Two halves make a whole: in *The Skeleton Twins*, Kristen Wiig (l) and Bill Hader play estranged twins who find that reconnecting with one another may be the solution to fixing their broken lives.

Unpopular opinion: I didn't find director Craig Johnson's *The Skeleton Twins* to be "really funny," as so many critics have claimed. And going into a movie that stars *Saturday Night Live* veterans Kristen Wiig and Bill Hader, funny is what's to be expected. Instead, I'm going to agree with *Rolling Stone* when it called the film "heart-crushingly real." *The Skeleton Twins* gives you the unexpected—an honest, character-driven story. And that's exactly what makes this film absolutely superb.

The film opens with dental hygienist Maggie Dean (Wiig) staring at a fistful of sleeping pills—on the brink of committing suicide—when her phone rings. Her twin brother, Milo (Hader), is in the hospital after slitting his wrists in a suicide attempt of his own. Just like a sibling to mess up your plans for the day.

Milo, a failed Hollywood actor, is lonely and depressed following a recent breakup with his boyfriend. When Maggie arrives at the hospital, it's the first time the twins have seen each other in 10 years. In an attempt to break the silence,

Milo jokes, "Look at me, another tragic gay cliché."

Maggie, being a loyal sister despite their estrangement, insists that Milo should come to stay with her and her husband, Lance (Luke Wilson), in their upstate New York hometown. Lance reads like an inspirational-quote poster—an easygoing man's man whose positive outlook on life is annoyingly over-the-top. He and Maggie make for an oddball couple—instead of their personalities balancing each other out, they exaggerate each other's extremes. The more depressed she becomes, the more he seems to try and compensate.

The reason behind the twins' estrangement isn't initially addressed, but it's soon revealed that it's due—at least in part—to an inappropriate affair that Milo had with one of his high school English teachers, Rich (Ty Burrell), as a teenager. Soon after Milo moves in with Maggie, he looks up Rich (who is still closeted, living with his girlfriend and son) in an attempt to rekindle their flame.

Although Milo is now an adult, the vibe that Rich gives off when the two are together

still feels predatory. Rich gives Milo false hope by sleeping with him, only to treat him coldly the following morning. His true motive, we find out, is to have Milo read his film script, as he's under the impression that Milo is a successful actor with an agent back in Los Angeles.

Maggie has some skeletons in her closet as well. Although she's finally found the "nice guy" every girl seems to desperately seek, she's not in love or even satisfied with her marriage. Instead, she's secretly having sex with her scuba instructor—something that doesn't fulfill her either. Caught up in what seems to be an endless funk, Maggie also hides her birth control around the house instead of telling her husband she's not ready to have kids. As Milo says, "He's good. Maybe good isn't your thing."

Despite the serious subject matter, there are some delightfully comedic moments—in Wiig and Hader's signature crowd-pleasing style—scattered throughout the film. The pair rocks a hilarious lip-sync scene to the '80s hit "Nothing's Gonna Stop Us Now," and the look on an intoxicated Milo's face when he goes to a local gay bar looking to pick up someone, only to find out it's "dyke night," is priceless.

Like most twins, Maggie and Milo share each other's pain and failures without even trying. But the most beautiful part of the story is when the pair realizes that the solution to fixing their situations may lie in fixing their relationship with one another.

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by
David
Goldberg

Television Short

Empire

Love, war, family, sacrifice, money, and music—that's what openly gay Academy Award-nominee Lee Daniels and Emmy Award-winner Danny Strong bring us with their fiery new TV drama, *Empire*.

• Hip-hop king Lucious Lyon (Terrence Howard) appears to be unstoppable. Once a street kid selling drugs to support himself, Lyon is now a talented music artist and CEO of Empire Entertainment—a company he built from the ground up. But when he is diagnosed with ALS and learns he has less than three years before he is left debilitated, he must quickly groom one of his three sons to be his successor. • What ensues



MICHAEL LAVINE/FOX

is an emotional chess game between brothers—the youngest, Hakeem (Bryshere Gray), a talented but spoiled and fame-hungry artist; the middle son, Jamal (Jussie Smollett, pictured), an openly gay musical prodigy whose sexual orientation angers his father; and the eldest, Andre (Trai Byers), the business-minded CFO of Empire who falls short in charisma. Lyon's ex-wife, Cookie (Taraji P. Henson), is also thrown into the mix after she's released from prison early and claims to have rights to half the company. • The show is produced by Strong, Daniels, and openly gay Illene Chaiken (*The L Word*), among others. *Empire* premieres January 7 at 8 p.m. CST on Fox. —Megan Smith

'Shameless'

Father does not know best



CHUCK HODES/SHOWTIME

Modern family guys: Mickey Milkovich (Noel Fisher, l) and Ian Gallagher (Cameron Monaghan) are passionate lovers who often have messy confrontations on Showtime's *Shameless*.

Over the past few years, TV has blossomed with more diverse portrayals of gender and sexual identity, with series like *Orange Is the New Black* and *Transparent* blowing the past away. But there are few spaces in our culture that celebrate the alternative, self-made families seen on *Family Guy* and *Modern Family* and reject the conservative stay-at-home-mom model. Many of us don't belong with our parents in the suburbs anymore. *Shameless*, which begins its fifth season on Showtime on January 11, has a different message for sons and daughters who want to embrace their difference: father does not know best. In fact, he might even be a total moron.

Frank Gallagher (William H. Macy) personifies this ideal. As Chicago's most unkillable alcoholic, Macy roars around the screen like a genie out of the bottle: manic, fearless, and nonplussed by consequences. He lives by his own hobo code, replete with political philosophy

that none of his bar-mates want to hear. He wakes up in all manner of places: dumpsters, under the snow, and once, in Mexico.

But at least Frank is consistent; his six children know not to expect any parental support. Led by Fiona (Emmy Rossum), the Gallagher brood relies on one another to maintain their decrepit home and make the gas bill. Together with their neighborhood friends, they build a family dynamic on survival and

exhibit symptoms of his mother's bipolar disorder, his siblings share looks of concern, but not of surprise. For the Gallaghers, inheritance is nothing more than a time bomb.

But it's not all that grim, really. *Shameless* is driven by the same daredevil mania as *American Horror Story* or even *Jackass*, and at its best portrays sickening behavior as a part of survival. Frank has outdone himself every season: he's been used

as a drug mule, tried his hand at male prostitution, and lost—and regained—a liver. I'd love a whirl in 3D, if only to better enjoy

William H. Macy roars around the screen like a genie out of a bottle.

the phantasmagoria of shattering beer bottles, dripping sweat, gushing fluids, exposed buttocks, and the occasional cadaver.

Sex on *Shameless* may take place behind bodega freezers and under bridges, but it has never felt detached, especially for Ian and his thug lover, Mickey (Noel Fisher). Their passionate and dependability, not on moral hierarchies. "I trust you," Fiona says to her first love, Steve. "That's bigger to me than 'I love you.'" With Frank doing God-knows-what God-knows-where, it's up to Fiona to hold the family together. But with a penchant for dangerous men and self-destructive behavior, Fiona may be inching toward her father's legacy. The other siblings are not that far off, either. Lip (Jeremy Allen White), blessed with an abnormally high IQ, could be bound for greatness, but with every stumble, he convinces himself that he will never leave the neighborhood. When Ian (Cameron Monaghan) begins to

the phantasmagoria of shattering beer bottles, dripping sweat, gushing fluids, exposed buttocks, and the occasional cadaver.

Sex on *Shameless* may take place behind bodega freezers and under bridges, but it has never felt detached, especially for Ian and his thug lover, Mickey (Noel Fisher). Their passionate and

often bloody confrontations return a sense of curiosity and even danger to gay sexuality on TV. Not every couple needs to be nice, or suburban, or safe.

Like *Game of Thrones*, *Shameless* has a bad habit of punishing its female characters for no good reason. Particularly disappointing are Lip's girlfriends, who have all acted like jealous psychopaths when meeting one another. Mandy (Emma Greenwell), Lip's most consistent love, has suffered too many physical wounds of poor creative taste over the years. The writers of *Shameless* flirt masterfully with taboo, but their missteps in certain touchy areas have left too many characters—dare I say it?—shamed.

The show has careened into nonsense and lost its moral footing before, and likely will again. But *Shameless*' mission to portray outsiders at the extreme edge of the American dream will likely never get stale. The Gallagher children have a great many hereditary woes to contend with, and some will likely succumb to the shadow of their parents. No matter how strong our self-made families are, we can never escape our upbringing. But who wouldn't want to watch us try?

Shameless' fifth season premieres Sunday, January 11, at 8 p.m. CST on Showtime (sho.com).

David Goldberg is a regular contributor to *OUTSMART* magazine.

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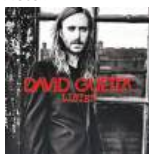
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by
Gregg
Shapiro

GrooveOut Shorts

David Guetta
Listen



This is a sophisticated, varied, and emotional collection of classic songs. It's not all peaks and pool parties—there are moments of uncertainty and introspection. Still, this being a Guetta album, it sounds like a good time.

Musically, this is Guetta's most ambitious work yet—a blend of live instrumentation and precision-programmed technology. And there are a series of genre-bending collaborations: John Legend, the Script, Nicki Minaj, Sam Martin, Sia, and many more. Atlantic Records (atlanticrecords.com). —Troy Carrington

Calvin Harris
Motion



Harris' new album features his triple-platinum hit "Summer," in addition to the recently released chart-climber

"Blame." Featured guests on Motion include John Newman, Ellie Goulding, HAIM, Gwen Stefani, Big Sean, Tinashe, R3hab, and more. For the second consecutive year, the Grammy-winning musician has been named the world's highest-paid DJ by *Forbes* magazine. Columbia Records (columbiarecords.com). —Suzie Lynde

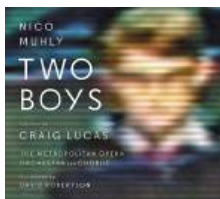
More GrooveOut Shorts
at OutSmartMagazine.com.

Classically Queer

Nico Muhly, Sharon Isbin, Cameron Carpenter, and more

Recorded live during the Met's 2013 season, the double disc *Two Boys* (Nonesuch) is queer classical composer Nico Muhly's collaboration with gay playwright Craig Lucas (*Prelude to a Kiss*, *The Light in the Piazza*). Lucas' cautionary tale of murder and intrigue involving the Internet and the police is set in 2001 and follows luddite detective inspector Anne Strawson (mezzo-soprano Alice Coote) as she is thrust into the technological realm of the 21st century while investigating the stabbing of one boy (Jake, portrayed by Christopher Bolduc and Andrew Pulver) by another older boy (Brian, portrayed by Paul Appleby). This thoroughly modern opera, sung in English, is accessible even to the most hesitant and inexperienced opera listener.

Nico Muhly is also present on *Music for Heart and Breath*



(Universal Music Classics/Deutsche Grammophon), composed by Richard Reed Parry of the Grammy Award-winning Canadian band Arcade Fire. As you might expect, heart and breath play a vital role in these compositions performed by Muhly, Parry, and Kronos Quartet/yMusic. Described as a "series of compositions that use involuntarily moving organs of the human body [such as the lungs and heart] as performance parameters," according to Parry, the concept is "less about 'performance' in the traditional musical sense," and more about translating "the quiet internal rhythms of the body" into music. On that level, Parry certainly succeeds.

Lesbian classical guitarist Sharon Isbin is fêted with the eponymous five-disc box set on Warner Classics. Encompassing three of Isbin's

recordings released between 1997 and 2004, the five Teldec and Warner Classics albums do a solid job of spotlighting Isbin's outstanding fretwork and guitar skills. These albums—*Journey to the Amazon* (on which she is joined by saxophonist Paul Winter), *Dreams of a World* (featuring folk-inspired guitar music by Theodorakis and others), *Guitar Concertos* (with music composed by Christopher Rouse and Tan Dun), *Baroque Favorites for Gui-*

tar (with compositions by Bach and Vivaldi), and *Concierto de Aranjuez* (featuring the music of Rodrigo, Villa-Lobos, and Ponce) are all splendid achievements, each complementing the other.

Queer organist Cameron Carpenter's *If You Could Read My Mind* (Sony Classical) is his most daring album by far, and marks the debut recording of his International Touring Organ. While it's probably unlikely that Carpenter (an OUTSMART coverboy in 2013) will ever achieve the kind of crossover success that he rightfully deserves (perhaps a dance remix would do the trick), it's not hard to admire his substantial talent. What's especially striking is the inclusion of both original compositions (such as "Music for an Imaginary Film"), as well as his renditions of 20th-century pop tunes, including the Gordon Lightfoot-penned title tune, Burt Bacharach's "Alfie," Leonard Cohen's "Sisters of Mercy," and Anthony Newley and Leslie Bricusse's "Pure Imagination." The limited deluxe edition of *If You Could Read My Mind* includes a DVD containing the doc *Birth of the International Touring Organ*.

Beginning with 1990's acclaimed Cole Porter tribute *Red Hot + Blue*, which featured

a stellar assortment of queer and queer-friendly artists, including Sinead O'Connor, Jimmy Somerville, Erasure, k.d. lang, Annie Lennox, U2, Debbie Harry and Iggy Pop, and the late Kirsty MacColl and the Pogues, singing Porter tunes, the Red Hot Organization launched a series of AIDS fundraising albums that continue to be issued to this day. Covering a variety of genres (indie, country, dance, Latin, Brazilian, African, alternative, and jazz, to mention a few) and calling on an incredible array of talent (Antony, Sharon Jones, David Byrne, Grizzly Bear, Meshell Ndegocello with Herbie Hancock, Bebel Gilberto, Angelique Kidjo, George Michael, Natalie Merchant, Smashing Pumpkins, Patti Smith, Bob Mould, Pavement, Dolly Parton, Wilco with Syd Straw, and Future Bible Heroes), the Red Hot compilations are something to look forward to, and all in the name of a worthy cause. *Red Hot + Bach* (Masterworks), one of the Red Hot Organization's 2014 releases, is akin to the work that Cameron Carpenter is doing in that it features a variety of hip artists (such as Chris Thile, Mia Doi Todd, Shara Worden, and Julianna Barwick) performing the music of J.S. Bach for an audience (read: generation) that might not necessarily have Bach in its iTunes playlist.

Gregg Shapiro is a regular contributor to *OUTSMART* magazine.



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by
Kit van
Cleave

ReadOut Shorts

Tepid Tea
Luke Fremont



When a CEO sues her company for discrimination, her attorney taps Chris Jacobs for the legal team. For Jacobs, the case resurrects painful memories of prior

heroics and unravels restraints binding a tightly controlled and long-denied secret—a secret that turns his wife against him. The novel touches hearts and minds through the trauma suffered by victims of race, gender, and sexual orientation. Fremont blends the psychology of internalized oppression with the emotions and moments of life for a striking portrayal of our capacity to hate and our ability to love. Harken Media (harkenmedia.com). —*Suzie Lynde*

Porn Again: A Memoir
Josh Sabarra

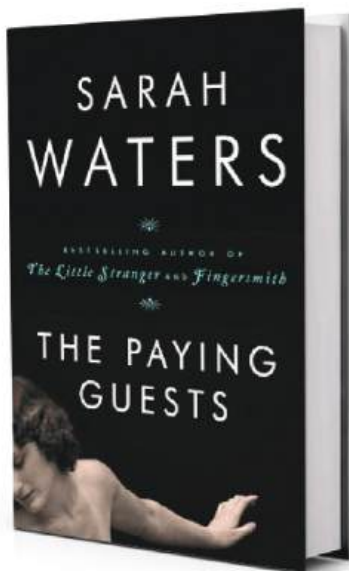


Sabarra throws open the proverbial closet—and bedroom—doors, taking readers on a Hollywood thrill-ride through growing up, coming out, coming-of-age, and, finally, finding

himself at 40. The shame and contempt that grew from his sexuality locked him in a prison of self-hate that robbed him of an emotional and sexual identity for more than three decades. Movie studio jobs led to relationships, but they created a false sense of acceptance and approval, requiring that he continue to up the stakes. Poignant, heartbreaking, glamorous, sexy, and hilariously honest. Self-published (joshsabarra.com). —*Troy Carrington*

Paying More than Asked

'The Paying Guests' by Sarah Waters



The Paying Guests
by Sarah Waters
2014 • Riverhead Books
(penguin.com)
576 pages • \$28.95
Hardcover

of *One's Own*, 1928)—were held up as cautionary tales for a younger generation. *The Well of Loneliness* was only allowed to be openly distributed in 1948, after

Hall's death. Wilde and Hall both paid mightily for their open lives.

But England has produced many out lesbian writers in recent years. Best known in America are Emma Donohue, Sarah Waters, and Jeanette Winterson, all of whom are critically admired and popular with the reading public. Less well-known but fine writers are Clare Ashton, H.P. Munro, crime novelist Val McDermid, and Jackie Kay.

Winterson's first novel (*Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, 1985) won her almost instant celebrity and a shelf of awards, including an OBE. Donohue writes great fiction for both a general audience and gay women, but her overview of lesbian writing over the centuries (*Inseparable: Literature between Women*, 2010) is a must-read.

Sarah Waters' first novel, *Tipping the Velvet*, was both a shocker and a great work in 1998. The title refers to a Victorian pornographic name for cunnilingus, so it was clear from the beginning that this book was going to be both romantic and erotic. Moreover, the BBC made a film from the

book, which followed closely the adventure of young Nan, who fell in love with a male impersonator, Kitty, and followed her to London. Later Nan becomes a male impersonator herself, in an act with Kitty, to bond the couple closer together.

From the oeuvres of Donohue, Waters, and Winterson, Americans have learned more about the fluidity of female sexual identity and gender, which has existed for centuries in Europe and the U.K. What had been largely ignored is the lesbian love affair, which has never received the kind of literary acceptance like male classics such as Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* or Somerset Maugham's *The Razor's Edge*.

Now Waters' newest novel, *The Paying Guests*, has again been praised by critics, and named an Amazon Best Book of 2014 and a top book by Barnes and Noble. It reflects a prominent historical time, 1922, between the two World Wars, when England was suffering the loss of many of its young men, and in anticipation of yet another war with Germany. Yet because of Waters' skill and detail, the novel is achingly contemporary.

Mrs. Wray and her daughter, Frances, 26, live together in reduced circumstances after the death of their husband and father, who left a nasty pile of debts. To make ends meet, they agree to rent part of their large family home to a married couple of lower class. (Class, lesbian sexuality, and the place of women in the U.K. through the years are all familiar Waters themes.) So Leonard and Lilian Barbour move in with the Wrays. The small rent the Barbours pay is enough to relax the Wrays about their debts and to keep their home.

Frances has been aware of her lesbianism for some time; she had a romance with Christina, but they remained friends after an embarrassing end to their affair (discovery, drama, separation). Her solution is to be celibate and work hard within the family home, doing all those tasks once done by servants when the Wrays were more financially secure.

While Leonard is at work, Lilian reads, smokes, pampers herself, and rearranges furniture. Obviously, she is bored. What interrupts her ennui is one of the most earth-shaking events she could have imagined—a deep passion she had never anticipated, which cannot be denied. Frances is equally surprised, fascinated, and then lost in the tsunami. All of this leads to a tragedy (two, some readers would say) and twist after twist in this romance-as-mystery novel.

Here's an example of what's waiting on the page: Waters foreshadows the explosion of desire by comparing it with the shelling of a boiled egg on a picnic planned by Lilian and Frances on their first day together, as "... the eggs gave up their shells as if shrugging off cumbersome coats." Elegant bodice-ripping and skirt-lifting follow the shrugging.

Kit van Cleave is a freelance writer living in Montrose. She has published in local, national, and international media. She reviewed Inseparable in the February 2012 issue of OUTSMART magazine; see archives.

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Calendar of Events

Compiled by
Marene
Gustin

'Hotel Volkswagen'

Politician/actor/writer Jón Gnarr is a serious supporter of LGBT rights

Jón Gnarr is sort of like the Icelandic Al Franken—a comedic writer and actor-turned-politician. Except he's funnier. And more brilliant.

He's also a serious supporter of human rights and the LGBT community, having led his city's 2010 Pride parade dressed in drag.

Having finished his four-year stint of mayor of Reykjavík, Iceland, he is returning to his roots, and this month Houstonians will have a chance to sample his wit as Mildred's Umbrella Theater Company hosts the first Texas reading of his play *Hotel Volkswagen*.

gen. The absurdist play follows a man, Palme, and his son, Little Ziggy, whose car breaks down near the Hotel Volkswagen. They check in while the front desk manager, who is also a mechanic, tries to repair the car. But will they check out? Turns out everyone at the hotel has an interesting past, including a gender-bending couple that longs for children and a nostalgic former Nazi. The play premiered in Iceland in 2012, and while many Houstonians may not be familiar with Gnarr, the staged reading will serve as an introduction to his work before he arrives here this spring to serve as the first CENHS



The Icelander cometh: Jón Gnarr, a former politician, returns to his roots with the witty *Hotel Volkswagen*.

Writer-in-Residence at Rice University during the spring semester. While here, he'll work on the third volume of his fictionalized autobiography.

Hotel Volkswagen readings are January 25 and 26 at Mildred's Spring Street Studios. Both performances are pay-what-you-can, with a suggested donation of \$10 to \$20. See mildredsumbrella.com for more details. —Marene Gustin

JANUARY

RADIO

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 JANUARY 7

Shen Yun. Five thousand years of Chinese culture on-stage! Dance, costumes, a live orchestra, and stunning animated backdrops will thrill you. See shenyun.com for times and tickets.

• JANUARY 3

Marcia Ball. See this roadhouse rhythm and blues singer at the Dosey Doe Coffee House in The Woodlands. Visit doseydoe.com for details.

• JANUARY 7 & 21

On This Muddy Water: Voices from the Houston Ship Channel. HGOco presents a free original song cycle celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Houston Ship Channel. See houstongrandopera.org for details.

• JANUARY 7–FEBRUARY 1

My Name Is Asher Lev. Theater LaB Houston kicks off the new year with this play adapted from the novel by Chaim Potok. See thelabhou.org for ticket information.

• JANUARY 9

Diavolo: Architecture in Motion. These dancers, gymnasts, athletes, and actors will thrill and delight audiences. Brought to you by the Society for the Performing Arts, spahouston.org.

• JANUARY 9 & 10

Flashdance: The Musical. The movie we all love is now on stage! See it at Galveston's Grand 1894 Opera House, thegrand.com.

• JANUARY 10

The Hot Box Girls' Crown Jewels. The Hot Box

Girls are a new generation of burlesque starlets who sing, dance, flirt, and tease their way onto the stage and into your hearts. Brought to you by the Society for Performing Arts, spahouston.org.

• JANUARY 11

Steve Tyrell. One performance only of the legendary singer! See him at The Grand 1894 Opera House. See thegrand.com for tickets and information.

• JANUARY 15

Musically Speaking with Andrés. An intimate concert with commentary from Andrés Orozco-Estrada. For more information visit the Houston Symphony at houstonsymphony.org.

Freedom Singer Rutha Mae Harris performs freedom songs. This concert at the Rothko Chapel is free; see rothko.chapel.org for details.

• JANUARY 17

Bayou City Burlesque & Circus Arts Festival. The first festival of its kind in Houston promises to be fun and funky. See bbcfestival.com for details.

• JANUARY 17 & 18

Mozart and Shostakovich. Twin sisters Christina and Michelle Naughton share the Jones Hall stage to perform *Mozart's Concerto for Two Pianos*. For more information visit the Houston Symphony at houstonsymphony.org.

• JANUARY 20

Bahamas performs songs from his new album *Bahamas Is Afie* at Fitzgerald's Downstairs, fitzlivemusic.com.

• JANUARY 20–FEBRUARY 8

The Book of Mormon. The hilarious musical from the creators of *South Park* and *Avenue Q*. Presented by Broadway at the Hobby Center. See houston.broadway.com for tickets and information.

• JANUARY 22–31

Waiting for Johnny Depp. A world premiere of a one-woman musical about fame from TUTS Underground. See tutsunderground.com for ticket information.

• JANUARY 22–FEBRUARY 7

Cloud Tectonics. Mildred's Umbrella presents this unusual romance. See mildredsumbrella.com.

• JANUARY 23

Edward Violinhands. The Juilliard graduate and Itzhak Perlman protégé is a head-turning musician who harnesses performance art, technical prowess, powerful emotion and dynamic staging to transport classical music into pop culture. Brought to you by the Society for the Performing Arts, spahouston.org.

• JANUARY 23 & 24

The Russell Peters Almost Famous World Tour features all new material, plus Peters' lightning fast improv with the audience. See entertainhouston.com for tickets and information.

• JANUARY 23 & 25

Mozart's Abduction. Laugh along to Mozart's humorous *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, filled with colorful and exotic musical themes. For more information visit the Houston Symphony at houstonsymphony.org.

• JANUARY 24

The Romeros, widely credited as the inventors of the classical guitar quartet, perform for one night as part of Da Camera's season. See dacamera.com for ticket information.

• JANUARY 24 & 25

Come and Take It Comedy Take Over. A two-day comedy festival with more than 30 comedy acts, burlesque troops, and live podcasts. See comeandtakeitcomedy.com for details.

The Oak Ridge Boys. One of country music's longest-running groups, The Oak Ridge Boys have one of the most distinctive and recognizable sounds in the music industry. See them at Galveston's Grand 1894 Opera House, thegrand.com.

• JANUARY 25 & 26

Hotel Volkswagen. Mildred's Umbrella presents a

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

reading of this absurdist play from Iceland. See article opposite page and mildredsumbrella.com for times and tickets.

• **JANUARY 25–FEBRUARY 8**

Stargirl. Main Street Theater's emotional tale about first love, the perils of popularity and non-conformity, and the acceptance of others. See mainstreettheater.com for tickets and location details.

• **JANUARY 27**

From Dowland to Britten. Nicholas Phan, tenor, and Eliot Fisk, guitar. A Da Camera concert at The Menil Collection. See dacamera.com for ticket information.

• **JANUARY 29**

The Science of Sound. The Robbins Foundation Symphony Detective Concerts introduce students to the orchestra's key players. For more information visit the Houston Symphony at houstonsymphony.org.

Dancing with the Stars: Live! If you love the TV show, you won't want to miss the live tour featuring a cast of the television show's most popular competitors. See concerts.livenation.com for ticket information.

• **JANUARY 30 & 31**

Sutton Foster. The Tony Award-winning singer, actress and dancer joins the orchestra to help kick off the New Year with a powerhouse song and dance extravaganza. For more information visit the Houston Symphony at houstonsymphony.org.

• **JANUARY 31**

Guys and Dolls. See Damon Runyan's colorful characters with music and lyrics by Frank Loesser at The Grand 1894 Opera House, thegrand.com.

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY

• **THROUGH JANUARY 3**

Ultra Black. Rudolph Blume Fine Art/ArtScan Gallery announces the opening of this two-person exhibition by Mario M. Muller and Randy Twaddle. See rudolphprojects.com.

• **THROUGH JANUARY 4**

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 remarkable undertakings in the 1960s: the space race and development of the artificial heart. See menil.org for details.

Robert Hodge: Destroy and Rebuild. The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston presents this work by Houston-based artist Robert Hodge. Visit camh.org for details.

• **THROUGH JANUARY 5**

Orna Feinstein—Now and Zen: A 15-Year Retrospective. Galveston Arts Center presents a collection of work from Houston-based monoprint artist Orna Feinstein. See galvestonartscenter.org for details.

• **THROUGH JANUARY 10**

Mural by Otabenga Jones & Associate is part of a yearlong commitment to health education at Lawndale Art Center. See lawndaleartcenter.org for details and other exhibits this month.

Liquified. Nicole Longnecker Gallery presents this exhibition featuring new paintings by Ellen Orseck. See longnecker-gallery.com for details.

¿Do Geese See God? An exhibition that discusses where science and mythology overlap features paintings by Jules Buck Jones. At McMurtrey Gallery, mcmurtreygallery.com.

Time Front. Lawndale Art Center presents this installation by Lauren Moya Ford. See lawndaleartcenter.org for details.

Kermit Oliver Exhibit presented by Hooks-Epstein Galleries. Oliver is the only American commissioned to design silk scarves for the French fashion house of Hermes, as part of the space's 45th anniversary. See hooksepsteingalleries.com for details.

• **THROUGH JANUARY 16**

Secret Sandwich. A group exhibition featuring new works from Monica Foote, Jonathan Jardin, Paris Jomadio, Geoff Smith, Alyssa Stephens, and Alonso Tapia. See fresharts.org.

• **THROUGH JANUARY 24**

New-Onset. GalleryHOMELAND presents an exhibition of five artists working in 2D and 3D. See galleryhomeland.org.

• **THROUGH JANUARY 25**

Fangs, Feathers and Fins: Sacred Creatures in Ancient American Art. Spanning nearly 5,000 years, this exhibition explores how peoples of the ancient Americas viewed themselves and the world around them. See mfah.org for details.

• **THROUGH FEBRUARY 1**

Experiments with Truth: Gandhi and Images of →



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Calendar continued from previous page

Nonviolence. Organized by Menil director Josef Helfenstein in consultation with the noted Indian artist Amar Kanwar, the exhibition is the first to trace the resonance of the ethic of nonviolence in the visual arts throughout the centuries and around the world. See menil.org for details.

Monet and the Seine: Impressions of a River chronicles the Impressionist painter's attachment to the Seine by tracing his life along the river. See mfah.org for details.

• **THROUGH FEBRUARY 15**
Traditions Transfigured: The Noh Masks of Bidou Yamaguchi. Contemporary works by the artist exploring the ancient art of Japanese Noh. See asiasociety.org/texas/exhibitions.

• **THROUGH MARCH 1**
Round 41: Process and Action: An Exploration of Ideas features installations by an interdisciplinary group of eight artists, including Rabéa Ballin, Julia Brown, Vanessa Diaz, Akua Holt, Rosine Kouamen, and Monica Villareal at Project Row Houses. See projectrowhouses.org for details.

• **THROUGH MARCH 13**
Double Life. The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston presents this exhibition, which features works by the internationally celebrated artists Jérôme Bel, Wu Tsang, and Haegue Yang. See camh.org for details.

• **THROUGH MARCH 22**
Shark! Get out of the water! Now! The Houston Museum of Natural Science presents this exhibit on all things shark-y. Visit hmns.org for details.

• **JANUARY 3-FEBRUARY 5**
Masks, Monsters and Monoliths. Archway Gallery presents the works of steel sculptor Jim Adams and painter Sherry Tseng Hill. See archwaygallery.com for details.

• **JANUARY 10-FEBRUARY 3**
Veronicas. Brooklyn-based Houstonian Jennifer May Reiland has her first U.S. solo show at Redbud Gallery, the diverse gallery based in the Heights. See redbudgallery.com.

• **JANUARY 10-FEBRUARY 22**
Texas Abstract. This exhibition of more than 20 of the most significant contemporary Texas abstract artists opens to the public free of charge. See galvestonartscenter.org for details.

• **JANUARY 24-JULY 16**
Takis: The Fourth Dimension. The Menil Collection presents the first exhibition in any U.S. museum to survey Takis' half-century of achievements. See menil.org for details.

• **JANUARY 30-SEPTEMBER 20**
The Art of Gaman. An exhibit of the art created by Japanese Americans interred in America during World War II, at the Holocaust Museum Houston. See hmh.org for details.

• **JANUARY 31**
Music of the Spheres. A yearlong exhibit featuring the audio and visual works of artists Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller opens today in the former Byzantine Fresco Chapel at The Menil Collection. See menil.org for details.

GLBT CRUISES & TOUR EVENTS

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AND OTHER THINGS

• THROUGH JANUARY 16

Women in Architecture. An exhibition and events recognizing female architects. See aihouston.org for details.

• JANUARY 19

Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The Children's Museum of Houston celebrates Martin Luther King Jr. with special activities and events for kids. See cmhouston.org for details.

• JANUARY 22

Martini Madness! Bossa Nova Bash. The annual fundraiser for Houston Center for Contemporary Craft features artisan glasses, bottomless martinis, sizzling snacks, and a big-board auction. *Mad Men* dress encouraged. See crafthouston.org.

WINTER EVENTS!

• THROUGH JANUARY 4

Winter Wonderland at Moody Gardens. Visit the island for Moody's Festival of Lights, ice skating, snow tubing, and the new Ice Land exhibit with two million pounds of carved ice sculptures. For details visit moodychristmasshow.com.

• THROUGH FEBRUARY 8

Discovery Green is your ultimate holiday fun destination this winter! With something for every visitor, the downtown park offers an array of activities, including outdoor ice skating in the shadow of Houston's skyline, family-friendly films, themed nights and more! This season also ushers in the arrival of a new dazzling, site-specific art installation by internationally recognized artist Bruce Munro, in addition to the presence of renowned Mexican artist Jorge Marín's *Wings of the City* installation of nine large-scale bronze sculptures placed throughout the park. See discoverygreen.com for details.

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) ■



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Photos by Dalton DeHart

Transgender Day of Remembrance 2014 at the A.D. Bruce Religion Center November 11



AIDS Foundation Houston's World AIDS Day Luncheon at the Westin Galleria December 1



World AIDS Day 2014 Observances: Legacy Community Health and The Montrose Center December 1



Houston Gay and Lesbian Parents' Gingerbread House Building Event at Covenant Baptist Church December 6



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Community

continued from page 16

a small craft/handmade business was born. I want to remind folks that this was in the mid-'90s and there wasn't much consciousness about recycling. I was determined to change that mindset."

In 2000, Neumann purchased a warehouse to use as a woodworking studio. After a few years of ownership, her friends encouraged her to build a second-story addition to make more space for other artists to rent and create in—ultimately creating six studios. "I invested more of my own money and went ahead with designing a working environment primarily out of secondhand found objects," she says. "I just went to town creating an environment for other artists to enjoy working in."

Neumann now works primarily with sign letters and scrap license plates—donating many of her creations back to



Neumann has been repurposing cast-off items found on Houston's streets for over 17 years. Pictured above is one of the many unique features of her artist studio—a sliding door she created entirely out of colorful yardsticks.

the city. The Reuse Center, the Green Building Resource Center, and the in-progress Smither Park adjacent to the University of Houston all display pieces of Neumann's metal letter work.

The artist was overjoyed upon hearing she had won first place in the city's reuse contest, noting it brought tears to her eyes.

"For years I was misunderstood about what I was trying to achieve," Neumann says. "Folks kept saying, 'Are you going to get a job?' Now, to be recognized by my peers for creating something from nothing is a long-awaited taste of validation."

The contest was coordinated by The Reuse Warehouse, a component of the City of Houston Solid Waste Management Department. Judges included Mayor Anise Parker, Solid Waste director Harry Hayes, and Dan Phillips, founder of Phoenix Commotion, a local recycled- and salvaged-material building initiative.

Neumann sells her work in local markets and statewide stores, and encourages others to buy

handmade products from local artisans. She continues to participate in art festivals, galleries, and shows across Texas. "I just hitch up and go," she says. "I feel like I have a new 'license' on life!"

View more of Neumann's art pieces at kiki.neumanncreations.com.

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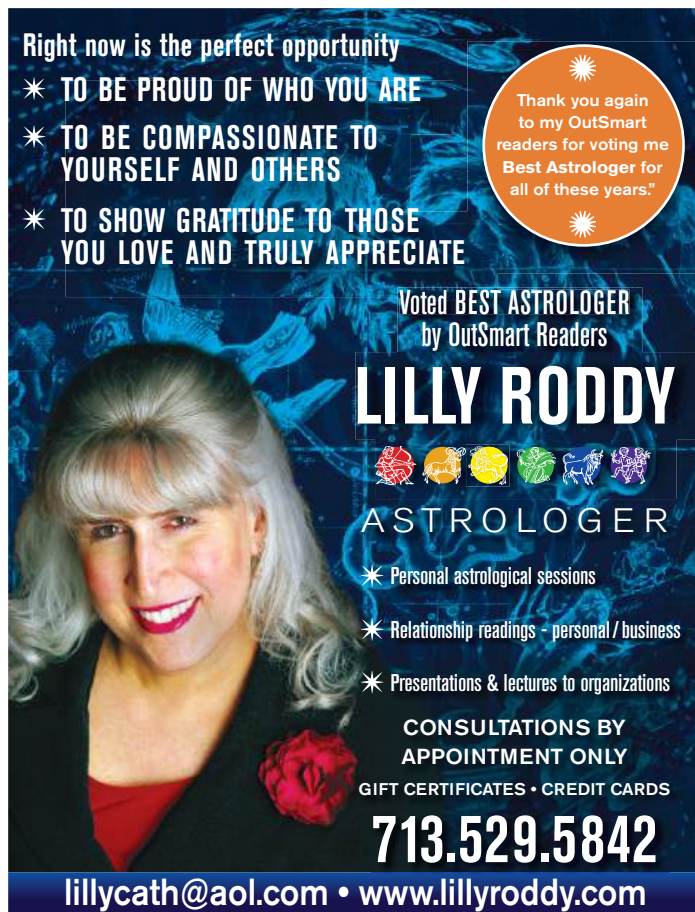
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LIBRA

(September 23–October 23)

Relationships are at the core of how Librans define themselves. You need that mirror on yourself that helps define who you are. Librans create many relationships throughout their lives, and they are obviously not all about romance. This continues to be a time of renewal and revitalization of everything surrounding your relationships. You will certainly be expecting your partner to participate more fully in the relationship. If you are single, you are seeking a relationship with much more built-in independence and freedom. Relationships that don't lend themselves to this renewal and overhaul process may be terminated this year. This energy is especially strong in March and December.



Cleaning out the old basements and family closets is part of your theme this year. This could be a year of needing to do major home repairs or renovations, or possibly even moving. Family members who are elderly seem especially old this year. This is a good time for therapy, because you are also cleaning out your own emotional basement. It's a period of death and rebirth in this area of your life. At times you may feel the need to isolate yourself, and at other times you may feel the need to stand up and be heard. This back-and-forth period lasts through the end of the year.

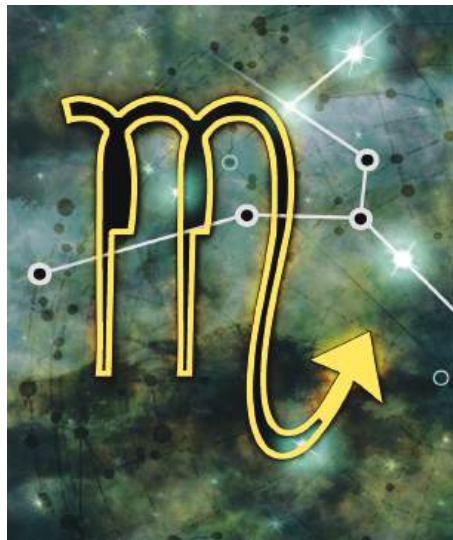
If you are seeking to promote yourself or your business, it's an opportune time to be involved in any kind of community organization or adult education class. But rather than being in charge, you'll be more interested in just taking some kind of position on a board. You are definitely working on your boundaries, and this year you find it easier to tell people "no"—and mean it!

SCORPIO

(October 24–November 21)

In 2014, Scorpions stepped forward and more actively participated in their own lives, careers, and relationship endeavors. This trend continues through 2015, with a slight shift toward more participation in community service-based organizations in the latter half of the year. This is in addition to your focus on career and planning for your future security.

As your focus shifts to planning for your financial future and taking care of past debts, you may feel very trapped or limited in your life. This is a very good time to use some of your talents and skills that you have had locked away for awhile. The universe wants you to expand beyond what you have been doing to generate an income. You definitely feel more creative, and you're slowly moving out of your box.



Mid-year in 2015, you continue working on more stabilizing influences and long-term goals in your current relationships. You are expecting people to grow up and act more adult-like! If they don't, it will be hard for you to tolerate their shenanigans.

This continues to be a good time for you to write, blog, or journal about your day-to-day life and musings. You are trying to change some of your day-to-day routines and generate new interests and activities. This could even be a good time for an exercise class if it has a strong social element to it.

After August, you shift your focus somewhat toward groups and organizations. This is a good time for you to be part of a group, and maybe even take some sort of leadership position. This could be a great place for you to meet new friends or potential romantic partners. Creative energies are much stronger in the second half of the year.

SAGITTARIUS

(November 22–December 21)

For some time now, you travelers and explorers of the Zodiac have not had your usual fire and excitement about life. Many of you have been a lot more internally focused. This year, Saturn (planet of goal setting, career, and boundaries) enters your sign for her approximately 2½-year visit. This is a time for re-assessing and determining what's important in your life at this juncture. You are concerned with creating some sense of long-term security and safety.

For many of you, this can be a time when you have a renewed interest in reestablishing some career goals. You may feel more of a sense of responsibility and want to give back to others in the community. You also have a desire to work on yourself and improve your own presentation.



Relationships are also going through a period of reevaluation and analysis. You do not necessarily want to bring certain relationships to an end, but rather renew your goals and continue on the path that you started.

In the latter half of the year, there are appreciably more opportunities for expanded career options, a more active social life, and a greater ease in dealing with everyday life. This could be an excellent time for you to travel or even venture out with your own project. Part of your past is fading into the background. It was this process that caused you to be more internalized and a bit isolated. You are beginning to move out of that and into a time of more action.

This should be a productive year to start new projects, attempt a new career, go back to school, or set your sights on what interests you the most.

More ASTROCAST on page 89

Photos by Dalton DeHart

OUTSMART'S Holiday Party at Advantage BMW Midtown December 9



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CAPRICORN

(December 22–January 19)

This year, Capricorns continue to experience the same sense of growth and change that they've been experiencing throughout the last six years. This is the last year that these changes are felt at such an intense level. Although it diminishes as we get into 2016, first you have to make it through 2015!

One part of you is going through a time of personal transformation and letting go of many things that you used to think were valuable or essential. The other part of you is looking for new ways to express yourself and break out of your old patterns from the past.

With regard to your career, you may feel that



you are pushed to the edge and have to totally revamp your career and the direction you thought it was heading. You are looking for something that really holds your interest and generates excitement on a daily basis. This year can be a time to take matters into your own hands and do something on your own. Don't be afraid to take a leadership position at your current company and become an agent of change.

Relationships may also seem dicey during 2015, but that's because you are not clear about who you are and what you want. If you open up and ask for your partner's support, you'll find they are ready to help you. Don't fall into the trap of your old belief system that says you are supposed to do everything on your own. You are not alone, and this is a clear example of that.

Make sure you have some time to get away and rest this year. Travel is favored, especially after August.

This year is all about learning about your own power. Don't be afraid to own your potential.

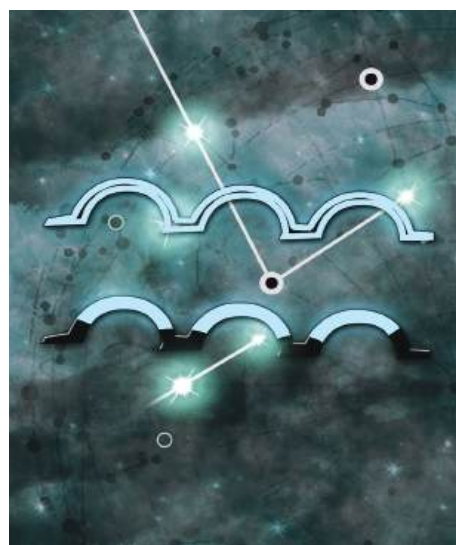
AQUARIUS

(January 20–February 18)

This continues to be a time for Aquarians to pay more attention to personal boundaries, long-term goals, and being more selective about how they use their personal resources.

You are very interested in cleaning up your immediate environment, getting rid of the stacks of things around your house, and working on adding storage and organization to your life. You will be much more conscious about how you use your time this year, and you are not happy if you feel like your time has been wasted.

If you belong to social organizations, this is a time to reassess whether you want to participate. You may be letting go of those connections that don't



serve any purpose in your life. You may also choose to take more of a leadership role in an organization that you still feel connected to.

This can also be a trying time for friendships. You expect your friends to be a lot more responsible and supportive, and if they are not, they may no longer be in your life.

Relationship energies are a lot more positive this year. If you are single, this is a very good year for meeting potential new partners! If you are in a relationship, this year should make it better and create a more positive atmosphere between you and your partner. At the very least, it makes you more social and more verbal.

In the latter half of the year, you desire to create a greater bond with your partner or the important people around you. This is also a very good year for you to write, teach, and really develop your social-media skills.

PISCES

(February 19–March 20)

For some time now, you Pisceans haven't been as clear about your social life or your career direction. You've been much more involved in spending time on personal exploration and discovering who you really are. This exploration continues, but you seek to add some kind of direction, focus, or closure in your life over the next couple of years.

For some of you, this is a time to push forward with career, family, and marriage goals. You are feeling a strong need to participate in society and make your mark! As you exert your authority, you may get pushback from some of the people around you. You won't be so quick this time to adjust to their needs or shift your overall plans. Your boundaries are a lot



better, and you are able to tell people "no."

If you are older, you may find that you are cutting back on some of your activities and doing only the things that really interest you, rather than what is expected of you (as you did when you were younger).

Your relationship arena gets a lot better in the latter half of 2015. If you are involved, this can be an improved time in your relationship; it may even be a time when your partner is very busy and getting a promotion. If you are single and interested in a relationship, this is an excellent time to be out there. You feel more social, and you're not as much of a hermit as you have been over the last couple of years.

The latter half of the year is just better for you socially. If you are unhappy that you haven't created a leadership role for yourself in your current job, it is a good time to seek an alternate career or a new job. ■

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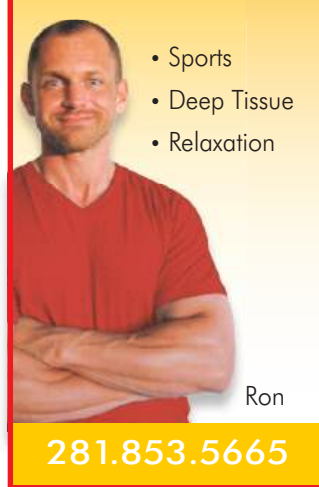


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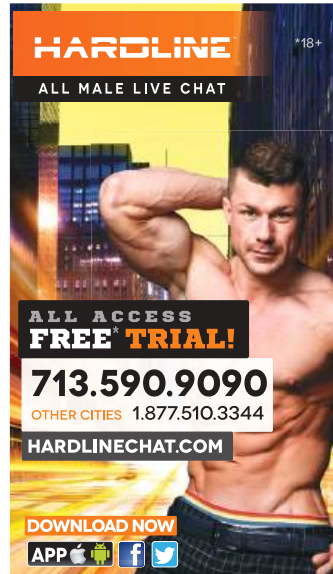
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Bar & Club Guide

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 Tues., Steak Night on Wed., and Wing Night Thurs. DJs nightly. 7 days a week (Mon.-Sat., 7a-2a; Sun., 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 • club2020 houston.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: John "Cookie" Touchette

WHERE: Robert's Lafitte
2501 Avenue Q • 409.765.9092

WHAT'S UP: This Island institution makes its claim as Texas' Oldest Gay Bar. Staff members say Robert's Lafitte will serve as a Mardi Gras headquarters with two parades passing by during the Island's Mardi Gras celebration in February. With the best drink prices in town and some of the friendliest bar staffs around—some fondly known as "Pickles" and "Cookie"—it's easy to understand why the locals belly up to the bar as soon as the doors open. Smoking is still allowed inside.

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. • jr sbarandgrill.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 dancehall is located in the historic Esquire Ballroom and opens Wednesday–Sunday. The new outside patio and stage are open. Wednesday features Steak Night and Bingo. Free dance classes on Thursdays and Karaoke. Saturday night the dance floor fills with the best C&W... check their website for all specials, events and times. 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.SOBEE.

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 • tonyscornerpocketbar.com.

VIVIANA'S

This club, in a new location, appeals to fans of Latino music and drag alike. 4624 Dacoma • 713.681.4104.

Beaumont

ORLEANS STREET PUB AND PATIO

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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

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by
Lilly
Roddy

Get Projects Started before January 16

Review, clean out, reorganize, and revisit your past

Your list of 2015 New Year's resolutions may look a lot like last year's list with Mercury going retrograde on the 16th. Get your projects started before this date, or you will have to wait until February 21 when Mercury is going direct. Use this time to review, clean out, reorganize, and revisit your past. • The second half of the month is very low-energy. We will want to avoid crowds and find more peaceful places since we're just more inwardly focused. It's a good time for yoga, meditation, or tai chi. • The sun starts the month in Capricorn but enters Aquarius on the 20th. Mercury begins in Capricorn, enters Aquarius on the 4th, and remains there for the entire retrograde period. Venus is trudging through Capricorn, entering Aquarius on the 3rd and Pisces on the 27th. Mars is already in Aquarius and enters Pisces on the 12th. Saturn has just entered Sagittarius for the first time in about 28 years. Jupiter remains in Leo, Uranus in Aries, Neptune in Pisces, and Pluto in Capricorn.

ARIES (March 21–April 19). January is always a busy month for you, and this is no exception. You are feeling very action-oriented—ready to make decisions and move forward in your life. You will be making some decisions that affect where your career is going and the viability of your relationships. Get as much done as you can before Mercury goes retrograde on the 16th. With this retrograde, you'll be seeking out old friends and organizations that you haven't connected with in a while.

TAURUS (April 20–May 20). Although the holidays normally find you laid-back until the middle of January, during this past holiday season you were a lot more focused on taking action with your career. With Mercury going retrograde in your career sector, you will be reevaluating your current position and the problems that come up repeatedly. If you need some help or support, contact your friends—they are all too ready to help you. Your home will be a retreat this month, so be sure to make some time to stay there.

GEMINI (May 21–June 21). This month sees you taking a much more laid-back approach to the New Year. With your ruler, Mercury, going retrograde, it's a good time for taking care of what's already on your plate rather than starting something new. Your relationships need to be revitalized. Career energies are much more active, especially after the 12th. You may want to start new projects at work, but it would be best to wait until Mercury is direct on February 21 before you start. You will be experiencing some

delays and frustrations, so look for a good outlet to vent.

CANCER (June 22–July 22). Relationships will get your attention and focus this month, so work at revitalizing those relationships to make them more vibrant than ever. It may feel like you've just "had it" and can't go any further. Your work can be a good escape from some of this. Mercury goes retrograde in the area of your chart that represents emotional and sexual intimacy. This can be a great time to have a real heart-to-heart talk, or to seek out the help of a therapist.

LEO (July 23–August 22). Your upbeat mood continues through January. The first part of the month has you focused on getting your personal habits and routines in order. This is a good time for you to pay attention to your health and to lose weight. Partnerships may be tense while Mercury is retrograde in your relationship sector. Old problems will return, so address them quickly and do away with the drama. The latter half of the month is not as tense.

VIRGO (August 23–September 22). At this time of year you are usually a bit more laid-back and not pushing yourself as hard as you usually do. However, as 2015 begins you're probably more focused than you have been in a long time. It's a very good month to work on improving your health. Mercury (your ruling planet that is going retrograde) will be reminding you that you are ready for a gym membership! Your relationship needs some renewal, so make sure you devote some time to that toward the end of the month.

LIBRA (September 23–October 23). You didn't get much of a break during the holidays, and your life continues to be very busy. There are a lot of demands on you, and you are having to make some choices and decisions even if you feel like you haven't studied every option. Old family issues are resurfacing. You are letting go of what you assumed were your responsibilities as you look for alternate solutions. Your partner is tired of seeing you waiting, and is ready for you to take action. Take some time for yourself in the latter half of the month—you will need it.

SCORPIO (October 24–November 21). You may be feeling a bit overwhelmed by the sense of obligation that you impose on yourself. You are feeling



ILLUSTRATION: DAVID EDUARDO FLORES PEREZ

CAPRICORN (December 22–January 19). Happy birthday to the Capricorns! This is your personal yearly cycle of review and rebirth—the natural time for you to be evaluating where you are and where you need to go. Your finances are under review with Mercury retrograding through your house of money and resources, so it's the perfect time to get that area of your life in order. Make sure you take some time for yourself toward the end of the month—all work and no play makes Jane a dull girl.

a strong urge to plan for your financial future and retirement. Your career area remains positive, even with Mercury retrograde. This retrograde is a good time to reconnect with family members or friends from your past. It's time to take your creativity and put it to a tangible use!

SAGITTARIUS (November 22–December 21). You've already started working on your New Year's resolutions with a very strong, serious tone that is aimed at making your life better. You start the month focused on your financial position as you look for ways to improve and make investments in your future. You are feeling much more connected to your career and to getting ahead. Mercury goes retrograde at mid month, so use this time to get your office and your home cleaned up and organized. Family members are a little grumpy in the latter half of the month.

AQUARIUS (January 20–February 18). You are just beginning to come out of your normal holiday retreat time. The holidays often seem overwhelming and too demanding. Your personal energy level remains strong, and you are happy to work on personal projects. This can be a good time for exercise, especially if it's one of your New Year's resolutions. Mercury is retrograde in your sign from January 16 through February 21—a very introspective time. In some ways it's the ideal time to review your life and reestablish your priorities. Watch your spending in the latter half of January.

PISCES (February 19–March 20). Although you had been enjoying the holidays, they were a bit demanding, even for you. Your career energies are really being highlighted this month and throughout the coming year. In 2015 you will be working on getting that part of your life in order. The latter half of the month is a natural time for you to retreat and have a rest. You will still have a lot of energy for things that you are personally interested in, but not much energy for things that you feel obligated to do. Work can be demanding, but by setting your own boundaries you will prevent others from taking advantage of you.

Read Lilly Roddy's 2015 forecast at OutSmartMAGAZINE.com. For more astro-insight, log on to lillyroddy.com.

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OUT IN HOUSTON



Angela Pisecco, Monyque Starr, Lorraine Schroeder, Dana Hinton, and Lou Weaver honored the memories of those lost to anti-trans hatred at the Houston Transgender Day of Remembrance held at the University of Houston's A.D. Bruce Religion Center on November 22.



On November 24, Tim'm West, Sincerity Lucrezia Macias, Godfrey Plata, Felicia Martin, Jermaine Sylvester, Colin Dempsey, and Rev. Freedom K. D. Gulley participated in Teach for America's "State of Education in LGBTQ America" panel at the Montrose Center.



The Progressive Open Door Christian Center hosted special guest preacher Dr. Thomas Freeman on November 30. Pictured here are Dr. Freeman and Pastah Freedom with members of the Progressive Open Door Christian Center and students of Texas Southern University.



On December 1, AIDS Foundation Houston held its 2014 World AIDS Day Luncheon at the Westin Galleria. In attendance were David Chaumette, Licia Green-Ellis, Council Member Ellen Cohen, Richard Ray, Dominique Sachse, Kelly Young, and Dr. Brandon Brown.



In honor of World AIDS Day, mSociety members and guests came together on December 1 to host their "mSociety Is Facing AIDS" event.



Valentino Rubio, Denise Martin, Kelly Simmons, Bill Baldwin, Anita Goff, and Eddie Tamez celebrated at the Houston Heights Association's 2014 Holiday Party, held at the home of Bill Baldwin on December 5.



On December 6, Bayou City Performing Arts presented its "Making Spirits Bright: A Holiday Tradition" concert at the Heinen Theatre in Midtown. Pictured here are Charles Cole, Jacobi Montgomery, Kenneth Clayborne, David Schulz, Tola Ouk, and Steven Shannon.



Katie Caldwell, Chree Boydston, Kathryn Smith, and Jeff Smith at Legacy Community Health Services' 2014 Schmooze fundraiser, held at the home of Kathryn and Jeff Smith on December 10.



The Bayou City Boys Club (BCBC) held a holiday party and toy drive benefiting Texas Children's Hospital's Pediatric Clinical Trials Group and Baylor International Pediatric AIDS Initiative on December 7. Pictured here are representatives from BCBC, Texas Children's Hospital, and Baylor.



On December 10, Bering Omega Community Services held its "Bingo Bells" event at Fox Hollow. Pictured here are members of the organization's young professionals board, staff, and event performers.



The SD15 Democrats, Greater Heights Democratic Club, Oak Forest Area Democrats, and Spring Branch Democrats joined together at Boulevard Realty on December 17 for their "Happy Ho Ho Holiday Party." Pictured here are Democratic-elected officials joined by Lenora Sorola-Pohlman, Fredericka Phillips, and Harris County Democratic Party Chair Lane Lewis.

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