JANUARY 1999 • COMPLIMENTARY

OutSmart

Houston's Gay & Lesbian Monthly Magazine



TIME IS ON OUR SIDE

30 Years of Houston Gay History

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE
A Really Progressive Dinner
The Very Gay Legislature

Do the Time Warp

Where We've Been in 30 Years

by Melissa Valenzuela

It's astounding. Time is fleeting. Madness takes its toll—and it has for the gay community in the past 30 years. In the beginning—the very beginning—there were drag queens. From the dazzle of the Diana Foundation's beautiful, flamboyant she-sters of the 1950s to the roaring political quests of today, the gay community has been through it all. But the gay community did not peek much from behind the closet doors until the 1970s, when *OutSmart* begins its look at where the gay community has been.

YEAR: 1970

MILESTONE: Integrity Houston founded

HAPPENING: Even as political allies dwindled to a short demise, Integrity survived and thrived, in part because of its honest realism that a radical calling to restructure society was too ambitious during this confining era. Members of Integrity met faithfully at the old Holy Rosary Church on Travis where they mounted assertive political strategies for homosexual rights.

YEAR: 1973

MILESTONE: Houston Gay Political Coalition

HAPPENING: Making political waves of its own was the GPC, a painful nag to City Council. On two occasions, members demanded an end to job discrimination and police harassment, recognition of gay minorities by the Human Relations Council, and a proclamation designating June 24-30 as Gay Pride Week. They were met with impudent resistance, including these words from Councilman Frank Mann, "You're abnormal. You need to see a psychiatrist instead of City Council."

YEAR: 1975

MILESTONE: Texas Human Rights Foundation challenges sodomy article 21.06

HAPPENING: With no hope that Texas legislators would repeal 21.06 during this year's legislation, the foundation filed Baker vs. Wade in the U.S. District Court. Its handpicked plaintiff, Donald Baker, went up against Dallas' elite Christian devotee Henry Wade. Baker filed suit claiming 21.06 violated his constitutional right to privacy and equal protection under the law. His case was not heard until 1981, when the court unanimously ruled in favor of Wade.

YEAR: 1977

MILESTONE: Human Rights Rally

HAPPENING: More than 3,000 gay and lesbian protesters gathered in the Depository Bar parking lot on McGowen Street and marched by candlelight to the Houston Public Library to protest Anita Bryant's visit to Houston. The Oklahoma beauty queen, known for her antigay crusades, sang with patriotic gust at the Texas Bar Association's annual dinner at the Hyatt downtown. The demonstration has been touted as the gay community's first collective political act.

YEAR: 1978

MILESTONE: Town Meeting I

HAPPENING: Sponsored by the GPC, political guru Ray Hill co-organized Town Meeting I in the Astroarena, where 4,000 gays and lesbians set resolutions dealing with homosexual issues. Main speaker Frances "Sissy" Farenthold, twice Texas gubernatorial candidate, told the crowd, "No one is free unless we are all free." This spirited idealism quickly dissipated with controversy surrounding media actions in the arena. Roaming cameras poked fear into many participants who still lived the closeted life.

Timeline

1953
- Diana Foundation

1963
- Roaring Twenties (closed 1975)

1965
- Albatross

1966
- Galleon Bar

1967
- Roaring Sixties (lesbian bar, closed 1975)
- Tumblebugs (became T.H.E.M.)

1968
- Golden Nuggett
- Promethean Society
- Red Room Bar
- Texas Homophile Educational Movement (T.H.E.M., first gay nonprofit organization to be chartered)

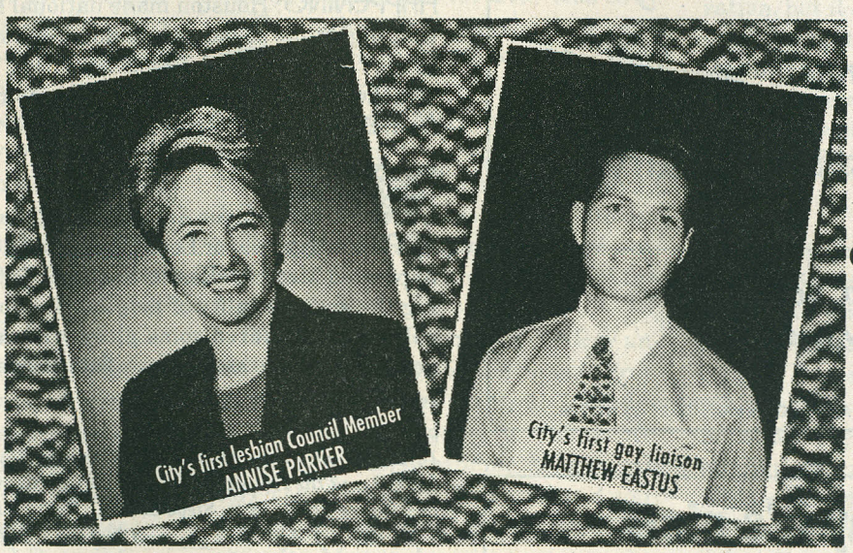
1969
- Miss Camp America
- Texas Riders

YEAR: 1979
MILESTONE: First Gay Pride Parade
HAPPENING: Commemorating the famous Stonewall Riots, Larry Bagneris co-organized the community's first concerted effort from protest to pride. More than 20,000 people attended the landmark event, but discrepancy haunts this annual celebration. Roughly 200 members of the now-dead Gay Activist Alliance of the University of Houston marched down a two-block stretch in 1976, staking claim to the first gay pride parade.

YEAR: 1980
MILESTONE: Mary's Lounge raided
HAPPENING: Just as Gay Pride Week began, Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission and Houston police officers raided Mary's Lounge, arresting 61 people and using what the then-manager called "Gestapo tactics." Asst. Police Chief Tommy Mitchell said police responded to calls from the public, and the arrests were routine enforcement of the law. Congressman Mickey Leland accused the department of harassing gays; all charges were dropped.

YEAR: 1982
MILESTONE: AIDS Foundation Houston opens
HAPPENING: When AIDS mysteriously began to plague American livelihood and HIV-case management remained scarce, AIDS Foundation Houston emerged as the first community-based organization solely dedicated to HIV-related issues. In a reactive stance against AIDS, AFH set out to reduce the transmission of HIV and to remain one step ahead of this deadly disease.

YEAR: 1985
MILESTONE: Born into Heaven
HAPPENING: Heaven, with its glowing lava lamps, sunken dance floor, and hard-bodied go-go dancers, opened its doors to the wild, the prep, the young, the old. Tragically, this Pacific Square milestone met its fate in 1997. A burning building sent screaming queens out the doors, but loyal patrons have nothing to worry about. Rumor has it that the booming club will soon resurrect as South Beach.



YEAR: 1988
MILESTONE: Inklings
HAPPENING: Tucked in a renovated red-brick house on Richmond, Inklings Bookstore was the peril of co-owners Annise Parker and Pokey Anderson. It stood as the only lesbian-specific bookstore. And in its 10th year, the owning duo reluctantly sold this female haven to Texans living in Salt Lake City, Utah, subsequently blessing Mormons with their first gay and lesbian bookstore.

YEAR: 1991
MILESTONE: The Paul Broussard murder
HAPPENING: The community received a wake-up call when 10 young men from The Woodlands beat and killed Paul Broussard after he left a popular gay nightclub. Gay activists mobilized for swift punishment against the men, but only one received jail time while the others each received 10 years probation.

YEAR: 1992
MILESTONE: *Texas Triangle*
HAPPENING: This brainchild of publisher and editor Kay Longcope was recognized for its sharp journalism standards and staunch resistance of sex and bar advertisements. Longcope's commitment to this "cleanliness" cost her in 1996, when the newspaper fell to financial woes, and big gun Todd Cunningham of Angle Media rescued this failing newspaper. With his entrance came the sex advertisements and Longcope's exit.

YEAR: 1993
MILESTONE: Texas Association of Transsexual Support
HAPPENING: TATS was formed to meet the specific needs of transsexuals, either male-to-female or female-to-male, and those who have yet to make

1970

- Integrity/Houston
- KPFT Radio Station
- Krewe of Olympus - Texas
- Nuntius Publication (discontinued 1977)
- Round Table Bar (closed 1973)
- University of Houston Gay Liberation Front (folded in 1973 and did not have official university sanction)

1971

- Hi Kamp

1972

- Dignity/Houston (Catholics)
- Houston Motorcycle Club
- Mary's Bar
- Montrose Gaze Community Center (September 1972)
- Poppa Bear (tourist drag show bar on Market Square, closed 1973)

1973

- Gay Radio Show (8 weeks of programming)
- Houston Council of Clubs
- Houston Gay Political Coalition
- Just Marion and Lynn's Bar
- Metropolitan Community Church Study Group of Houston (predecessor of MCCR)

1974

- Contact
- Texas Gay Task Force

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such operative changes. It's not all about fun for these guys/gals; the group assists graduate students with research and practical experience about transsexuals.

YEAR: 1995
MILESTONE: The Greater Houston Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce
HAPPENING: The chamber helped gays and lesbians move into the big-business, networking mecca of Houston. It furthered the community's economic spirit when it mixed big business and small entrepreneurs during Empower, a gay business expo.

YEAR: 1997
MILESTONE: First Nighttime Parade
HAPPENING: Houston made national history with the city's first nighttime parade. Gays and lesbians were "glowing with pride" as decorated floats and cars streamed down the Westheimer strip, celebrating both homosexuality and relief from the blistering June heat.

YEAR: 1998
MILESTONE: Mayor Appoints Gay Liaison
HAPPENING: Mayor Lee P. Brown made gay history when he appointed Matthew Eastus as the city's first gay liaison. Bearing the responsibility of helping Brown mix with the gay locals, Eastus shared some glory with Annise Parker as she gained notoriety as the city's first lesbian City Council member at the end of 1997.

Information obtained from the Charles Botts Memorial Library of MCCR and the Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center. Research assistance provided by Steve Brown. Next month, OutSmart *continues with more of Houston's gay and lesbian timeline history.*

1975

- Gay Activist Alliance (University of Houston)
- Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus
- Lambda Center A. A.
- Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection (MCCR, Houson chartered)
- Point Blank Times (continued until 1978)
- Southwest Courier
- Swamptrash
- This Week in Texas (TWIT)
- Update Weekly (aka Update Texas Weekly)
- Wilde N' Stein Radio Show (became Gay and Lesbian Voices)

1976

- First Gay Parade in Houston (June 20, sponsored by the Gay Activist Alliance)
- Colt 45's
- Ducks Softball Team
- Integrity (Episcopalians)
- Leathermen
- Montrose Star
- R.E. Search Warrant

1977

- Anita Bryant Protest March (June 16, Houston Human Rights Rally)
- Ray Hill Becomes First Openly Gay Candidate for Houston City Council
- Gay Unitarian/Universalist Caucus
- Houston Human Rights League
- Lutherans Concerned for Gays
- Texas Conference of Clubs
- Wilde and Stein Bookstore

WHERE WE ARE GOING

What community organizations are doing in 1999

by Melissa Valenzuela

Just as triumphant and grand as where we've been, where we're going screams "out with the old and in with the new." As community organizations leap into the new year, expect some changes, whether it's expanding old services or creating some new ones. *OutSmart* takes a look at some of these growing organizations and how 1999 will lead them into the next millennium.

SISTERS

In 1999, the gay community's African-American sisters are moving—literally.

SISTERS, an African-American women's organization, is relocating its monthly meetings from the Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection to the Hollyfield Foundation Conference Center, 2700 Albany. President Shirley Gray said the move is a direct result of the group's growing membership in the past year.

"We want to be somewhere where everyone can reach us. We have members throughout Houston, and the Hollyfield Center is a more central area," said Gray.

Beginning strong in the new year, SISTERS will hold a "How to Love Yourself" presentation with guest speaker Sue Long of the Montrose Counseling Center on Jan. 10, in conjunction with the group's monthly meeting. Then, on Feb. 19, just a few days after its 6th anniversary celebration on Valentine's Day, the group co-sponsors the Lesbian Health Fair.

With 100 current members, Gray anticipates SISTERS will continue to grow in 1999. The group's agenda includes completing its request for nonprofit 501(c)(3) status, expanding its outreach services, creating a Web site, and conducting a membership drive. SISTERS provides African-American women outreach support on health-care issues, spirituality, legal and financial matters, and other services. It also hosts game and movie nights.

"We want to contribute to a more diverse community," said Gray. "We are primarily an African-American organization, but it creates a safe, comfortable environment for all women to share, nurture, and foster kindness."

SISTERS meets every second Sunday of the month, 5-8 p.m. For more information, call 713/801-0027.

AVES

In 1989, Amigos Volunteers in Education and Services, Inc. (AVES), was created to counter an increase of AIDS/HIV in Latino/a gays and lesbians. What began as a small, disease-prevention service, AVES is now a fully operational educational and advocacy organization which tries to strengthen cultural awareness about Latinos/as within the gay community.

"For Latinos/as, there really are no culturally specific services in the community. We try to be a liaison for the Latino community. We want to give them access to services that are queer specific, linguistically specific, and culturally specific," said Alex Morua, the organization's client services administrator.

1978

- Houston Town Meeting 1 (June 25)
- Ray Hill wins Hill vs. Houston law case in U.S. Supreme Court
- Bunnies on the Bayou
- EPAH (Executive and Professional Association of Houston)
- Gay Resources Services of U of H (formerly Gay Activist Alliance)
- Gulf Coast Transgendered Community
- Houston Pride Band
- It's About Time
- LXIX (bar publication)
- Montrose Activity Center
- Montrose Counseling Center
- Montrose Mining Company Bar
- Montrose Patrol
- PFLAG - Houston (Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians and Gays)
- Houston Pride Week Calendar
- Upfront Amercia (aka Upfront)

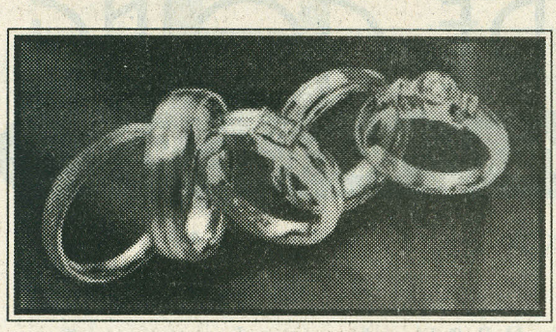
1979

- Beginning of Gay/Lesbian Pride Week Parades With Celebration of Tenth Anniversary of Stonewall (June, first co-chairs Carol Fennema and Bill Puryear)
- Organizational Office for First National March on Washington, D.C., established in Houston
- A Capella Caucus (Church of Christ)
- Astro Rainbow Alliance of the Deaf
- Church of Christian Faith
- Gay Men's Chorus of Houston (Montrose Singers)
- The Main Event
- We Are Women

1980

- Black and White Men Together (Houston)
- CHE (Citizens for Human Equality)
- I/H, Inc. (formerly Integrity Houston)
- Insight
- Kindred Spirits Bar
- Montrose Softball League
- Montrose Sports Association
- The Montrose Voice (now the Houston Voice)
- Pegasus
- Pride Committee (organized as year-round group)
- Texas Bay Area Gays

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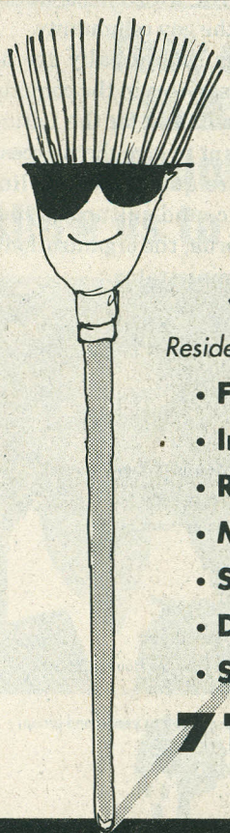


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For 1999, AVES' agenda includes creating a teen clinic. Financed by a $100,000 grant, the clinic will provide HIV-positive female adolescents with educational services related to HIV/AIDS treatments, sexuality and birth control information, as well as obstetrics/gynecological services and a clerical training and job placement program.

AVES, which provides services to an 11-county area, also expects to expand its mental health services, specifically for same-sex domestic violence victims.

In 1997, AVES served more than 20,000 people. Most of the group's outreach success comes from its mobile street program, where the Latino gay community is directly hit by AVES volunteers. The organization also provides case management, early intervention, support groups, crisis intervention, food vouchers, and limited financial assistance for individuals and families affected by HIV/AIDS.

"1999 is really also about building on our previous programs, more about expansion," said Morua.

AVES is located at 4126 Southwest Frwy, Ste. 1717. For more information, call 713/626-2837.

PFLAG

The legacy of Parents and Friends of Lesbians And Gays (PFLAG) is not unknown. From mounting a simple, yet effective billboard campaign in 1996 to showing pride in the annual parade, PFLAG's contributions to the gay community have been nothing less than monumental. And in 1999, the group undoubtedly continues with such kind efforts.

Just before its first meeting of the new year

Your Gay Child

needs you. Your gay sibling, aunt, cousin, friend needs you. Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) is dedicated to keeping families together. To begin your journey of reconciliation, call our help line at 713-867-9020.

PFLAG
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays
www.pflaghtx.org

PFLAG explodes with an advertising campaign in 13 community newspapers.

1981

- Gay and Lesbian Switchboard of Houston
- Montrose Clinic
- The Royal, Sovereign and Imperial Court of the Single Star

1982

- First Safe Sex Pamphlet in U.S. Published in Houston
- AIDS Foundation Houston
- Club Scene
- Community Gospel Center
- Gay Fathers/Fathers First
- JR's Bar and Grill
- New Freedom Christian Church
- Outrage
- The Ripcord Bar
- Silver $ Times (publication)

1983

- Montrose Directory
- Out In Texas
- Rich's Dance Club
- Texas Gay Rodeo Association
- The Group (Theater Workshop)

on Jan. 10, PFLAG explodes with another advertising campaign in 13 community newspapers, including the *Katy Sun*, the *Clear Lake Sun*, the *Kingwood Observer*, the *Pasadena Citizen*, the *Alvin Journal*, and the *Village News*. The ads will run throughout February.

"We want to let people know we're present, whether they come to the meetings or not," said Jeanne Edmonds, co-president of PFLAG. "It's important for people to know that we're out there, that there is support."

Foremost on the group's agenda is community outreach. PFLAG, with 325 current members, will be visible at church gatherings throughout the Houston area, even extending to the Woodlands, Tomball, Conroe, and Beaumont.

"In 1999, we would like to reach more parents and family members with love, acceptance, and celebration. Reaching parents is still very important to us; it is the basis of our foundation," said Edmonds. "We're going to be working within churches and going through ministers and people active in their churches."

PFLAG will also dive into the political arena during the upcoming legislation in January. Although it has yet to formulate anything concrete, the group is trying to find a way to be most helpful against the anti-gay adoption proposal.

To consummate the group's activities in 1999, PFLAG will host a conference to educate school administrators and teachers of area independent school districts about homosexuality. The conference will enlighten educators about gay youth and serve as a supportive resource, Edmonds said.

PFLAG meets every first Sunday of the month at the Christ Church Cathedral, 2 p.m. For more information, call 713/867-9020.

ASIANS AND FRIENDS OF HOUSTON

Co-founder and former president Kurt von Richthofen describes Asians and Friends as a social and educational organization that serves as an alternative to the bar scene. Yet the group also uniquely maintains a social conscience while broadening cultural diversity within the community.

Since its inception in 1992, Asians and Friends has promoted diversity by presenting monthly educational programs on multiculturalism and opening its organization to all people regardless of their nationality or ethnicity.

"This is a good organization, so certainly we want to concentrate on making this an even better organization, but there really isn't anything particular," said von Richthofen. "This is really a positive experience for people. It's a chance to make people feel better about themselves."

The group currently has 100 members, but it is quickly growing. Members have aggressive recruiting efforts to take well into 1999, including posting fliers, hosting regular Friday night movies, and holding Sunday brunches. They also work closely with other organizations, such as AIDS Foundation Houston, to make themselves more visible while giving back to the gay community.

For more information and meeting location, call 713/772-3757.

MONTROSE COUNSELING CENTER

On the heels of its 20th anniversary in December, the Montrose Counseling Center (MCC) is expecting great things for the coming year. While continuing to focus on the needs of the gay and lesbian community, the center also plans to create new service positions and increase funding.

MCC hopes to add a case manager to its LIFE Program to assist women with chronic illness or victims of hate crimes, sexual abuse, or domestic violence. The center currently offers case management for people with HIV/AIDS.

"We need a continuum for those clients in the LIFE Program going through counseling so that a case manager may help them with various psychosocial crises," said Sean Carter, development and marketing manager. "With this program addition, the client would not have to spend



Montrose Counseling Center

1984

- Adoption and Repeal of Ordinance to List Sexual Orientation on City Employment Discrimination
- Four Seasons
- FrontRunners Houston
- Houston Outdoor Group (HOG)
- Lavender Letters

1985

- AIDS Interfaith Council
- HeartSong
- Heaven Dance Club (closed 1997)
- Houston Forum
- Houston Pride
- Texas Forum
- The Wand (aka Womynspace)

1986

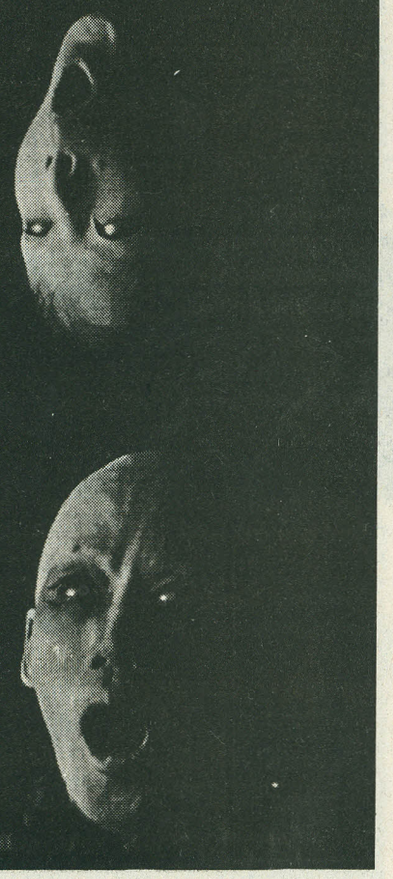
- LOBO Bookstore
- Omega House
- PWA Coalition

1987

- Bering Community Service Foundation
- DIFFA/Houston (Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS)
- H.A.T.C.H. (Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals)
- Lady Victoria Lust PWA Holiday Fund (became PWA Holiday Charities in 1997)

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counseling time dealing with issues such as eviction, physician visits, medication assistance, etc."

MCC also wants to develop its Lesbian Health Outreach Program, which reaches lesbians in Harris and surrounding counties, by moving its current part-time outreach worker into a full-time position.

"Education and prevention have become very important in the lesbian community," said Carter.

On Mar. 12, MCC will host its annual fund-raiser, titled "Bringing in the Green." The event will be held at the Waldo Mansion and is expected to raise $20,000. The donations will be used for services not funded by the government.

For more information about MCC and its many services, call 713/529-0037, or visit the center at 701 Richmond.

H.A.T.C.H.

Since its inception 11 years ago, the Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals (H.A.T.C.H.) has emerged as a top resource for gay and lesbian youth. And recent membership trends suggest the group will continue to grow in 1999.

"We have a lot planned for 1999. We're anticipating all kinds of big change. It's just going to be an explosive year," said Carol Petrucci, the group's first newly appointed program director.

"We've already seen an increase in the number of teens served, so we'll look at increasing our volunteers, and get a better coordination of our training efforts, as well as make a stronger connection with the schools," she added.

The foremost priority for H.A.T.C.H. is creating ongoing training efforts for its current group facilitators. Approximately 40-50 teens attend Friday night H.A.T.C.H. meetings, Petrucci said.

H.A.T.C.H. also wants to expand its outreach efforts by continuing to build relationships with school counselors and by opening its mentoring opportunities to involve parents and leaders in the community.

"We want to work on doing the best that we can with what we have to stabilize the organization," said Petrucci. "In January, we will be looking at long-range planning for the next 3-5 years and at the priorities for the organization."

For more information and meeting location, call 713/942-7002.

1988

- Amiga (group for Latina lesbians)
- The Assistance Fund
- Body Positive
- FIRM (Foundation for Interfaith Research & Ministry)
- Inklings Bookshop (closed 1998)
- NAMES Project Houston
- Pacific Street Bar

1989

- American Option
- AVES (Amigos Volunteers in Education and Services)
- Houston Wrestling Club
- Kolbe Project
- Santa Fe Bar & Patio
- Texas Invitation Tournament

What We Must Do

POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS PREPARE FOR THE 76TH LEGISLATURE

by Melissa Valenzuela

During the 76th legislature, opening on Jan. 12, local gay and lesbian political organizations will lobby against several antigay proposals, as well as push for stronger legislation in support of gay rights. With the recent slaying of James Byrd in Jasper, the arrest of two Houston men accused of violating the sodomy statute, and the fearful consequences of Rep. Warren Chisum's (R-Pampa) antigay adoption proposal, these organizations will mount aggressive 1999 legislative agendas.



State Sen. Rodney Ellis

From gay marriages to job protection for transgenders, they have targeted gay issues expected to ignite controversy between the two political parties. *OutSmart* takes a look at the legislative agendas of four local organizations and the Austin giant the Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby of Texas (LGRL) as they spearhead antigay legislation to garner wins for the gay community.

THE HOUSTON GAY AND LESBIAN POLITICAL CAUCUS

When Clarence Bagby was elected as the caucus' president, he enacted the Legislator Matching Project, which pairs constituents throughout Harris County with their district legislators. Since then, the project has resulted in an increase of constituent-legislator communication.

"It is far more meaningful for one or several constituents to call their district legislators than for some president or leader of an organization to call them," said Bagby. "This way, through the program, legislators hear directly from constituents whether they support or disapprove of a certain proposal."

The caucus will use this proactive network system to combat upcoming legislative issues, specifically hate crimes. During the past two legislative sessions, efforts to include sexual orientation and other identifying characteristics of groups such as race and ethnicity dissipated with political bureaucracy and conservative opposition. Teaming with Sen. Rodney Ellis (D-Hous.), who helped pass the hate crimes statute in 1993, the caucus expects legislators will consider passing stronger legislation to end hate crime violence because of the slayings of Byrd and Matthew Shepard in Wyoming.

"We believe that of all the items on our legislative agenda, the hate crimes bill is definitely going to be one to get a lot of attention," said Bagby. "It is going to be a lot harder to not pass this bill when you have the sister or mother [of James Byrd] asking legislators to pass it."

1990

- The Gentry Bar (closed 1998)
- Houston Gay & Lesbian Yellow Pages
- Lambda B.S.RAG
- Lambda Roller-skating Club
- Lesbians Over Age Fifty (LOAF)
- Prime Timers

1991

- Houston Voice
- LiB (Lesbians in Business)
- Q-Patrol
- Rotheudt/Dizinger Foundation

1992

- Asians and Friends
- Bayou City Boys Club
- BiNet Houston
- Crossroads Market
- John Steven Kellett Foundation
- Log Cabin Houston
- Texas Triangle

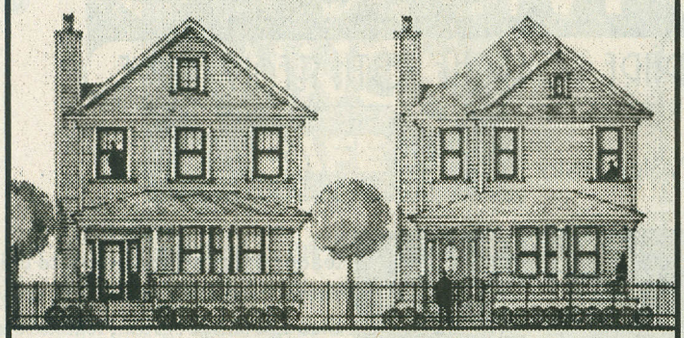
1993

- AIDS Alliance of the Bay Area
- Black Tie Dinner - Houston
- Just For Us
- Lesbian Health Initiative (L.H.I.)
- Milam House
- National Leather Association - Houston
- Texas Association for Transsexual Support
- Steven's House

1994

- Hollyfield Foundation
- Houston Area Bears
- It's Time, America (Transgendered)
- OutSmart
- Rainbow Ranglers
- SISTERS (group for African-American lesbians)

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The caucus released a one-page legislative agenda that also includes preventing the passage of the Chisum proposal; protecting Texans from discrimination based upon sexual orientation or gender identity in employment; pushing for legislation that allows hate crime victims the opportunity to sue for civil penalties; and increasing funding for AIDS/HIV services.

To volunteer or for more information, call 713/521-1000.

LOG CABIN REPUBLICANS OF TEXAS

On the right side of this legislative battle stand members of the Log Cabin Republicans of Texas (LCR). While they continue to be discounted by other lesbian and gay political organizations for their party preference, LCR has mounted a legislative agenda to persuade legislators under the elephant tent to repeal anti-gay legislation.

"We've learned in Washington, D.C., that the most effective way to begin to lobby Republicans on gay issues is to be a Republican," said Rich Tafel, executive director of the group's national office.

With that premise in mind, LCR has appointed Steve Labinski as the group's registered lobbyist for the legislation.

"We intend to have an active lobby presence during the session because it is so important that Republicans understand that equal rights is an American virtue that should be upheld by all political parties," said Labinski, also the group's president.

LCR has created a mammoth legislative agenda to lobby against proposals that "promote government-enforced discrimination against gays and lesbians." It will, however, specifically target Chisum's anti-gay adoption proposal.

"Our number one priority will be to stop the proposed bill that would prevent gays from adopting children," said Labinski. "This sweeping ban against adoption of children by gay men and lesbians would be outright government intrusion into family decision-making."

LCR will also lobby against the anti-gay marriage bill, which Labinski describes as "a gratuitous slap in the face for all gays and lesbians, since existing laws already prohibit same-sex marriage."

LCR has chapters in Austin, Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio. For more information about the group's legislative efforts, call 512/467-9797, or check your local listings for area chapters.

STONEWALL DEMOCRATS

Although the Stonewall Democrats are just beginning to assimilate into something substantial, it has jumped on the legislative bandwagon to combat anti-gay proposals.

1995

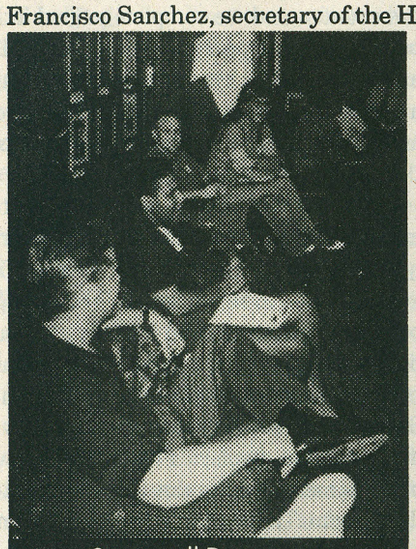
- African American Lesbian and Gay Alliance (AALGA)
- Center for AIDS
- Greater Houston Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce
- Uncommon Legacy - Houston

1996

- AssistHers (care group for lesbians)
- Chase Bank of Texas, N.A., P.R.I.D.E. Team (Chase Employees Group)
- Garden and Yard Society (GAYS)
- Lesbians United in Coalition (L.U.C.)
- Queer Artists Collective (QuAC)
- SEAShell (Shell employees Group)

In January, just days after the Legislature opens, Stonewall will elect its officers for 1999 and create a legislative committee with a primary focus to identify legislative issues affecting gays and lesbians and to coordinate lobbying efforts. With a committee in place, the donkeys will determine which legislators to push and which legislators to support, especially on issues related to the current sodomy statute and job protection for transgenders.

"We have to make sure we have a presence and let our legislators know the gay and lesbian community is watching," said Francisco Sanchez, secretary of the Harris County Democratic Party. "Our legislative efforts have got to make an impact, especially to the not-so-gay-friendly representatives."



Stonewall Democrats combat antigay proposals.

Stonewall's legislative agenda will require a lot of grunt work for members. The group is currently building a local program to identify and pair constituents with their district legislators. Then, on Jan. 27, the group teams with the Texas Gender Advocacy and Information Network to lobby on transgender issues. Group members will travel to Austin, distribute information packets, and visit with legislative officials and their staffs. Stonewall also will join LGRL for its "Lesbian Gay Lobby Day" on Mar. 22.

For more information or to volunteer, call 713/521-4539 or 713/739-7785. The group's next meeting will be held Jan. 18, 7 p.m., at Grace Lutheran Church, 2515 Waugh.

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN-HOUSTON

The Human Rights Campaign in Houston (HRC) is supporting the battle against anti-gay Texas legislation in a different way—with money.

HRC will provide much needed financial support for the Lambda Legal Defense, which is providing lead attorneys for

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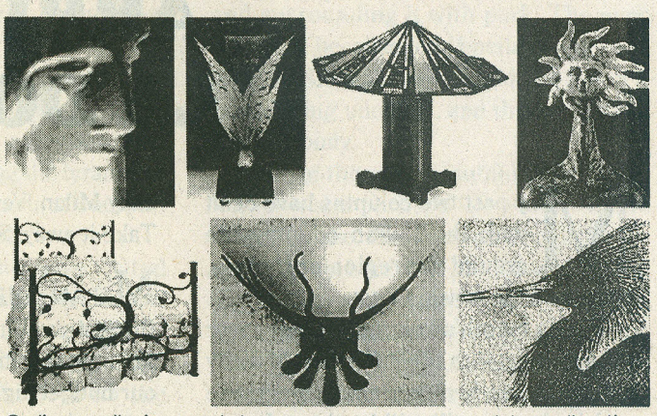
1997

- Annise Parker Election to City Council
- Empower '97 (gay and lesbian business exposition)
- Evening Gay/Lesbian Pride Parade
- G.A.N.G. (Gay Alumni Noon Group over 40s)
- Houston Gay and Lesbian Film Festival
- Human Rights Campaign - Houston
- PWA Holiday Charities (began in 1987 as Lady Victoria Lust PWA Holiday Fund)
- SPECTRUM (Southwestern Bell employees group)

1998

- First Gay Liaison Advisor to Houston Mayor Appointed
- Stonewall Democrats
- Hollyfield Conference Center
- Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center
- Montrose TV
- Gold PAC

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Health

continued from page 25

Two years ago, when I began treatment, Dr. David Ho famously suggested that early drug therapy could eradicate—cure—HIV infection. Few now believe that antivirals alone will cure this disease. But Dr. Walker is proposing something different, if only slightly less dramatic. He's saying that early therapy might not cure the infection, but it might place the virus in "remission."

Is that what's happening to me? Is my virus in remission?

I haven't been off therapy long, and most observers—and not just the hardened skeptics—would say my situation is tenuous, that it's far too early to draw conclusions. In an e-mail reaction to this news, a close friend and ex-lover wrote, "Perhaps one shouldn't get over excited too soon." He's right.

I'm reluctant to share this experience. I don't want HIV-infected people to make analogies between my situation and theirs and then decide to stop treatment. Most people with HIV don't start therapy until well after the resolution of acute retroviral syndrome, and therefore aren't subject to Dr. Walker's hypothesis. (In fact, since I started treatment after I'd become HIV-antibody-positive, I may not be subject to it myself.) I also feel awkward, embarrassed by the success of this little experiment, even if its results should prove transient. Perhaps as many as half of the people on treatment are either failing it, or never responded in the first place. And of those, many have struggled with this disease, lived with its painful consequences, far longer than I have.

But if there is any truth to Dr. Walker's theory, that's good news for all of us. It means that HIV is not, always and everywhere, a fearsome bastard from which there is no relief. If there are any circumstances under which the virus can be pounded into submission, this tells us something useful. Our common enemy is vulnerable. After two decades of thinking of the virus as unassailable, we can begin to think something new, something that, in Ralph Waldo Emerson's words, may serve to "encourage and fortify" us.

Paul Simmons, a registered nurse board certified in HIV/AIDS nursing, is director of information and advocacy at The Center for AIDS. His e-mail address is NursePaul@aol.com.

TravelOut

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Venice is world famous for glass-blowing and art, but most of the furnaces are now over on Murano, an adjacent Island. Good buys and exceptional quality is everywhere, but the short trip to Murano provides the opportunity to see the city from the lagoon.

After Venice, we headed to Bologna. We didn't have much time in Bologna, but did see an excellent Egyptian exhibit and an Etruscan and Villanovan collection at the archeological Museo. The evening we arrived, we walked a few of Bologna's many covered sidewalks. Bologna claims to be the most archaic city in the world. On our "passegiatta" (evening stroll) we came across the spectacle of the Duomo being blockaded by riot cops. The night before, a house full of immigrants had been evicted from the home they had been sharing, and during the day they entered the church and demanded sanctuary. Bologna is a university town (the world's oldest and the hotbed of all things liberal, leftist, and even communist). A crowd of students had gathered to show support for the immigrants.

From Bologna, we traveled to Ravena. The mosaics in Ravena are known as the world's best, and they certainly impressed me. The color palate used by the artists was as subtle as the palate used by any painter. Unlike oil paintings though, the mosaics give the scenes a luminosity that painters can only envy. The renditions of the saints, Magi, and life of Jesus were incredibly lifelike. The characters' cheeks even had a rosy blush in them.

We left Ravena in the rain and headed to Umbria where we kept a much slower pace, even though our days were as full. But those are a tale for another day.

What We Must Do

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two men accused of violating the Texas sodomy statute. By pleading no contest to sodomy charges and paying an appellant bond, the two men and their legal defense team have begun to intensely and ambitiously challenge the 119-year-old law.

Strategically, HRC will push for legislators to repeal the sodomy law in similar lobbying efforts as other political organizations. But David Muck of the HRC Houston Steering Committee believes the group is most helpful raising legal funding.

"What we're going to be doing is going to affect legislation at the local and state level," said Muck, who is also co-chair of the group's Federal Club, responsible for fundraising.

HRC, with approximately 5,000 local members, is expected to raise more than $300,000 in 1999 by hosting several monthly social events, including the annual HRC dinner on Mar. 20 and a private performance of *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde* at the Alley Theatre on Apr. 1. The majority of revenue, however, will come from the Houston HRC Winter Gala.

HRC's local efforts mirror the long-time legislative campaigns against anti-gay legislation on national levels. The group is equally concerned with job discrimination, gay marriage issues, and hate crimes at all three levels of the political system.

For more information or to join HRC, call 202/628-4160, or visit http://www.hrc.org.

LESBIAN GAY RIGHTS LOBBY OF TEXAS

In the past year, lobbying giant LGRL has prepared for the upcoming legislation by continuously urging constituents to contact their legislators, distributing hate crime pledge cards, and conducting lobby training days for volunteers. Its primary focus for the upcoming legislation is to just keep working.

LGRL released a similar legislative agenda as the caucus and seems to be tackling all the issues set forth by legislators. Its agenda includes lobbying proposals about hate crimes, AIDS/HIV, gay adoptions, gay marriages, transgender issues, and non-discrimination in employment and education.

With its own Legislative Matching Project, LGRL mobilizes outreach efforts in each district in Texas when a proposal or bill arises affecting gay and lesbian rights. However, the group needs more volunteers for the program.

"With enough committed volunteers participating in programs such as LGRL's legislative matching, we will have a strong, comprehensive grassroots lobbying effort," said Dianne Hardy-Garcia, LGRL executive director.

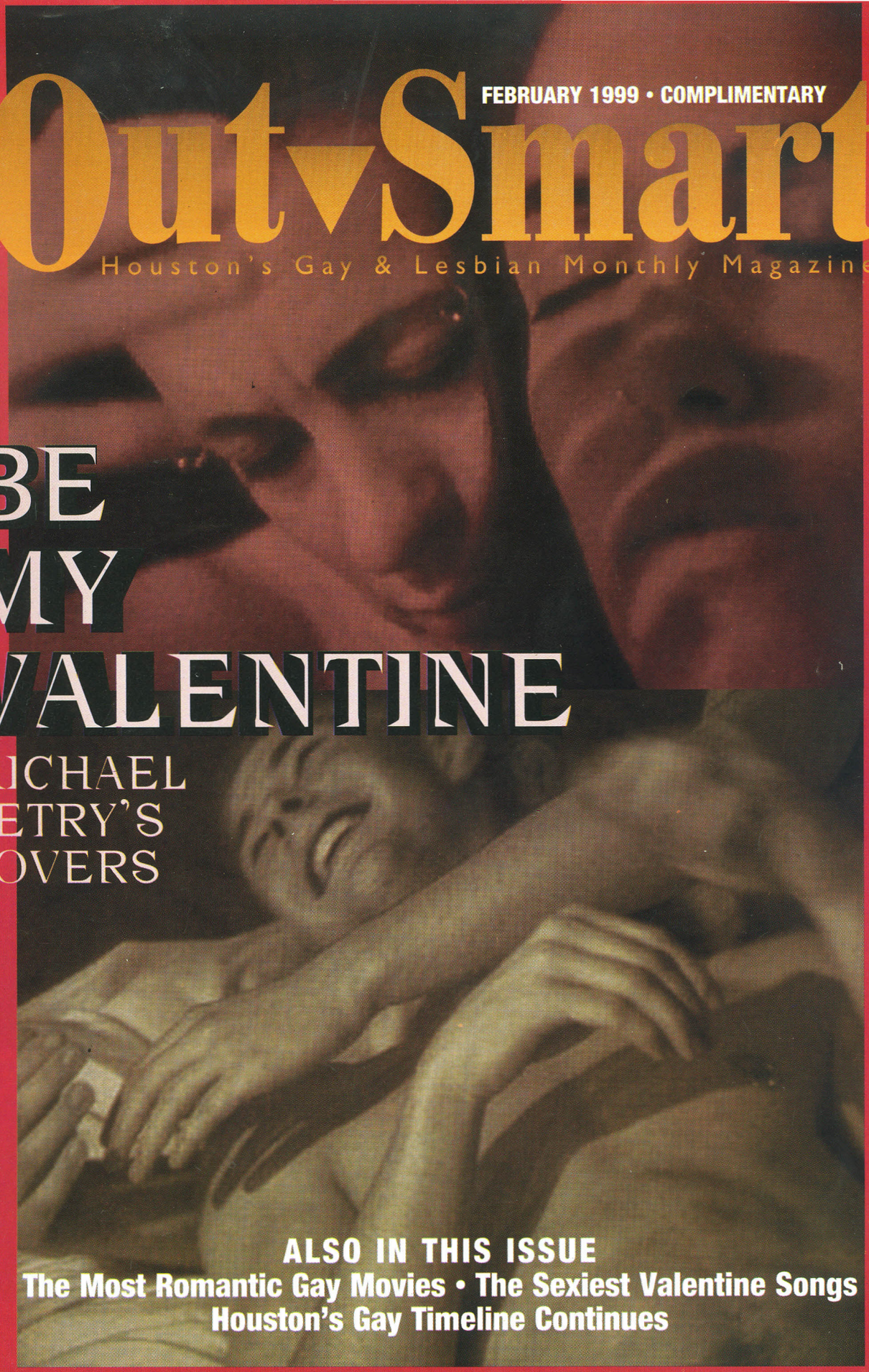
The group is also sponsoring the "March for Our Families" on Mar. 21, followed by the "Lesbian Gay Lobby Day" on Mar. 22. LGRL encourages all supporters to visit Austin on those days to lobby their legislators.

For more information, call 512/474-5475, or visit lgrltexas@aol.com.

FEBRUARY 1999 • COMPLIMENTARY

OutSmart

Houston's Gay & Lesbian Monthly Magazine



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MICHAEL PETRY'S LOVERS

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

The Most Romantic Gay Movies • The Sexiest Valentine Songs
Houston's Gay Timeline Continues

Letters to the Editor

PATCHING THINGS UP

I would like to comment on the article in *OutSmart*'s January issue regarding 30 years of Houston gay history. I applaud your staff for giving us some history of what has been accomplished in Houston; however, I would be remiss if I did not point out what I consider to be major omissions.

In my opinion, a major part of Houston's gay history has happened at a little neighborhood bar in West University, known as the Briar Patch. The BP has been in the same location for 30 years now and during that time:

1. The BP has become the oldest gay bar in the city, and I am told the oldest bar in Texas.

2. The only Houston softball team to win the Gay World Series was sponsored by the Briar Patch.

3. *Out & About* magazine named the BP as one of the best eight piano bars in the country, and No. 1 in Texas in 1998.

4. Perhaps the most important part of our history is our support of Stone Soup Kitchen, having raised more funds for this worthwhile charity than any other Houston club.

While I'm happy [Melissa] Valenzuela was kind enough to mention the support that gay bars have made in the history of Houston, I do wish she had done her homework just a little better. I might add that there were several other names in Houston that made such a contribution, and while I know she could not include everyone, the names omitted were certainly a big part of helping the community achieve the success it has today.

I hope you will not think of this letter as "sour grapes," but I did stop counting the names of other bars at 14 and did not see the Briar Patch mentioned at all. We at the BP are proud of our past and will always strive to do more for the future.

—Wayne Gray
Houston

MAD DOG? GOOD DOG!

In response to your time warp article, I was appalled that every social service agency I started, TV show produced, shelter opened, activist group founded, and contribution I made for gay people with AIDS was completely ignored in the historical archives.

I have put together a list of groups and agencies that made a historical contribution and would respectfully request they be included in any future archives. If you need more information I would be glad to tell you the rest of the story.

1. 1992: Formation of the TSHCC/Thomas St. Healthcenter Citizens Council—founded by Act-Up and Queer Nation members. This group was responsible for creating one of the most powerful PWA advocacy groups in the nation. TSHCC renovated the building, started a model volunteer program with



over 400 members, reduced waiting times, increased HIV meds funding, brought about sensitivity training, hired patient liaisons, etc. Founding chair and co-chair Steven Bradley and Matt Locklin.

2. 1993: Harris County Hospital Districts Council-at-Large—council of all hospital district clinics, including reverends and people from every ethnic background. It elected first openly gay person with AIDS as executive officer: Matt Locklin.

You listed Montrose TV but forgot:

3. 1993-96: AIDS Talk Houston TV—over 300 hours of AIDS (we sneaked in gay rights, too) education on TV with your host PWA Matt Locklin. This show spawned: HIV Positive! TV 1994; Montrose Clinic TV 1993; and Life Today! TV 1995.

You listed Milam House and Steven's House:

4. 1994: TLC House Emergency Shelter, a gay-positive AIDS shelter—founded by Matt Locklin and Joe Dan Harper.

5. 1995: AIDS Housing Coalition—incorporates and assumes control of TLC House emercengy shelter. Founded by Richard Rancier and Matt Locklin. Has served over 300 residents to date without government funds!

6. 1996: Montrose 77006 TV—openly gay programming with your host "Mad Dog Matt" Locklin. M77006 was the model for Montrose TV.

These are just some of my contributions to the gay community, and yet I never received a penny in salary, an award, or cushy job. At least I could be remembered in history, if you please.

—Matt Locklin
Houston

Editor's Note: Retracing history—especially the history of homosexuality in Houston, Texas—is a daunting task at best. OutSmart *regrets these two very important omissions to which you have drawn our attention.* OutSmart *would like to point out that, in the first time in our thirtysomething history, we have had no formal Gay and Lesbian Community Center to become a focal point for such historical knowledge as you, Mr. Gray and you, Mr. Locklin, have so generously provided. It is our sincere hope that you both will provide such information to the center (an invaluable supplier of information for the Timeline piece), so present and future generations will benefit. No historical record will contain every event, every moment. However, with your information—and the information of others—perhaps, for the first time, Houston's gay and lesbian movement will have a more accurate vision of the past with which to carry forth our vision of the future.*

PUTTING ANOTHER LOG (CABIN) ON THE FIRE

This is an open letter to anyone affected by the hateful assault on gays and lesbians by the Republican Party. Unfortunately, once again, so-called community leaders (i.e. Log Cabin Republicans, and local and national writers, specifically *Out* magazine's John Cloud for his "Taking the Initiative" piece in February) suggest we, gays and lesbians, are to blame for the assault on ourselves, and we should stop insisting on equality and be thankful that we are allowed to live, period. We are reading suggestions that if we would just stop fighting for equality, things would be better. That is the stupidest thing possibly ever uttered!

Gays and lesbians aren't fighting to keep the equality they've acquired; they never had it! We're supposed to be fighting for it now!

The Bush family, with longtime pal Pat Robertson, is largely responsible for the recent antigay assaults. When the Bush campaign deliberately launched its family values (re: antigay) campaign in 1992, let us not forget the Mosbacher resignation. It is completely implausible to think that they didn't know they were opening the door to a full-scale assault on gays and lesbians. They knew and didn't care. Now we have a Bush as governor, pushing for a further assault on gays and lesbians. You can almost count on Bush to attempt to cover up his hatemongering antigay adoption bill with a meaningless, watered-down, back-to-compassionate discrimination public relations snowjob, the kind the Bush Republicans do so well.

We would like to support the Log Cabin Republicans. Unfortunately, they have spent more time and effort aiding the assault on pro-gay equality Democrats than stopping the assault on gays and lesbians by their own party. If they are serious about stopping the antigay Republican attack, why aren't we hearing about breaking up the Republican Party? Instead of stopping this assault and fixing the damage they've done, what we are hearing is that if gays and lesbians shut up and go back in the closet and hide, the powerful right-wing Republicans will go along with the pretense that we don't exist. That doesn't work for us! We won't do that.

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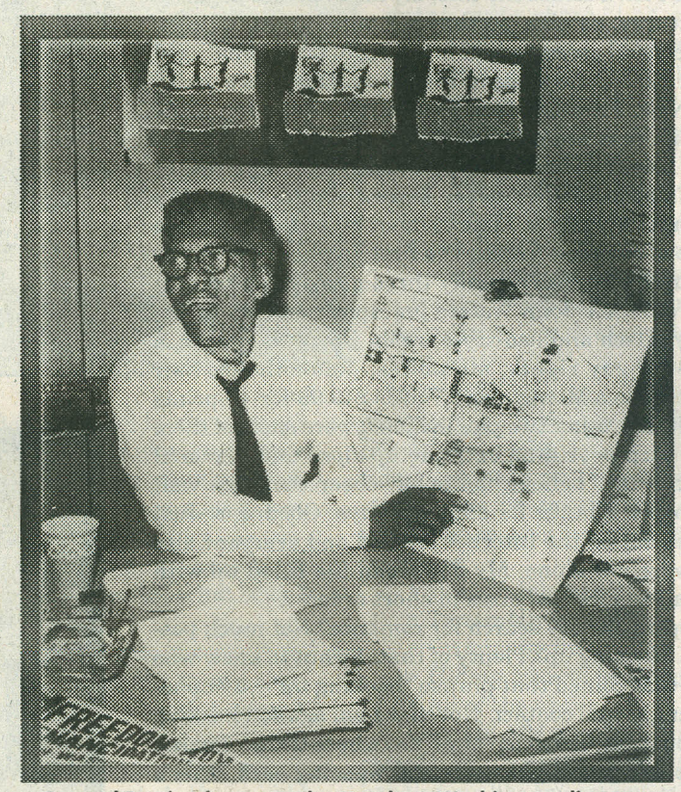
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TIME OUT

REMEMBERING WHEN GAY AND BLACK MADE HISTORY

by Melissa Valenzuela

In February, many African Americans remember, and invoke others to remember, their black history—from heroic figures such as Rosa Parks, who dared to challenge segregation laws, to the horrible suffering of countless martyrs who were victimized simply because they were black. But some AfricanAmericans were haunted by another stigma: being homosexual. This month, we remember them.



AP/WIDEWORLD PHOTOS

Bayard Rustin, deputy to the March on Washington director.

Radical pacifism led to Bayard Rustin's contributions to black and gay history. But his former ties to Communism and homosexuality were stigmas that burdened him throughout his career.

Rustin, a spirited black man, provided the impetus to Dr. Martin Luther King's 1963 milestone in American history: The March on Washington. Along with longtime friend Philip Randolph, Rustin planned to lead a mass demonstration for black economic power. However, as more people became involved, including King, the focus shifted to civil rights.

King became the march's undisputed leader, and Rustin was appointed as deputy to Randolph, who became the march director. Though he remained relatively unseen during the march, organizers believed he was essential to bringing together this massive undertaking.

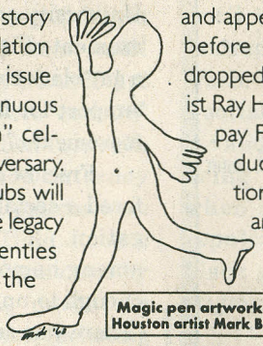
Still, the Pennsylvania native, with his high-pitched voice and flamboyant New York Greenwich Village friends, was considered a liability to his fellow march colleagues and a target for antigay slurs from conservative political leaders; attacks always made reference to his "morals." (The term "gay" or "homosexual" was rarely used at this time.) Rustin's involvement with the Young Communist League from 1936 to 1941 also was used against him.

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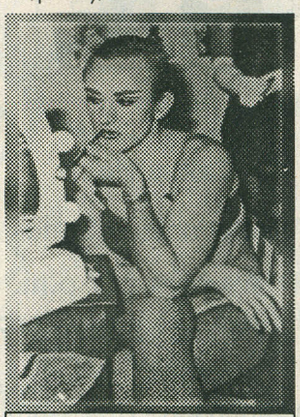
TIMELINE 1953-1968

Each month OutSmart will feature sections of Houston's gay history timeline.

1953 Decades after the Diana Foundation's inception, the "Dianas" still dazzle audiences with their glittery and glamorous on-stage performances for local fundraisers. Take a look at the history of the Diana Foundation in *OutSmart*'s March issue as "the oldest continuous roast in the nation" celebrates its 45th anniversary. **1963** Bars and clubs will come and go, but the legacy of the Roaring Twenties peaked well into the mid-'70s, even after it closed. Andy Ruth introduced this "dance" club on W. Dallas, and manager Rita "Poppa Bear" Wanstrom turned it into a lesbian haven. When Ruth called it quits in 1965, Wanstrom took the lead and opened the Roaring Sixties. **1965** Gay publications got moving with Bob Eddy's card-stock artistic magazine *The Albatross*. The "flying" *Albatross*, published by Reuters of Houston, hit the stands in August, when at least 13 gay-oriented bars and clubs existed (including Houston's proudest The Pink Elephant). This short-lived creative quarterly featured prose, poetry, and the "Magic Pen" artwork of Houston artist M. Burke. **1966** Captain M.C. and First Mate Les of the Galleon ran a tight ship for gay men looking for live music and drag shows. The two treated their guests to homemade Friday evening buffets and romping Sunday beer busts. The Galleon was often filled beyond capacity, and many patrons were sadly turned away by the crew. Those lucky enough to get in were witness to grand organist Ethel Smith's seaworthy performances. The owning duo welcomed aboard many clean-cut men before selling this Richmond Avenue nightspot. **1967** Days before New Year's Eve, police raided the Roaring Sixites, a lesbian bar, and charged owner Wanstrom with wearing clothing of the opposite sex (pants). Strong-arm attorney Percy Foreman took the "under-dog" case and appeared in court four times before charges were finally dropped. Wanstrom and gay activist Ray Hill founded Tumblebugs to pay Foreman's $2,500 fee. The duo solicited private donations, sponsored drag shows, and sold Tumblebugs paraphernalia. **1968** Hill and Wanstrom's concerted effort spilled over into political activism. With David Patterson and other community leaders, they formed the Promethean Society, the first homosexual political organization in Houston. But internal conflict between Hill and Wanstrom and lack of support from the community weakened this aggressive organization, and it ceased to function. Subsequently, Wanstrom co-founded the Texas Homophile Educational Movement (T.H.E.M.) to "dignify human rights, all rights." Wanstrom claims that T.H.E.M. was the first gay nonprofit chartered organization in Texas. It fell to community apathy in the early '70s. Socially, the gay scene was plentiful. In "Twelve Fighting Years," Bruce Remmington writes that a 1968 bar guide listed 26 Houston homosexual taverns, including J.V.'s Cabaret on Westheimer where queen Jerry Vanover performed "Mention My Name in Sheboygan" or Hadley Street's plush Red Room where Eddie Foster played host. But imagine, all this was just a ruffle in the wave of fun yet to come in the 1970s. Pick up *OutSmart*'s March issue for what happened between 1969-1973.



Magic pen artwork of Houston artist Mark Burke.



Jerry Vanover prepares for a performance at J.V. Cabaret

Timeline provided by The Houston Gay and Lesbian Community Center and Steve Brown of the MCCR Botts Memorial Library.

PHOTO: THE ALBATROSS, 3RD ANNIVERSARY EDITION 1968

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continued from page 34

South Carolina's pro-segregationist senator Strom Thurmond and North Carolina's outspoken Jesse Helms led an attack against Rustin in a plan to sabotage the March on Washington. Thurmond denounced Rustin's homosexuality on the Senate floor, while Helms expressed his disgust outside a Republican convention. The credibility of the march weakened as Rustin's homosexuality overshadowed his abilities as a black leader.

Many of Rustin's colleagues sought his resignation and disassociation from the march, but King came to his defense, noting that Rustin had taken his share of beatings long before anyone else. His colleagues relented.

Rustin managed the logistics and preparations for the event. He was in command of the grunt work: directing volunteers, making route fliers, releasing press passes, providing water and medical supplies, and getting portable toilets. Another civil rights leader, John Lewis, remembers Rustin squeaking in a British accent: "Now we *cawn't* have any disorganized *pissing* in Washington."

On the day of the march, Lewis and Rustin were rewording Lewis' speech, and they missed the beginning of the march. They were escorted by car to the Capitol, but large crowds blocked the streets. Rustin got out and joined the "sea of humanity."

And the rest of the march is history.

Small civil movements in Houston mirrored the work of Rustin. Black community leaders and students staged protests at Texas Southern University and sit-ins at government offices. Fred Freelow, a gay black civil activist, rallied support for his own "freedom movements."

Freelow and all black gays faced a social menace—segregation. A "common bond" among homosexuals was not enough to unite the two races. "There was segregation within the gay community. Whites didn't go to black bars, and vice versa," said Jim Cass, who believes black bars were not located in the Montrose area until Studio 13 opened on Westheimer more than 10 years ago.

A short time after the historical march, Joe Andrepont

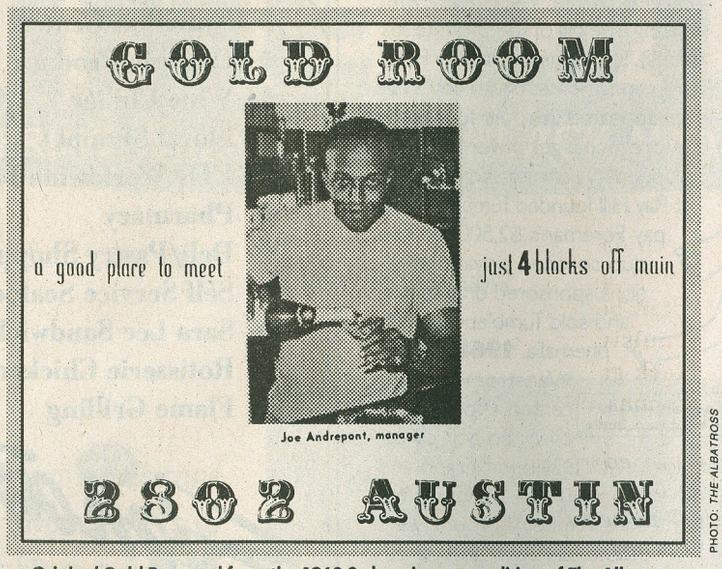
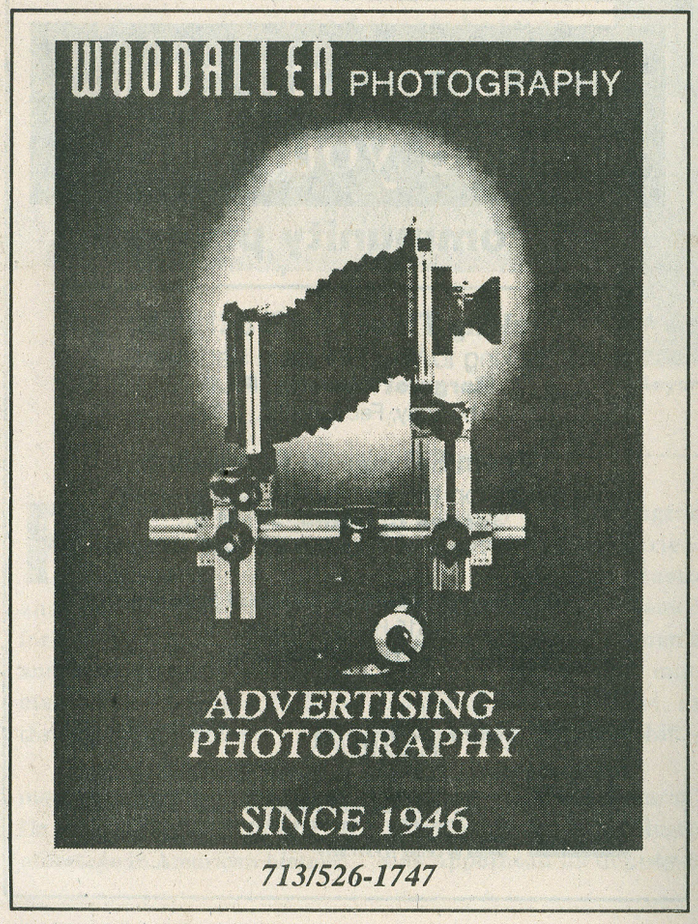
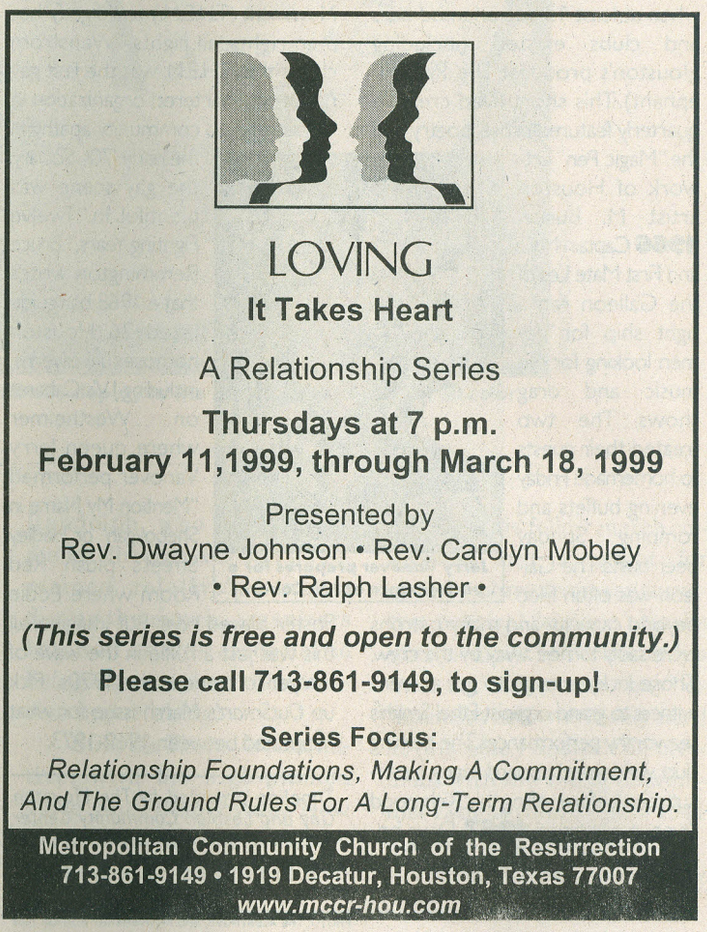


PHOTO: *THE ALBATROSS*

Original Gold Room ad from the 1968 3rd anniversary edition of *The Albatross*.





opened the Gold Room on Austin Street, dubbed by former patrons as the city's first gay black bar. The interior of this gray old house (once the Golden Nugget), nestled behind a high fence for semi-privacy, was adorned with sharp-gold drapes that shimmered from small stage lights. Only a handful of white gays, who were "curious," visited this black bar, Cass said.

On Friday and Saturday nights, nearly 120 patrons were treated to the Gold Room's high-energy performances by voluptuous drag queens in beautiful costumes, including "The Supremes" and "Eartha Kitt." They were also pampered by feature bartender Delois Gaines on Sunday afternoons, when Andrepont hosted his wiener roasts.

Police raids and arrests were frequent at the Gold Room, as they were at all gay bars during this decade. Patrons were often verbally and physically harassed when police officers with flashlights combed through the crowd. Rarely did anyone challenge police authority.

The Gold Room thrived until the late '70s, before Andrepont moved to Seattle, Wash. His bar was more than a social outlet for black gays; it validated being black and being gay during a time when both seemed socially repulsive. And this month, black gays remember these stigmas as history.

Join community advocate George Rimmey next month when he takes a look at the history of the Diana Foundation and its upcoming 45th anniversary.

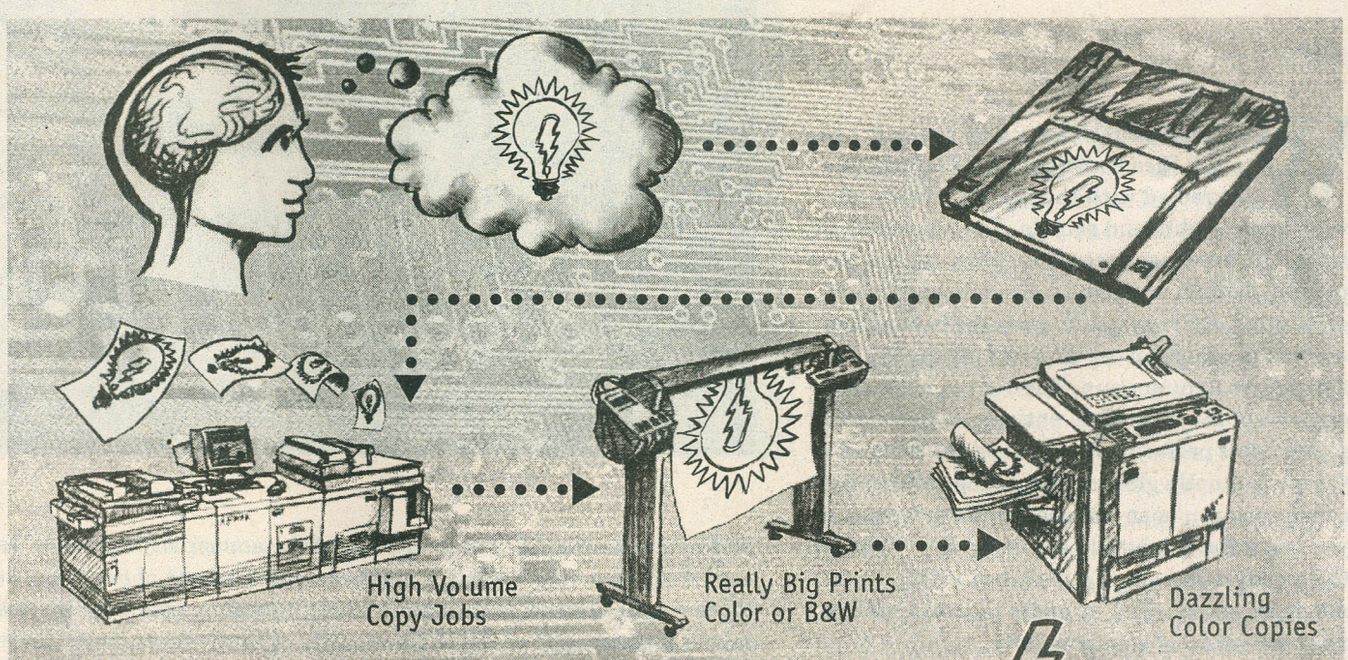
Information obtained from Walking in the Wind *by John Lewis with Michael D'Orso, and research assistance provided by Roger Ward.*



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THE DIANAS-First of a Kind



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Famous "Mommie Dearest" Number, 1983

by George Rimmey

The year was 1953. McCarthyism was in full swing, and thousands of gay government workers left the District of Columbia for the West. Houston was a pit stop on their way to California.

This was a very dark period for gays in Houston. Since many gay bars had opened in the 1940s, Montrose was developing into an enclave of the right people. Baptists and conservative leaders did not take kindly to our progress. Persecution of gays was a top priority and raids were an everyday occurrence. The police entered bars, lined up patrons, and took every other person to jail. The police also invaded private homes to arrest homosexuals. Gays were treated like common criminals and charged with "drinking after hours at an alleged homosexual gathering." These tactics only ended with the civil rights and hippie movements in the 1960s.

In the midst of that background of terror, and the fact that it was open season on gay people, a dozen or so friends met at the home of David Moncrief. It was the night of the annual Academy Awards, and it was not so common then, nor is it today, for a group of our community to get together to enjoy that festive night. Since Houston was becoming a mecca for gays, and more and more outrageous and/or elegant events in our community were becoming common occurrences, the group decided that Houston needed to have its very own Academy Awards.

Leader Charles Hebert and the group decided that an annual "Academy Award" would be given to the most outrageous and/or most ridiculous performing "gay star" of the year in Houston. There was no formal organization established at that time. It was simply a group of friends getting together to have fun.

The annual event was first held in private homes, with more and more people joining in the fun each year. Even though some of the group were still caught in raids, the annual Houston Academy Awards had a charmed existence in this unhappy era.

Others in the community soon noticed the fun and revelry of this group of well-educated individuals with a lively interest

TIMELINE 1969-72

Each month OutSmart will feature sections of the Houston gay history timeline.

1969 Couple David Stewart and Pat Petty started the outlandish, sometimes comic Miss Camp America Pageant in their home, where Petty often crowned himself with the dubious title. This spoof of the national pageant was founded as a social club for those who had "a natural penchant for theatrics," but evolved into a nonprofit foundation in support of AIDS-related charities. Don't miss the entertaining queens at the Deb-U-Not Ball at Picasso's, Mar. 7, followed by Rhinestones & Studs in July, a pre-party to the annual beauty pageant in September. **1970** Shimmering entertainment continued when Krewe of Olympus co-founders Ben Jones and Bill Walters hosted this royal bead-tossing Mardi Gras-esque celebration. This royal presentation of rich costumes and festive fashions in February has blossomed into a premier black-tie event supported by fund-raisers held throughout the year, including the popular FoDoDo Party. The Krewe first made headlines in the *Nuntius*, a monthly gay rag founded in the same year by editor Paxton Goff (alias Phil Frank). But these frolic starts of the disco-era shared the glory with community activism. In response to the Stonewall riots in New York during the previous year, young radicals of the Houston Gay Liberation Front demanded an end to local police harassment. The group met on the University of Houston campus but never gained official university sanction because of its controversial nature. It hosted a gay pride conference featuring gay activist Frank Kameny, who proclaimed that "Queen Victoria was dead, the Puritans long gone, and now was the time to move toward a more balanced notion of morality." Swaying from this radical calling to restructure society was Integrity Houston, which survived and thrived for more than a decade. Just as the Gay Front began to fold, Integrity was at the peak of its political movement, which included a meeting with mayoral candidate Fred Hofheinz. **1971** The Hi Kamp bar featured some drag queens with raw, sassy talent who performed in masses. Former loyal patrons still remember this dizzy little place near Downtown, just one block from Main Street, as one of the campiest hotspots ever. **1972** Located at Fairview and Whitney, the Montrose Gaze Community Center was a promising attempt to serve the community. But over-ambitious goals and financial difficulty led to the anarchic center's immediate demise. Although the gay community had social and political outlets, it was lacking spiritual resources. Escaping the same destiny as the short-lived center, Dignity Houston focused on spiritual development and education for gay and lesbian Catholics. Its simplistic goal to foster social progress has contributed to its lasting existence today. Even Mary's Bar survived past the strong-willed group. This Westheimer landmark near Waugh still caters to the riskiest and wildest of men, some probably of the former Houston Motorcycle Club, founded during the same time. For even more highlights of the gay community, pick up *OutSmart*'s April issue for what happened between 1973-1975.


the NUNTIUS 40¢
& OUR COMMUNITY
VOL. 2 NO. 7 JULY 1972 HOUSTON, TEXAS
TEXAS PRISONS X GAY MAIL
DALLAS GAY PRIDE PARADE SUCCESS
Stonewall vs Times

Cover artwork for *The Nuntius*, July 1972

Timeline provided by the Houston Gay and Lesbian Community Center and Steve Brown of the Botts Memorial Library of MCCR. Research obtained from "Twelve Fighting Years" by Bruce Remmington.

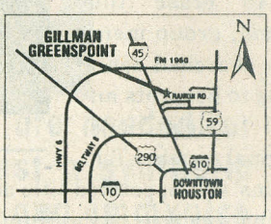
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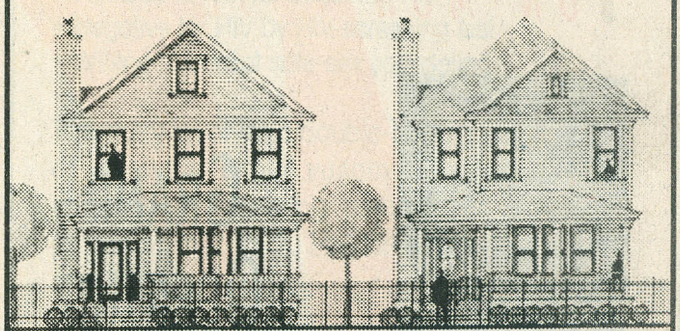

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in the theater, ballet, and the arts (which brought them all closer together).

Many outsiders soon established, in their minds erroneously, that this was an elite gay social group, since the group often met in bars and were often seen together. Jealousy reared its head, and outsiders dubbed these individuals as the snobbish "A Group." Nothing could have been further from the truth.

To erase this stigma, group members searched for a name to honor its annual celebrations. Original member Tom Adams' self-appointed title as "Diana, Goddess of the Hunt" helped give birth to the group's notorious name: the Dianas.

With a real name, the Dianas began to grow, and private homes became too small to hold the annual event. The award show had become so large and popular with elegant costumes and sets, coupled with the hiring of professional directors and choreographers, that tickets to the event had to be sold to defray costs. Some of the early shows were held at the Windmill Theater at the Town and Country shopping center; an adult movie house in the Village; the Sheridan Lincoln Hotel; and the Tower Theater.

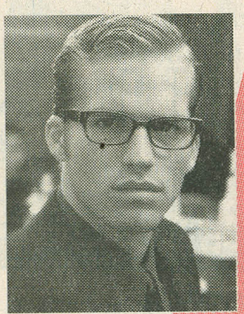


Kathy Whitmire number in 1985

The Dianas annual show also became a black-tie event. There are many black-tie events in Houston today, but the Dianas was a first.

The annual show began making a profit early on and the group, even though they were not a nonprofit organization, donated proceeds from the event to the community. One of the first recipients was the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts. Many of the members enjoyed being on that selection committee. It was always their hope that a student who received a

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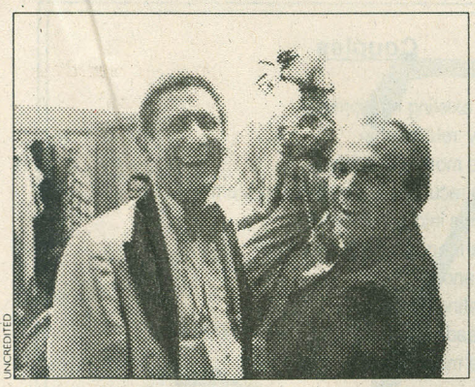
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David Moncrief (l), in whose house the first Diana Awards was held, is seen here with Wayland Flowers (r) and Madam.

scholarship from the Dianas would go on to fame and fortune just to come back and support the Dianas.

The Dianas was an early buyer of bricks at the Wortham Center, and soon the awards show was held at that opera house. That event drew the largest gay black-tie crowd in Houston history and was capped off with a midnight dinner at the Hyatt Regency. The record number of people attending that event has yet to be duplicated.

Hebert also held the annual "Barbecue at Tara" at his home until his death in 1987. This event evolved into what is now the Dianas annual country dinner held in October at the Polo Grounds inside the park at 610 and Memorial Drive. Live bands, fantastic barbecue, dancing, and an evening when everyone is a cowboy or cowgirl—it's a not-to-miss ticket.

When AIDS appeared on the scene, the Dianas became a nonprofit foundation distributing its profits from the annual award show and country dinner to various AIDS organizations. The Dianas was instrumental in establishing the McAdory House, the first AIDS Hospice in Houston, and also helped form the Assistance Fund.

Going to a Diana show is like going to party at Auntie Mame's. If you enjoy making fun of yourself and have a sense of humor, the show is a must. I've always felt making fun of life is not an insult, but a sign of maturity.

The 45th Diana Awards Show will be held this year on Mar. 27, 7 p.m., at the fabulously restored Crystal Ball Room at the Rice. The cabaret-theme show includes a seated dinner and live entertainment featuring Samantha Samuels, an Edith Piaf twin. Proceeds from this year's award show will be donated to Body Positive. To purchase tickets starting at $95, call 713/639-2000.



UNCREDITED

"Ava" (center), perennial star of awards show, with fans.

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George Rimmey, pictured at his high school prom in 1946 (top), and at a recent community function, is a community advocate with a long history of charitable involvement. He can be reached care of this publication at George Rimmey@outsmartmagazine.com.

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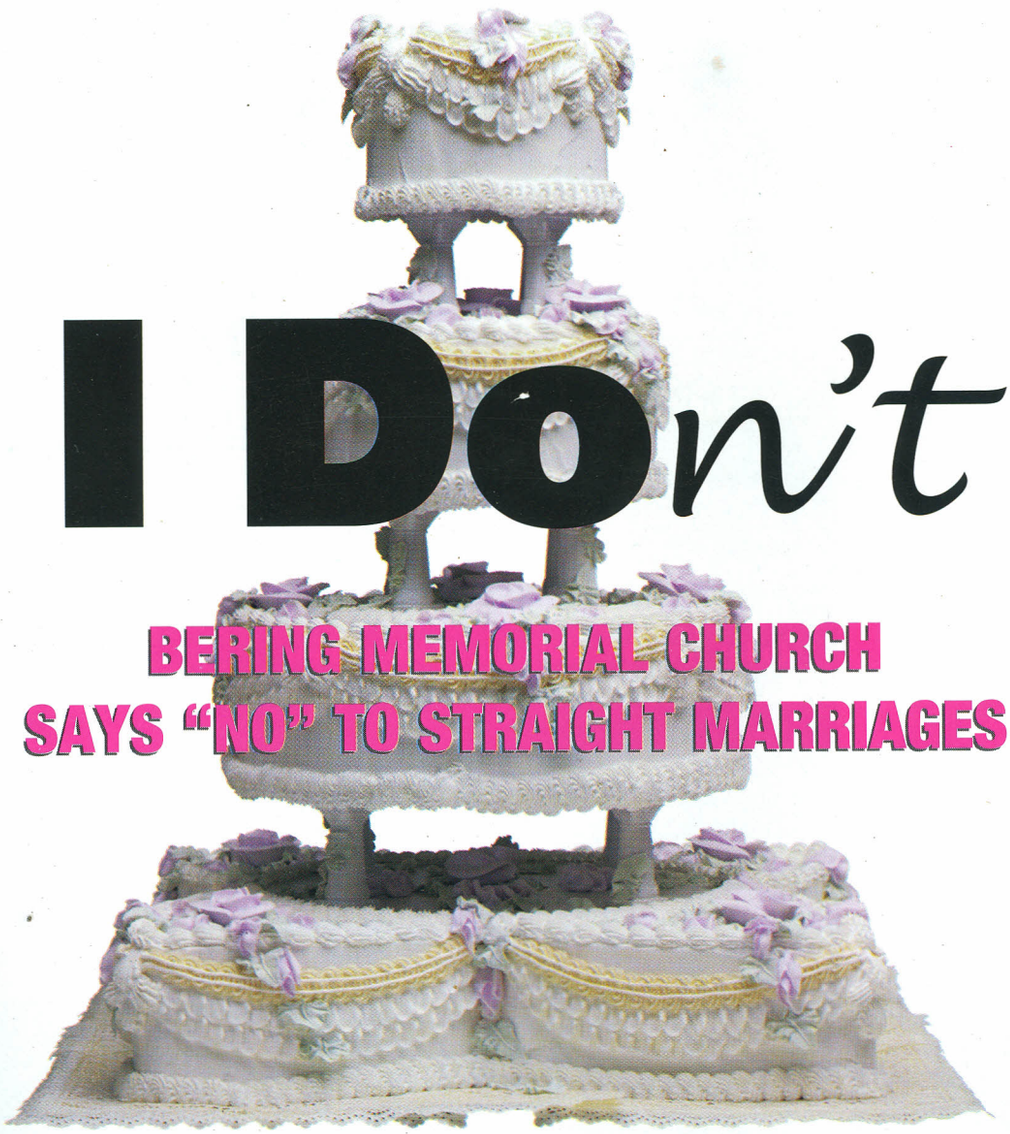
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- HIV-Infected Patients Feel the Effects of a Medicare Cap
- Gay Issues in the 76th Texas Legislature
- Comic/Actor Jason Stuart Tells Almost All

KREWE of OLYMPUS

-Mardi Gras, Texas Style

by George Rimmey

Back in 1970 the Krewe of Olympus established itself by hosting one of the first gay Mardi Gras balls in New Orleans. Although heterosexual Mardi Gras balls were in existence for hundreds of years, it was unheard of for a gay group to host such spectacular feats.

There were several straight krewes in New Orleans that carried an almost sacred allure. Their members were carefully selected and highly restricted. Many of them, not wanting to upset the status quo, held very quiet balls with plain or simple costumes. However, the Krewe of Olympus, fighting convention, was one of the first gay krewes to use rhinestones and feathers, putting them in a class of their own.

Ben Jones joined the Krewe in New Orleans in 1974. His life partner Bill Walters joined in 1978. Their interest in the Krewe and its growth became an intrinsic part of their lives. When Ben and Bill moved to Houston in 1980, they continued to rent an apartment in New Orleans so they could return and continue full participation in the Krewe's activities. But in 1991 the Krewe of Olympus suffered from a dwindling membership. Many of its members left the city or suffered from the effects of AIDS in the community.



Reigning King Denise Martin and Queen Weldon Hickey 1999

The Krewe was down to just three members when Ben and Bill effectively moved the Krewe to Houston in 1991. Their leadership since has increased membership to more than 60 members and massive events at the Edwin Hornberger Conference Center, with more than 800 members in attendance.

The first Houston ball was held in 1992 at the Ramada Inn Northwest in its grand ballroom. Nearly 20 members dressed in elegant and fabulous costumes for the show's 250 guests. A convention for the Goat Ropers, in town for the annual Houston Rodeo at the time, were having a conference in the room next to the Krewe's pageant. It wasn't long before these rough and ready cowboys sensed something strange was going on, and it was impossible to stop them from crashing the party. The members' vim, vigor, and enthusiasm excited everyone, and the first Houston Mardi Gras show was off with a bang.

The Krewe of Olympus ball is a tableau, meaning it is a theme-costume presentation by the members and requiring black-tie attire for the guests. Each year the theme is unique. There is no charge for admission to the ball; guests must be invited by a member of the Krewe.

Each year a "captain" is elected by the membership. The captain's authority over the ball is absolute. He determines the theme, picks the king and queen, and determines the table arrangements and seating assignments. Every member gets 10 invitations. However, the captain can increase the number when a member gives extra effort and work. The captain's table

TIMELINE 1973-75

Each month OutSmart *will feature sections of the Houston gay history timeline as featured in the January issue.*

1973 Political unity within the gay community began to crystallize when the **Houston Gay Political Coalition (HGPC)**—led by **Billy Walker**, **Chuck Berger**, **Bob Osborne**, and **Randy Thomas**—entered onto the political stage. Calling the former **Hope Mission for Alcoholic Women** building at 504 Fairview its home, HGPC was organized to provide such basic needs as legal council, to educate parent groups, and to provide other services lacking within the gay and lesbian community. And although HGPC did not draw much support from other community groups, it appeared before City Council twice in May, when it demanded a halt to job discrimination and police harassment. It also demanded that a liaison group be established with the police department and that the **Human Relations Council** recognize gays as a minority group. Refusing to take action, **Mayor Louis Welch** walked out during the second Council meeting "on the pretext that he had to greet visiting Japanese mayors."



Pokey Anderson

1974 **Henry McClurg** founded the news publication ***Contact,*** which had distribution nationwide despite its deep Houston roots. And although it may have only published 17 issues before being absorbed by ***The Advocate*** in 1975, it served as the catalyst for a myriad of other news-based publications geared to inform, empower, and unite Houston's gay and lesbian population.

1975 ***The Pointblank Times***, founded in March by **Linda Lovell** and **Alison McKinney**, was the city's first lesbian periodical. Although snubbed by many of its surrounding peer publications, the *Times* addressed feminist and lesbian subject matter until it encountered financial difficulties in 1978. Big-business lesbians continued their growing presence in the community, including top-notch **Marion Pantzer**. With her partner, she opened the lesbian bar **Just Marion & Lynn's**, where many patrons flocked to hear lesbian poet **Judy Grahn**. The event was a mere highlight of the many cultural events held at the bar. During the mid-year, though, politics took over from the social scene. **The Gay Political Caucus (GPC)**, borrowing its name from the **Women's Political Caucus**, announced its formation at a press conference. Leading the GPC's efforts was **Integrity**'s **Jerry Miller**; **Reverend Robert Falls**, the first pastor of the newly formed **Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection**; **Pokey Anderson**, lesbian community representative; **Hugh Crell**; **Keith McGee**; and **Bill Buie**. (Certain accounts also recognize well-known homosexual activist **Ray Hill** as a co-founder of GPC.) The caucus' demands included the introduction of new legislation prohibiting discrimination against gays in the workplace and the right for gay couples to jointly file tax forms. A major issue for the caucus, however, was the repeal of Article 21.06, which classified the act of sexual intercourse between two individuals of the same sex, even private, consensual contact, as a class C misdemeanor and now punishable by a fine of up to $500. Look for *OutSmart*'s May issue, where we will spotlight certain historic events that helped to strengthen Houston's gay and lesbian community during 1976-1978.

—Steve Poruban

Timeline provided by the Houston Gay and Lesbian Community Center and Steve Brown of the Botts Memorial Library of MCCR. Research obtained from "Twelve Fighting Years" by Bruce Remmington.

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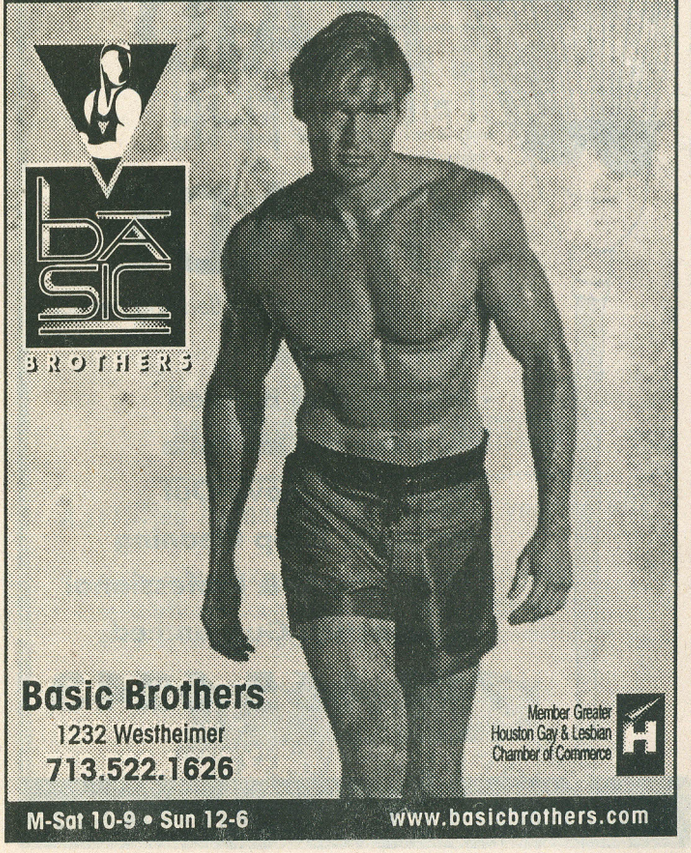
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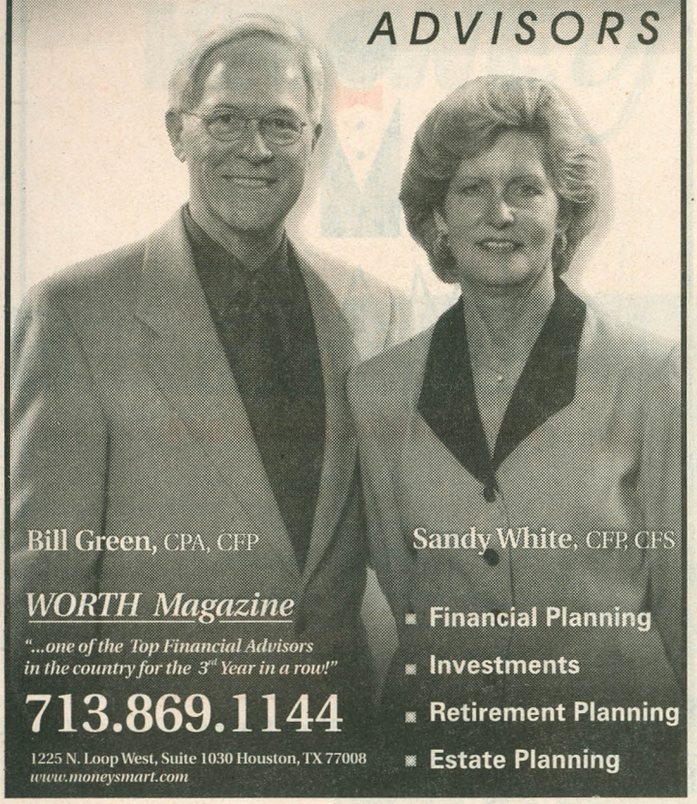
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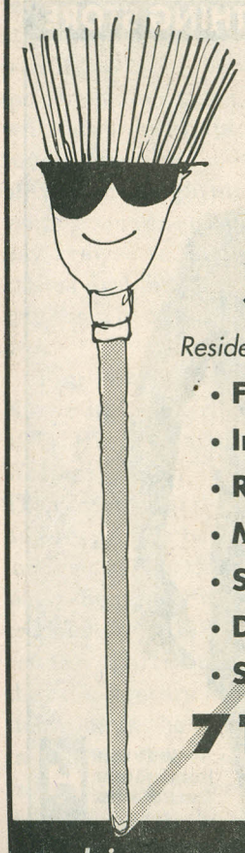
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seats about 50 and is reserved for his friends, event underwriters and sponsors, and community leaders; it is a great honor to sit at the captain's table.

Since the ball's theme changes from year to year, guests come prepared for surprises. At the beginning of the ball, the king and queen present themselves to the guests and walk the length of the ballroom showing their fabulous costumes. After they take their seats of honor to reign over the ball, members come out in resplendent costumes in accordance with the theme, some worth nearly $3,000. (We all know rhinestones and feathers do not come cheap.) They too walk the length of the ballroom, and the throwing of the beads begins. Members throw out beads to guests, who scurry to get as many as they can. Attending the Krewe of Olympus Ball is like going to the Belle Arts Ball in Paris!

During the ball, a collection is taken for designated community charities, and guests respond with an outpouring of donations. In a matter of minutes, thousands of dollars are collected. Last month during the Krewe's "Games People Play" Ball, $16,000 was raised for AIDS services and gay-oriented organizations such as the Thomas Street Clinic, the PWA Holiday Charities, and the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard. Past recipients have included Q Patrol and Pet Patrol.

Sands Stiefer, this year's captain, stated, "The purpose of the Krewe of Olympus is not only working toward increasing needed monies for charities in our community but also to preserve and extend the traditions of the gay Mardi Gras ball."


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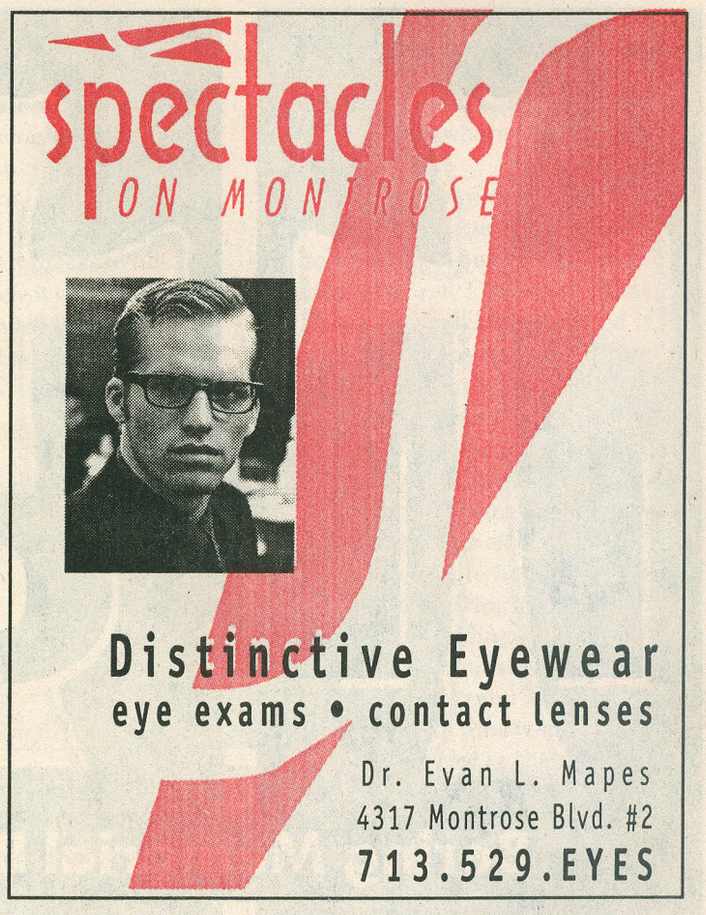
Since members pay for their own costumes, three fund-raisers are held throughout the year to raise money for the ball's expenses, including the hall rental. Any money raised in excess of the expenses is also donated to the ball's designated charities. The three fund-raisers are the Fais Do Do Party, the Bastille Day Party, and the 12th Night Party.

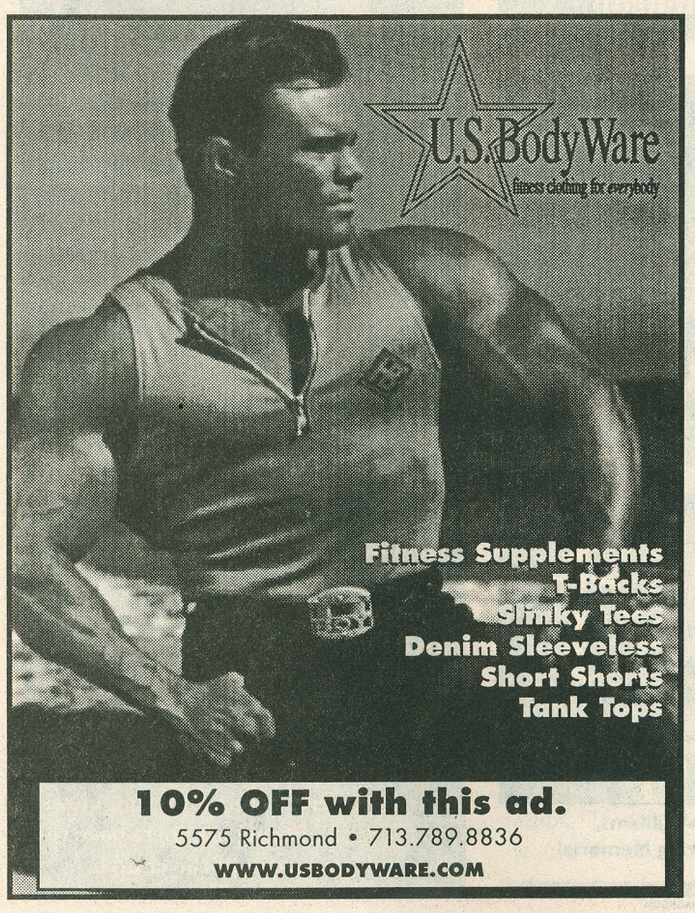
The Fais Do Do Party (country) is always in October, and it is a Cajun Festival. Zydeco music rings out, and there is Creole food like Houston has never seen. The French-style Bastille Day Party is in July. It is a celebration of freedom which features a headless Marie Antoinette cutting and serving cake, and leather-clad executioners monitoring a guillotine.

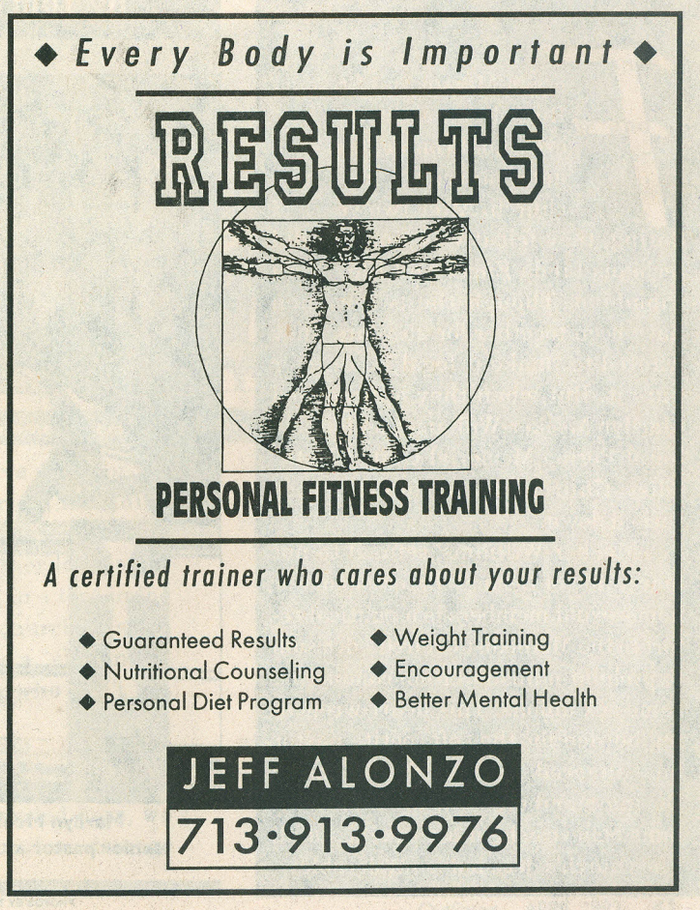
The Krewe also hosts the 12th Night Party, in recognition of the Feast of the Epiphany held on the 12th night after Christmas, which marks the beginning of Mardi Gras season. The Krewe of Olympus gives an elegant cocktail party on that day.

And speaking of cocktails, Briar Patch's own Wayne Gray takes full control of the bar activities at the balls. Many of the guest ball bartenders are leading members of our community, and are at the splendid mercy of Gray's training. The ball is always followed by a cast party at the Briar Patch.

Krewe members make up a delightful team, with no motivation other than to provide entertainment to a grateful crowd. Their efforts are strictly for the enjoyment of their guests. In fact, none of the members sit in the audience to view the show, making the Krewe of Olympus a unique group of men and women, both gay and straight of all minorities, a constant pleasure to the party eye.







MAY 1999 • COMPLIMENTARY

OutSmart

Houston's Gay & Lesbian Monthly Magazine



The Birds & The Bees

Gay Love and Lust in the Animal Kingdom

Houston's 3rd Annual Gay & Lesbian Film Festival

ALSO: Gay Sports • Ballet's Dominic Walsh • Texas Lesbian Conference • Colt 45's

THE COLT 45's

a brotherhood of charity

by George Rimmey

In 1976 a group of 13 gay men organized a self-styled "Western charity club" called the Colt 45's. Although they came from all walks of life, in the early years no gals were allowed, no fussy cosmopolitan-type gents, no tennis club groupies, nor golf-green types either.

In order to join the organization Glenn C. Smith, an early member, said, "You not only had to want to do good works, but you had to own a pair of black and a pair of brown cowboy boots, a black and a brown leather vest, and felt and straw cowboy hats." In other words, to be a member of the Colt 45's you had to be an easy-going cowboy type or an Old West buff who could rope-'n'-ride and was interested in doing what the Lone Ranger called "good works."



UNCREDITED

Colt-45's 1981 Ripcord Anniversary: (l-r) Becky Pitner, Jim Moore, Ron Anderson, Ben Moore, Floyd Irvine, Marty Single, Rodney Smith, Daryl Butler, and Randy Chamble.

Colt 45 members did indeed make striking figures going about from place to place in their Western garb collecting money for various charities and people in need. Much of the Colts' early contributions were raised at an annual Country Carnival held at the Brazos River Bottom. The carnival was always very successful, mixing an evening of ring throwing, darts, wheel of fortune, and raffles with fund-raising.

Proceeds from the carnival were donated to community organizations, including Goodfellows, Variety Boys Club, and the Ronald McDonald House. The Colts did not receive any of the proceeds; all their administrative costs were out-of-pocket, as they still are today.

In 1981 the Colts became a nonprofit organization, and when AIDS appeared on the scene, they were ready to face this terrible catastrophe. Members distributed collection boxes marked "Aid for AIDS" throughout the community. It was almost impossible to go into a bar, restaurant, store, or any other business that served the gay community without seeing those collection boxes.

Not only did the Colts collect funds, but they also set up a processing procedure to disperse the money to those in need. The Aid for AIDS campaign was the impetus to the Colt 45's AIDS Trouble Fund.

The Colts were concerned about people diagnosed with AIDS and their inability to afford housing and utility bills after paying costly medical bills. The Colts allocated funding through the AIDS Trouble Fund to qualifying PWAs (either on disability or living on a limited income) to assist with rent payments and bills.

Since the Colts' membership was limited to 25 at the time, the process of screening and funding applicants was a monumental task only accomplished by strict dedication. The Colts have distributed approximately $393,000 in direct assistance to more than 1,300 clients in the past 11 years.

Many organizations in the community began raising funds to fight AIDS in the mid-'80s: Miss Camp America, the Dianas, the Royal Sovereign and Impe-

TIMELINE 1976-78

Each month OutSmart will feature sections of the Houston gay history timeline as featured in the January issue.

1976 A perfect marriage of socialization and charity was attained through the formation of the Colt 45's. Since its humble beginnings, the group, which initially limited its membership to just 30 people, have sponsored a suite in the Ronald McDonald House on La Concha Street and have entertained at St. Anthony's Convalescent Home on Almeda. In the Jan. 1981 issue of *Upfront*, a description of the organization was published: "The club's aim is to do good works for the gay and straight community to show people what gay people can do." Also, Henry McClurg, who had founded the relatively short-lived *Contact*, launched the *Montrose Star*. From the very first issue of the newspaper, which appeared in July, McClurg sought after a stronger, news-oriented format than was present in other gay and lesbian publications of the time. Many Houston publications can be viewed to this day at the MCCR archives. **1977** In July, Charles Gillis opened Wilde and Stein Bookstore—named after outlandish English playwright Oscar Wilde and feminist writer Gertrude Stein—on Richmond Avenue. The store peddled books, periodicals, and both fiction and nonfiction literature about homosexuality and the gay rights movement. Gillis reportedly launched the store due to his hindered gay upbringing in east Texas in the early 1960s—the public libraries at the time yielded no books about any gay topics of interest. Wilde and Stein served the Houston gay and lesbian community by offering easily accessible (and positively presented) materials to a needy gay and lesbian public. Also, the bookstore served its purpose as a meeting place, serving as a template for stores of its type yet to come. **1978** The first issue of *Upfront* appeared in April, taking on a more critical and substantial view of gay and lesbian issues. Gary van Ooteghem, the first president of the Gay Political Caucus, established the newspaper, which two years later morphed into *Upfront America*. According to reports, *Upfront*'s founder used the publication, more or less openly, to fill a void that was lacking in the coverage of gay issues he thought to be most important. In its first issue, *Upfront*'s editorial outlined van Ooteghem's concern for more relative and topical gay publications: "One of the primary goals is to raise the awareness and consciousness of our community through provision of information about issues of national, state, and local concern. Many of us exist in a vacuum, unconcerned and unaware of the serious and dangerous conditions that confront us in the larger community." Another attempt at organizing Houston's community was through the startup of the Montrose Activity Center (MAC) in July. The board of directors of the newly founded MAC—which ran for nonprofit in an acquired 18,000-square foot edifice on Holman Street at the corner of La Branch—professed the center's purpose "to provide a facility for gay groups and organizations at a minimum cost." And used it was, by such influential organizations as the Gay Political Caucus; the social-political group, Integrity; Church of Christ homosexual support group, A Cappella Chorus; gay theater ensemble, the Montrose Players; and the Montrose Marching Band. MAC eventually closed due to insufficient funding. Pick up June's issue of *OutSmart*, when some of Houston's gay and lesbian history highlights are revealed for 1979-1981.



Gary van Ooteghem

Timeline provided by the Houston Gay and Lesbian Community Center and Steve Brown of the Botts Memorial Library of MCCR. Research obtained from "Twelve Fighting Years" by Bruce Remmington.



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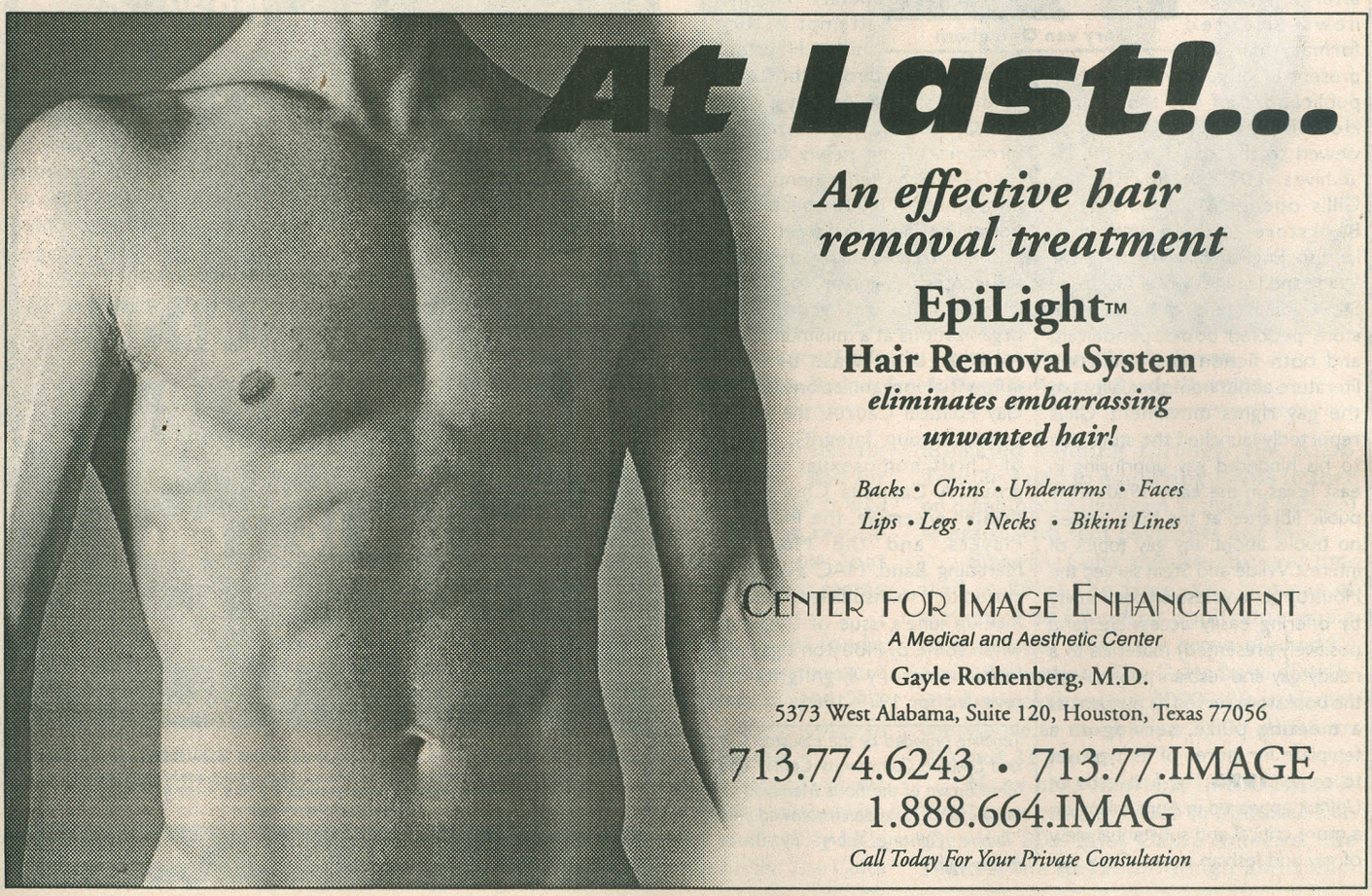
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rial Court of the Single Star, the Krewe of Olympus, A Christmas Songfest, and the Texas Gay Rodeo Association. All of the organizations wanted to raise money but were not set up or prepared to distribute funds directly to those affected by AIDS. The organizational efforts of the Colts were recognized by these groups, which contributed a portion of their fund-raising revenue to the AIDS Trouble Fund.

The Colts always stressed a masculine appearance; members in the early days would never consider appearing in "drag." However, in 1985, a very special person appeared on the scene: Lady Victoria Lust (Marvin Davis). Davis was a retired drag queen who, although sick himself, began performing again to raise funds for AIDS. It was his idea that during the Christmas season special attention should be given to those who were ill in order to brighten up their lives. He put all his tips together made during performances and distributed them in $20 increments to needful PWAs. Lady Victoria Lust also contacted his friends to raise funds through performances of their own.

The Colts, liking what they saw, incorporated Lady Victoria Lust charitable work into their organization, thus giving his performances and money-raising efforts nonprofit tax status. They also absorbed all of his expenses. The Lady Victory Lust Fund, though, expanded into what is now called the PWA Holiday Charities. Amazingly, before this happened more than $100,000 had been distributed to those in need. Lady Victoria Lust is long gone, but her legacy lives on considering the PWA Holiday Charities continues to financially contribute to the Colt 45's.

With their assistance, and other community organizations, the Colt 45's are able to maintain the AIDS Trouble Fund and two other main financial assistance programs: the Stone Soup Food Pantry Fund and the Till Thacker III Memorial Fund.



The Colts distributed approximately $183,000 through its Stone Soup Food Pantry Fund, which is used to pay wholesale food vendors who supply fresh fruits, vegetables, and meats to the food center. The Till Thacker III Memorial Fund was established in loving memory of a cherished Colt 45 member and respected community leader. Grant recipients from this fund are generally AIDS- and HIV-related organizations that support other worthy community efforts. Also allocated from this fund is financial assistance for burial expenses to families who have lost someone to AIDS. More than $200,000 has been distributed.

The community's confidence in the Colt 45's has been supported by letters of commendation from both President Bill Clinton and Gov. George W. Bush. Former Houston Mayor Bob Lanier also proclaimed June 15, 1996 as "Colt 45 Day" in honor of its 20th anniversary.

Colt member Jim Moore said, "The closeness and friendship among the members, along with the promotion of the Western image and the community confidence makes it all worthwhile."

For the first time, this year the grand marshal for the Gay Pride Parade was chosen by an open community vote. The Colt 45's have been selected as the 1999 Organizational Grand Marshal, recognizing the hard work and commitment of this worthy organization.

Dan Lindquist, the current president of the Colts, said "We will continue to raise funds and distribute as much money as the community will entrust us with to people living with AIDS."



One thing is for sure: If you're a Colt 45, you're a very special person.

George Rimmey is a community advocate with a long history of charitable involvement. He can be reached care of this publication.

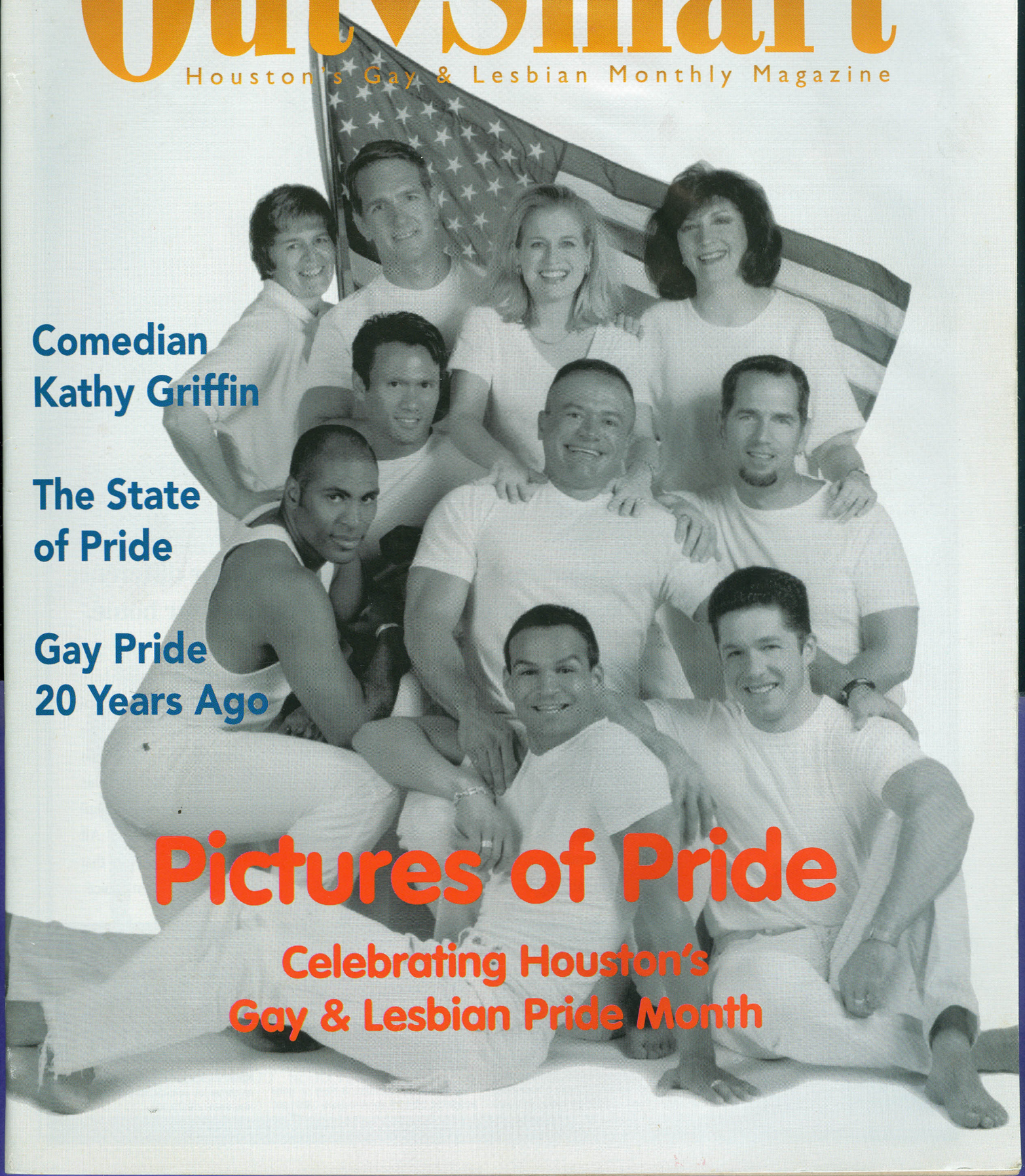




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OutSmart

Houston's Gay & Lesbian Monthly Magazine



Comedian Kathy Griffin

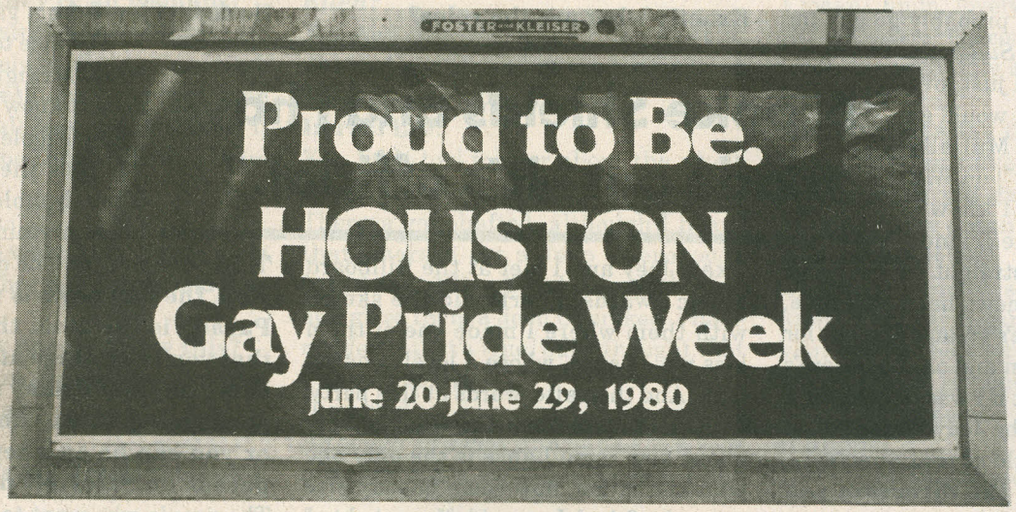
The State of Pride

Gay Pride 20 Years Ago

Pictures of Pride

Celebrating Houston's Gay & Lesbian Pride Month

HOUSTON PRIDE Turns 20



• by Steven Poruban • photographs by Blase DiStefano •

This year marks the 20th anniversary of Houston's gay and lesbian pride parade and celebration. And this year's theme—"Pride, Power, and Pizzazz"—seemingly highlights the core elements underlying the community's overall achievements and long-time survival.

The presence and power of the gay and lesbian community has grown noticeably strong over the last 20 years and the community is, as it should be, extremely proud of its accomplishments. Plus, no other group of individuals seems better able to really put on a party than the gay and lesbian community. In the words of the first pride celebration's co-organizer Larry Bagneris at a rally following the first organized parade: "I'm beginning to think that only gays can do everything right."

There exists a discrepancy in Houston about how and when pride was started. In 1976, about 200 members of the now-defunct Gay Activist Alliance marched down a two-block stretch of road. Discovering the significance of this event and its placement in Houston's gay history merely depends on who is asked.

It would seem that no single incident sparked the first community-concerted observance of pride in Houston. Of course, the event's organizers intended, in part, to commemorate the infamous Stonewall Riots, then 10 years old. The riots still serve as a pivotal point in gay history, when the community spoke up and out with demands for fair and equal treatment. But the pride celebration in 1979 went beyond remembering. And the momentous occasion set a precedent for all future pride events to follow.



"Disco Grandma" Mary Thelma Hensel (l), the parade's grand marshal, and gay activist Ray Hill celebrate Gay Pride in 1979.

Around the time of the first organized pride event, gays and lesbians were moving to the Houston area in droves. Billed as the newest "Gay Mecca," Houston was quickly becoming a strong urban force, and the sense of community was a healthy one.

The theme of that first organized happening was "Proud to Be." With an estimated crowd of about 20,000, the all-gay parade was routed along Westheimer, starting from Shepherd and continuing to Bagby. A police escort accompanied the 20 floats along their passage through what was dubbed the "Great Gay Way of the Montrose."

"Disco Grandma" Mary Thelma Hensel acted as the parade's grand mar-

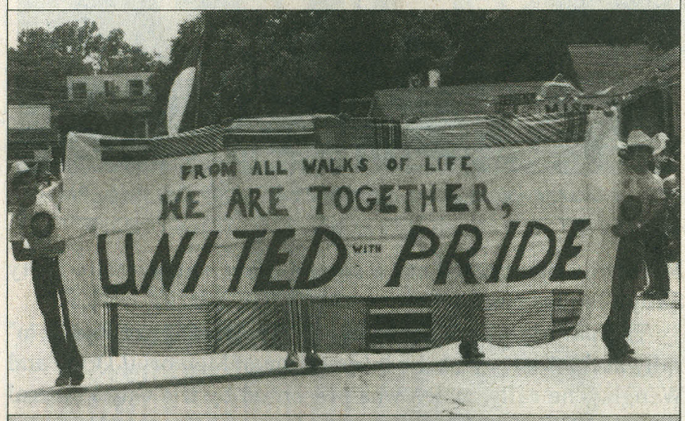
TIMELINE 1979-81

Each month OutSmart will feature sections of the Houston gay history timeline as featured in the January issue.

1979 Commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Stonewall riots in New York City, June saw the first organized efforts toward the start-up of Gay and Lesbian Pride Week Parades. The week-long event instilled a sense of pride and community that are still apparent in Houston today (see related story on previous page). The Gay Men's Chorus of Houston (GMCH) began and continues through to this day, performing at least two major concerts every season. The chorus' membership is comprised of both singing and non-singing members and invites members of both sexes and any sexual preference. Its mantra remains: "GMCH strives to instill community spirit though a mixed repertoire of formal, popular, and empowering music."

1980 In May, the Montrose Sports Association (MSA) became a Texas nonprofit organization appealing to gays who enjoyed organized competitive sports. The core idea behind the group was summed up in Article 4 of incorporation: "The specific and primary purpose is to foster sports competition among the membership for the pleasure and recreation of its members, with special interest for the gay community." MSA's first assistant director Patrick McIlvain said of the organization, "MSA is an alternative to bars, baths, and bookstores, centered around sports with a natural social outgrowth. The camaraderie generated by exercise is a lot more genuine than that mustered by martinis."

1981 Kathy Whitmire was elected mayor with gay and lesbian backing. Previous Whitmire campaigns for city controller were staffed with lesbian volunteers. The Montrose Clinic got its start through the work of Ruth Ravas, or "Mother Ruth" as she was known in the gay and lesbian community. Ravas helped to run a program that screened the homosexual community for venereal disease, which was becoming a growing concern. Initially, Ravas "in her own very ingratiating way, got herself into the bars" to screen the Montrose populace and then, later, was aided by a used mobile unit. Realizing the necessity for the service yet conceding to its shortcomings, the Gay Political Caucus' Medical Committee, under the stewardship of David Bonuelos, made plans toward a "free-standing medical clinic in the Montrose area that would be free [and] would serve the predominantly gay population." With the onset of HIV and AIDS, the clinic still plays a vital role as a nonprofit, low- or no-cost healthcare facility, serving the gay and lesbian community. Next month, *OutSmart* will highlight certain events that helped shape the Houston gay and lesbian community during 1982-1984.



From all walks of life: 1980's Gay Pride Parade began with this proud banner.

Timeline provided by the Houston Gay and Lesbian Community Center and Steve Brown of the Botts Memorial Library of MCCR. Research obtained from "Twelve Fighting Years" by Bruce Remmington.

Pictures of Pride



NAME: Ian Leffler **AGE:** 40 **HOMETOWN:** Moline, IL **GAY OR STRAIGHT?** Gay **YEARS OUT:** Since birth **MOM AND DAD KNOW?** Yes **GAY HERO:** Tinky Winky **GAY ZERO:** Rev. Falwell **ADVICE FOR NEWLY OUT:** Play safe. **PET PEEVE:** Stereotyping **RELIGIOUS OR SPIRITUAL?** Both **Y2K: HYPE OR HELP!** Over it already! **GAY STEREOTYPE THAT FITS YOU BEST:** See pet peeve. **GAY PREDICTION FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM:** People of all races, sexual preferences, and sexes will become closer and accepting. *Ian can be found at Basic Brothers clothing store.*



NAME: Richard Wiederholt **AGE:** 57 **HOMETOWN:** Maryville, MO **GAY OR STRAIGHT?** Gay **YEARS OUT:** 20 **MOM AND DAD KNOW?** Father died before I "came out." Mother knew before she died. **GAY HERO:** First drag queens at Stonewall who fought back. **GAY ZERO:** Anyone who believes God made homosexuals to be hated. **ADVICE FOR NEWLY OUT:** Come on out and join the rest of us. It's a great life. **PET PEEVE:** Gays and lesbians who refuse to get involved in our community. **RELIGIOUS OR SPIRITUAL?** Spiritual **Y2K: HYPE OR HELP!** Help **GAY STEREOTYPE THAT FITS YOU BEST:** I don't believe in stereotyping. **GAY PREDICTION FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM:** Slow but definite progress in not only being recognized but being appreciated. *Wedding bells still ringing. Richard and Ian (above) are celebrating pride month as recent newlyweds.*



NAME: Sean D. Carter **AGE:** 28 **HOMETOWN:** Garland, TX (suburb of Dallas) **GAY OR STRAIGHT?** Gay! **YEARS OUT:** 8 **MOM AND DAD KNOW?** Yes, probably before I did. **GAY HERO:** Olympia Dukakis **GAY ZERO:** Martha Stewart **ADVICE FOR NEWLY OUT:** Respect the older members of our community. They had it rough and made it easier for us. **PET PEEVE:** Men who juggle other men. **RELIGIOUS OR SPIRITUAL?** Buddhist (spiritual) **Y2K: HYPE OR HELP!** Blah, blah, blah! **GAY STEREOTYPE THAT FITS YOU BEST:** Swish! **GAY PREDICTION FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM:** Sequin tube tops, butterfly collars, and feathered hairdos will be hip again! *Sean is the development and marketing manager at the Montrose Counseling Center and is one of this year's proud grand marshals for the Gay Pride Parade.*



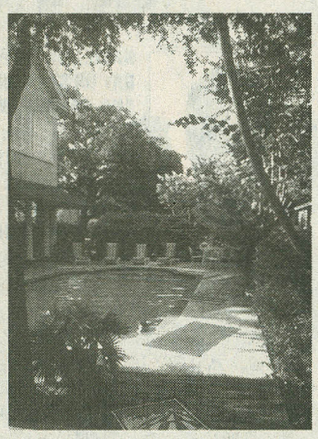
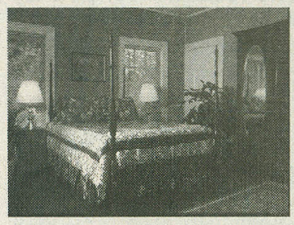
NAME: Caroline Burum **HOMETOWN:** Houston **GAY OR STRAIGHT?** Gay **YEARS OUT:** 9 **MOM AND DAD KNOW?** Yes **GAY HERO:** M. Dietrich **ADVICE FOR NEWLY OUT:** Find a support group like H.A.T.C.H. or Twenty Something **PET PEEVE:** When people accidentally out someone. **RELIGIOUS OR SPIRITUAL?** Spiritual **Y2K: HYPE OR HELP!** Just relax—it'll be Jan. 2 soon. *Caroline is the proud owner of Toopees Cafe.*



NAME: Bridgette Chambers **AGE:** 29 **HOMETOWN:** Houston **GAY OR STRAIGHT?** Gay! Is there any other way to be? **YEARS OUT:** 6 **MOM AND DAD KNOW?** Yes. Dad is supportive; mom is out; sister is out. **GAY HERO:** Robert Sadler **ADVICE FOR NEWLY OUT:** Relax and breathe. It will all work out. **PET PEEVE:** When people chew ice. **RELIGIOUS OR SPIRITUAL?** Both. This is something that me and my partner share and keep at home. **Y2K: HYPE OR HELP!** Hype. Nonetheless, I am still going to go to the ATM machine on New Year's—just in case. **GAY STEREOTYPE THAT FITS YOU BEST:** Let's see—there are typically two lesbian stereotypes: 1. Butch (I hate the word dyke) and 2. A lipstick lesbian. I am somewhat in between—clearly further from the lipstick stuff. **GAY PREDICTION FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM:** In the near future, gays and lesbians will enjoy federal protection at the workplace and protection from hate crimes. *The optimistic Bridgette connects us all as a wireless consultant.*

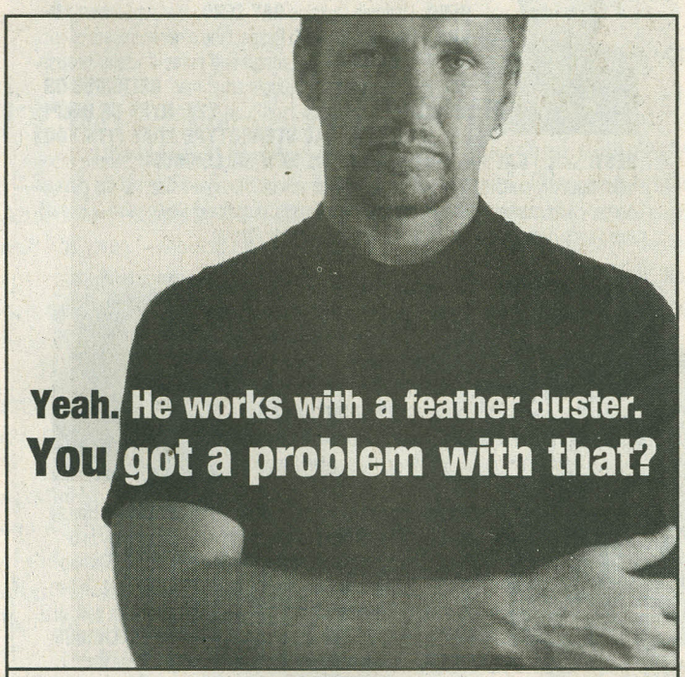
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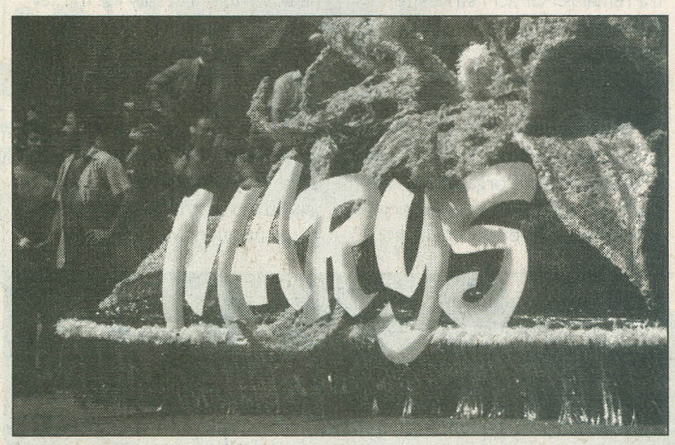
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MANMAID SERVICES

shal, led down the street by the MAC marching band and drill team. En route, she blew kisses to the crowd as they cheered wildly.

The floats were judged along the way. Mary's Lounge's float, titled "Proud to Be Beautiful," was awarded top prize.





Mary's Lounge was awarded top prize in the 1979 Gay Pride Parade.

Midtowne Spa turned out a second-place entry, while Dirty Sally's landed third place.

The parade was followed by an "Expressions of Freedom" rally at Spotts Park at the intersection of Memorial Drive and Waugh. The rally, which was presented by the Gay Political Caucus (GPC), reportedly attracted several thousand gay and lesbian participants. At the time, the GPC and Pride Committee worked together to sponsor the event.

The rally featured activist Ray Hill and GPC president Steve Shiflett, both of whom introduced the guest speakers. The speakers' respective topics addressed the issues of the time. The speakers included Tony Lazada, commenting on the 10th anniversary of Stonewall; Kathy Whitmire, making an appearance to vie for the gay vote; Jean O'Leary, co-founder of the National Gay Task Force, speaking about the national organization; and Midge Costanza, a former White House advisor to President Carter, commenting on the affluence and strength of the American gay minority. *This Week in Texas* (*TWT*) noted Costanza as saying, amusingly, that she had sat in the president's chair and that "it fit!"

Following the rally, $2,500 worth of fireworks were launched above the gathered mass of onlookers.

This year's pride celebration is bound to give previous years' events a run for their money, declares Brian Keever, Pride Committee of Houston, Inc. board member and banner district chair. "To me," he says, "Pride Week is just as important to our community as Thanksgiving or Christmas or anything else."

On the important function that pride serves within the community, Keever noted: "We have another generation of young gay men and lesbians that have no clue what 'Stonewall' is unless you educate them.

"It also helps people 'come out' because they see other people having a good time, it might give them the nudge to say, 'Wow, I could actually do that.'"

With that, Happy Pride, Houston! To quote Larry Bagneris, once again: "Remain gay, proud, and most of all, yourself."

Steve Poruban is a community writer and newly dubbed TimeOut historian. He can be reached care of this publication.

Getting the Love You Want

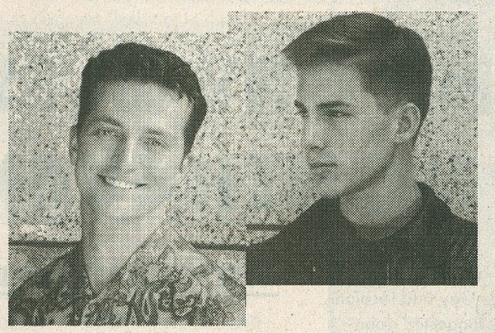
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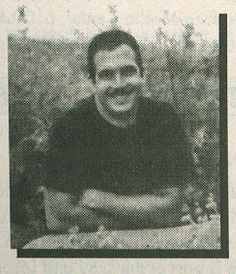
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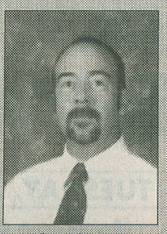
Pictures of Pride



NAME: Bruce Burgner **AGE:** 36 **HOMETOWN:** Houston **GAY OR STRAIGHT?** Gay **YEARS OUT:** 8 **MOM AND DAD KNOW?** Yes **GAY HERO:** Mitchell Anderson **ADVICE FOR NEWLY OUT:** Take your time and explore all the facets of gay culture. **PET PEEVE:** Those who do not realize that "gay" is a culture, equal to that of any other. **RELIGIOUS OR SPIRITUAL?** Lutheran **Y2K: HYPE OR HELP!** Hype **GAY STEREOTYPE THAT FITS YOU BEST:** Southern preppy **GAY PREDICTION FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM:** That gays and straights will be governed by the same laws. *Bruce is the host with the most for one of Houston's hearty restaurants.*



NAME: Kathy (Joe) Marie Goodwin **AGE:** 19 **HOMETOWN:** Houston **GAY OR STRAIGHT?** Lesbionic **YEARS OUT:** Little over a year. **MOM AND DAD KNOW?** Yes, yes, oh yes! I have gay pride. **GAY HERO:** Ellen **GAY ZERO:** Bush or Clinton (take your choice) **ADVICE FOR NEWLY OUT:** Follow your heart. Homosexual people exist everywhere, and keep on comin'! **PET PEEVE:** When someone says "Uh, hey Kathy Joe, umm...do you umm...uh, never mind." **RELIGIOUS OR SPIRITUAL?** I don't believe in organized religion, but I'm very spiritual. **Y2K: HYPE OR HELP!** Hype, help—only the future knows. **GAY STEREOTYPE THAT FITS YOU BEST:** The reason why I have my tongue pierced, soft butch, I scare Republicans. **GAY PREDICTION FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM:** We will rise from oppression. *Kathy is a "starving artist" working at Toopees, where she should eat something.*



NAME: Daniel Impastato **AGE:** 44 **HOMETOWN:** Buffalo, NY **GAY OR STRAIGHT?** Gay **YEARS OUT:** 26 **MOM AND DAD KNOW?** Yes. They are very supportive and loving. **GAY HERO:** James D. Sapienza, my best friend who died in '89. **GAY ZERO:** Fred Phelps **ADVICE FOR NEWLY OUT:** Dance your ass off. Play safe and don't be in a hurry to couple up. **PET PEEVE:** Gay citizens who do not vote. **RELIGIOUS OR SPIRITUAL?** Spiritual **Y2K: HYPE OR HELP!** Hype. I've got a Mac! **GAY STEREOTYPE THAT FITS YOU BEST:** Interior decorator **GAY PREDICTION FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM:** First openly gay mayoral candidate in Houston (no, Sylvester Turner does not count!). *Daniel educates you adults in bilingual education.*

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