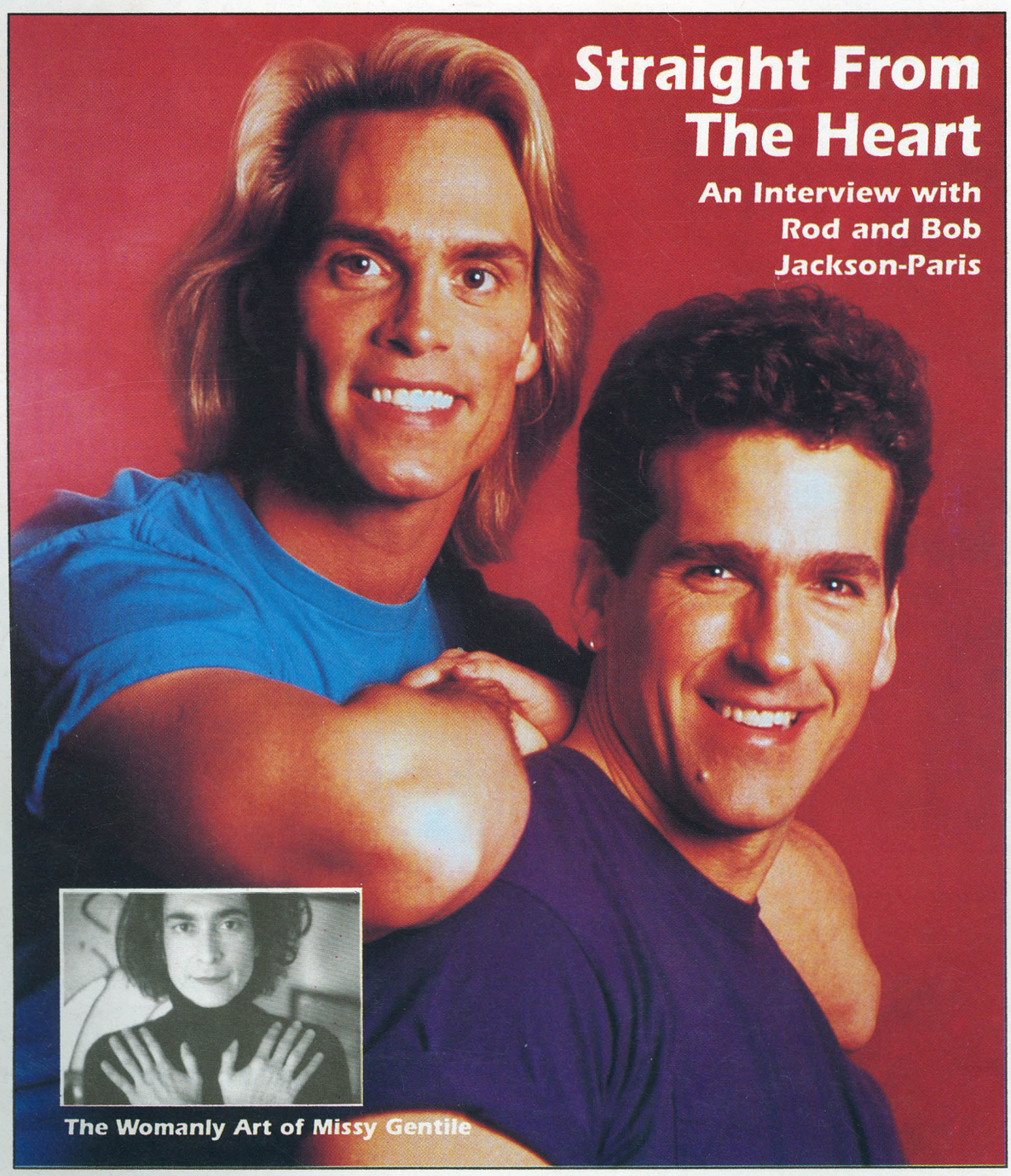
PREMIERE ISSUE • FEBRUARY 15 - MARCH 14, 1994 • COMPLIMENTARY COPY

Out▼Smart

HOUSTON'S GAY & LESBIAN MONTHLY MAGAZINE



Straight From The Heart

An Interview with Rod and Bob Jackson-Paris

The Womanly Art of Missy Gentile

LOBO welcomes *OutSmart* to our community. Like the rest of our community, gay journalism has, in most cases, greatly evolved since the early days of crudely done "bar rags" that were nothing more than one large advertisement for the bars, and then only the ones willing to buy advertising.

Unfortunately, some aspects of these early days still linger on. Not all of the gay press has risen above the "bar rag" stage, and some publications still tie advertising to who or what gets listed.

Actually, greater progress usually occurs nationally. *The Advocate* has evolved from a poorly printed tabloid to a glossy magazine. A few political magazines, *Outweek* and *QW* come to mind, appeared on the scene, captured a following and stirred controversy before vanishing into that great wasteland of the defunct.

Local gay newspapers advanced more slowly, unable or unwilling to break from the strong reliance on bars. Yet, as our community broadened its interests and horizons, the bars, while still a vital meeting place, do not monopolize the gay and lesbian social scene today.

It is as if the gay press was the last to discover that our community is so diverse, so encompassing of the greater American society. If you glance at some of the larger gay newspapers— *The Washington Blade*, *Bay Area Reporter*— the ads are dominated by a wide variety of retail stores and listings of professional services unheard of 20 years ago or less.

One of the hindrances to broader advertising was the advent of the "sex ads" that accompanied deregulation of phone services. Often, more mainstream gay advertisers did not want to appear alongside or even near such ads. This even led *The Advocate* to create an entirely new magazine to handle its classified and sex ads— opening the door then to national ads from companies welcoming the gay dollar.

Some gay newspapers have followed in similar path, barring sex ads altogether or placing them in a special section. The success of national gay publications like *Genre* or *Out* is due in large measure in gaining these national ads, to the exclusion of the sex ads.

It would even be fair to say that the maturity and the professionalism of a gay publication is directly tied to, first, its ability to break from the 'bar rag" syndrome and, second, to attract a greater diversity of advertising as well as content.

Any step, such as *OutSmart*, that furthers that evolution deserves our support and encouragement.

Lobo

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T-Shirts • Magazines • Cards • Books • Accessories • Necessities • Video Sales & Rentals

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ATTORNEYS

Congratulates

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Julie LaRue, LUTCF and the Acacia Financial Center of Houston, recognizes and congratulates **Out▾Smart** in its efforts to provide quality information to business owners, professionals and executives.

While our community faces common financial issues that everyone must address, we also have unique and specialized problems which require and deserve clear and thoughtful solutions.

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OutSmart

Houston's Gay & Lesbian Monthly Magazine

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

OutSmart provides positive information to gay men, lesbians and their associates to enhance and improve the quality of our lives. Our goal is to build a bridge of communication and understanding between cultural and social communities that are separated by traditions of ignorance and misinformation, thus creating a healthier community for us all.

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From the Publisher...

A healthy city is one that exercises cooperation and understanding among all its communities. Houston, the fourth largest city in the United States, is home to one of the fastest growing gay and lesbian communities in the nation. With that growth comes the need for a publication which encourages communication and positive information.

Having published *Uptown Express* magazine for nearly ten years, Houston's need for an informative, entertaining magazine that enhances and expands the currently available roster of gay/lesbian-oriented press has frequently been brought to our attention.

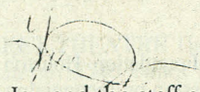
It is the goal of *OutSmart*, Houston's Gay and Lesbian Monthly Magazine, to address the diversity of this community, fostering understanding among all Houston's citizens, and beyond. *OutSmart* is designed to encourage greater cooperation and understanding between Houston's gay and straight communities, recognizing and accentuating our similarities and building on our mutual strengths.

The emotional and pivotal experience of participating in the *1993 March on Washington for Gay, Lesbian and Bi-Equal Rights* was also integral in the decision to create *OutSmart*. The power of an estimated one million people converging on our nation's capital with such definition of purpose was unforgettable and life-changing.

It is critically important for each of us to use our talents and resources to inspire global change in the perception of who and what gay men and lesbians are. It is equally important to illustrate what gay men and lesbians are not.

Gays and lesbians are our neighbors, coworkers, friends and family. A recent poll indicates that 65 percent of professional gay men and lesbians think it would be socially beneficial if all gay people were out of the closet. Seventy percent are optimistic about the progress of civil rights in the 90s. *OutSmart* invites you to celebrate this optimism, offering an oportunity to become "part of the solution" with business visibilty, support and participation.

It's time to be Out.
It's time to be Smart.
It's time for OutSmart.



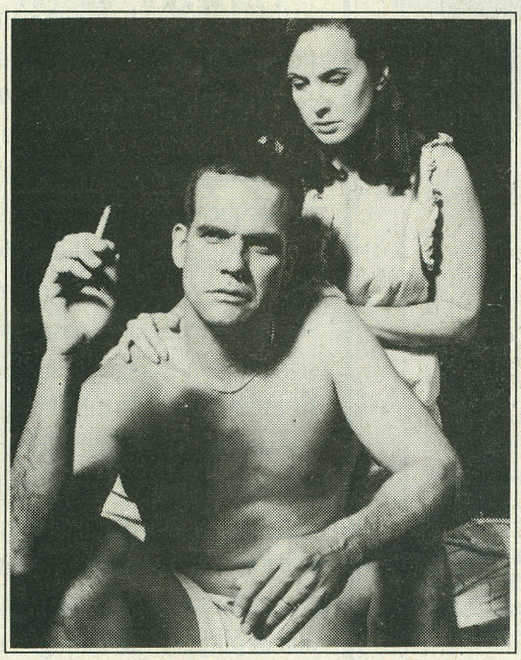
Greg Jeu and the staff of *OutSmart*

This issue is dedicated to Joey D. Cundiff
4/18/55—9/8/92

CALENDAR

If you are part of a group or have a function that you would like listed in our calendar, please send announcements by the 1st of the month to: CALENDAR EDITOR, OutSmart, *2990 Richmond, Suite 316, Houston, TX 77098. Inclusion in the calendar is based upon general interest to our readers, space availability and the whims of the editorial staff.*

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND MEETINGS



Beirut is a fable about a young man and woman trying to live and love in a society consumed by anarchy, oppression and plague. The government is contolling their lives—they're quarantining all who are infected with the plague and they've made sex a capital crime. Lynn Miller, Jr. (seated) and Celeste Cheramie star in this scorching drama presented by Theatre LaB Houston. The show opens Thursday February 17 and will run Fridays and Saturdays from February 18 through March 12 at 8 pm. Call 868-7516 for reservations.

FEBRUARY

15 Houston Pride Committee seeks members and volunteers. General meeting, 7 pm, Multi Purpose Center, 1475 West Gray, 529-6979.

16 Men's Network for gay and bisexual men, 7-9 pm, Montrose Counseling Center, 900 Lovett, 529-0037.

18-19 *Lovve/Rituals & Rage*, Root Wy'mn Theatre Company, 8 pm, The Heinen Theater, 3517 Austin, 630-1138.

22 Exploring Sensual Eroticism safer sex workshop, 7-9 pm, sponsored by AIDS Foundation Houston, 3202 Weslayan Annex, 623-6796.

AIDS Equity League, 12 noon, Charlie's Restaurant, 1100 Westheimer, 871-0092.

23 Women's Network for lesbian and bisexual women, 7-9 pm, Montrose Counseling Center, 900 Lovett, 529-0037.

28 Past Life Regression Workshop with Sandra Nicolas, 7-9:45 pm, for more information or to register call 522-0990.

Log Cabin Republicans of Houston general meeting, call 681-2607 for meeting time and place.

AIDS Foundation Houston hosts Richard Elbein, who will present nutrition education for those living with HIV disease, 6:30 pm in the downstairs conference room of the Montrose Library, 4100 Montrose, free. Call Bart Loeser at 623-6796 for more information.

MARCH

2 Men's Network for gay and bisexual men, 7-9 pm, Montrose Counseling Center, 900 Lovett, 529-0037.

3 AIDS Foundation Houston presents a panel discussion on recognizing and coping with grief, stress and burnout among caregivers and health care providers. 6:30 pm in the downstairs conference room of the Montrose Library, 4100 Montrose, free. Call Bart Loeser at 623-6796 for more information.

5 Spiritual Renewal Reception with Rev. Steve Pieters, 7 pm, Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection, 1919 Decatur.

6 P-FLAG General Meeting, 2 pm, St. Francis Episcopal Church, 345 Piney Point Road. P-FLAG Houston Helpline: 867-9020.

Spiritual Renewal Worship with Rev. Steve Pieters, 8:30 pm, Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection, 1919 Decatur.

8 Super Tuesday Primary Elections - Don't Forget to Vote!

AIDS Equity League, 12 noon, Charlie's Restaurant, 1100 Westheimer, 871-0092.

9 Women's Network for lesbian and bisexual women, 7-9 pm, Montrose Counseling Center, 900 Lovett, 529-0037.

11 P-FLAG Healing the Hurt Conference on Homophobia, 7:30 am-5 pm, University Hilton, 4800 Calhoun. Call 867-9020 for more information.

12 The DIFFA Collection (fashion show and auction), 6 pm, Grand Ballroom, George R. Brown Convention Center. For ticket information call DIFFA/Houston, 523-5350.

15 Houston Pride Committee seeks members and volunteers. General meeting, 7 pm, Multi Purpose Center, 1475 West Gray, 529-6979.

SNEAK-PEEK
March 19 AmFAR Benefit Concert with Liza Minelli, hosted by Angela Lansbury. Tickets range from $106-$506 and are on sale now through the Arena Theatre, Box Office 988-1020.

ONGOING

ACT-UP Gulf Coast, weekly meetings, Thursdays, 9:30 pm, 3400 Montrose @ Hawthorn, Suite 520, 523-9199.

AIDS ALLIANCE OF THE BAY AREA, support group for those infected and affected, Tuesdays, 7-8:30 pm, 17511 El Camino Real, #106, 488-4492.

AIDS FOUNDATION HOUSTON, free creative writing workshop for anyone affected by AIDS with freelance writer Gregg Rodriguez. Mondays, 3-6 pm. Call 623-6796 or 868-0008 for more information.

BINET (Bisexual Network of Houston), Wednesdays, 7 pm, MCCR Church, 1919 Decatur, 861-9149.

EMPOWERMENT FOR LIVING, a weekly support program and pot luck supper, Tuesdays, 6 pm, MCCR, 1919 Decatur. For more information call 861-9149.

EN*LIGHT*EN UP, a gay men's spirituality group, Thursdays, 7:30 pm, The Center for Light, 3408 West Lamar. Call Michael Coll at 520-6996 for more information.

GAY & LESBIAN LATE NIGHT RADIO: Saturdays, Midnight to 3 am. Featuring the QMZ (Queer Music Zone) with Jimmy Caper. KPFT 90.1 FM.

THE DIZINGER FOUNDATION offers free classes in art and photography to HIV+ individuals. The Foundation also gives grants to people for their completed works. Please feel free to visit the foundation office at 3701 Montrose to view the many works on display. 522-8660.

THEATRE

A. D. PLAYERS Through March 20: *Lettice and Lovage.* 2710 Alabama. 526-2721.

ACTORS THEATRE OF HOUSTON Through March 6: *The Owl and the Pussycat.* 2506 South Blvd. 529-6606.

ACTORS WORKSHOP March 4-April 11: *Dearly Departed.* 1009 Chartres. 236-1844.

ALLEY THEATRE Feb. 20: *Keely and Du.* Feb. 24-March 27: *Tartuffe.* 615 Texas Ave. 228-8421.

COMPANY ONSTAGE Through March 5: *How the Other Half Loves.* 536 Westbury Square. 726-1219.

CURTAINS Through March 5: *The Trilumph of the Spider Monkey.* 3722 Washington. 862-4548.

DIVERSEWORKS Feb. 18-19: *lovve/rituals & rage.* 1117 Washington. 223-8346.

DREEM KATZ Through March 12: *Planet Spivey.* Heights Theatre, 339 W. 19th St. 525-5959.

THE ENSEMBLE THEATRE Through March 6: *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf.* 3535 Main. 520-0055

GRAND 1894 OPERA HOUSE Feb. 18: *Grandma Moses, An American Primitive starring Cloris Leachman.* 2020 Postoffice. 1-800-821-1894.

HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE Feb. 17-26: *Thomas Melocon: A New Work.* 3517 Austin. 630-1138.

HOUSTON SKYLINE THEATRE Feb. 25-March 26: *The Lady's Not For Burning.* 1617 Fannin. 759-0701.

MAIN STREET THEATRE Through Feb. 20: *Julius Caesar.* 2540 Times Blvd. 524-6706.

NATIONSBANK HOUSTON BROADWAY SERIES Feb. 22-27: *Camelot starring Robert Goulet.* Music Hall, 810 Bagby. 1-800-377-6456.

RADIO MUSIC THEATRE Ongoing: *Wiener Day at the Rollercade!* 2623 Colquitt. 522-7722.

RICE PLAYERS Feb. 16-19: *Masterpieces.* Hamman Hall, Rice University. 527-4040.

STAGES Feb. 16-March 13: *A Parader Without a Permit.* 3201 Allen Parkway. 527-8243.

THEATER LAB HOUSTON Feb. 17-March 12: *Beirut* 706 Alamo. 868-7516.

THEATRE SOUTHWEST Feb. 25-March 13: *Tea and Sympathy.* 3750 S. Gessner. 661-9505.

THEATRE SUBURBIA Feb. 25-March 26: *The Black Duck.* 1410 W. 43rd at Oak Forest. 682-3525.

THEATRE UNDER THE STARS Through Feb. 20: *The Most Happy Fella.* Music Hall, 810 Bagby. 520-0111.

WEST-MON REPERTORY THEATER Through March 6: *Closed for Repairs.* 1102 1/2 Westheimer. 995-3720.

MUSIC

DA CAMERA Feb. 15: *Pulitzer Prize Winner George Perle.* Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross. Feb. 19: *La Guitarra.* George R. Brown Education Center at Houston Zoological Gardens. Feb. 24: *In Her Majesty's Service.* Stude Concert Hall, Rice University. 524-5050.

HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE Feb. 22: *Black History in Song* presented by HCC Chorus and TSU Choir. 3517 Austin. 630-1138.

HOUSTON GRAND OPERA Feb. 18: *United Negro College Fund Benefit.* Feb. 19-21: *Program of Schubert, Mendelssohn and Janacek.* Wortham Center, 500 Texas.

HOUSTON MASTERWORKS CHORUS Feb. 19: *HMC Goes to the Opera and the Follies.* Stude Concert Hall, Rice University. 529-8900.

HOUSTON SYMPHONY March 5-7: *Dvorak Violin Concerto with Christian Tetzlaff.* March 11-13: *The Smothers Brothers.* Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana.

SOCIETY FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS Feb. 23: *Violinist Pinchas Zukerman.* Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana, 227-ARTS.

Out In Our World

Report of 'Natural Resistance' to HIV

CHICAGO (Jan. 3 GayNet) —A report in the Journal of the *American Medical Association* describes several cases of possible "natural resistance" among HIV-exposed health care workers, raising the tantalizing possibility that the secret to fighting HIV may hide somewhere in the body itself. Drs. Mario Clerici and Gene Shearer and their team of researchers at the National Cancer Institute report that anti-HIV activity was observed in the immune systems of 6 of 8 HIV-negative health care workers who were exposed to the virus through on-the-job accidents. The immune systems of the HIV-exposed workers showed activation of the "cell-mediated" branch of the immune system, the researchers reported. It is this arm of the body's immune system that launches killer T-cells, whose job it is to attack foreign organisms like HIV. But there was no evidence of activation of the "humoral" arm of the immune system, which produces antibodies, the researchers said. No antibodies to HIV were seen in any of the exposed health care workers. The report is the latest in a flurry of recent evidence suggesting that when HIV enters the body it doesn't always cause infection and that some individuals are able to fight off the infection through some natural immunity.

No U.S. Funds for Global TB Battle

WASHINGTON (Dec. 24 GayNet) — Dr. Ann Van Dusen, global health chief of the U.S. Agency for International Development, says the United State can't help finance the $9 million program proposed by the World Health Organization to battle the worldwide tuberculosis epidemic. Although WHO has warned that a resurgence of TB in the U.S. is being fueled by the global epidemic, Van Dusen said the government's international health funds are pledged to AIDS and child-care programs.

Pneumonia Treatment Causing Shifts in Opportunistic Diseases

BOSTON (Dec. 26 GayNet) — *The New England Journal of Medicine* reports that the early and widespread treatment of AIDS-related pneumonia in the U.S. is changing the pattern of illnesses related to HIV. Because drugs treating pneumocystis carini pneumonia extend life expectancy of people with AIDS without stopping the decline of the immune system, 4 types of AIDS-related illnesses occur more frequently: mycobacterium avium complex disease, esophageal candidiasis, wasting syndrome, and cytomegalovirus disease. The four, once relatively uncommon, are now fairly often found among patients.

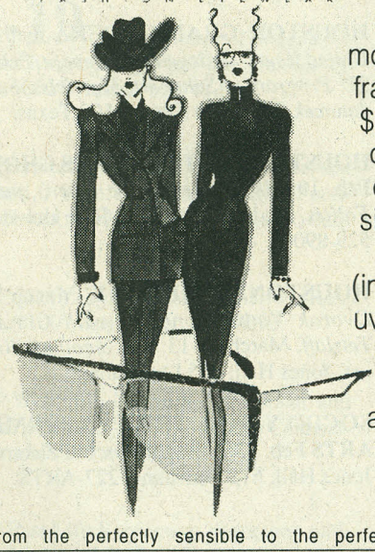
What Sign Are You?

DETROIT (Jan. 5 GayNet) — Just thought you'd like to know that, according to Patricia Fedelum of the Deaf Hearing & Speech Center in Detroit, deaf Americans have generally stopped using a limp wrist to sign the word indicating a homosexual. As a sign of the times, the newest sign is simply the letter Q for (guess what?) the word "queer."

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Family Support Essential for Healthy Gay Kids

WASHINGTON (Jan. 3 GayNet) — A tolerant, loving and supportive environment built around young gays and lesbians could be the life-saving force that counteracts the problems that often place them at high risk for HIV infection, said Rayford Kytle, deputy director of the news office at the U.S. Public Health Service, in a recent speech to the agency's employees. Kytle, who said he has experienced first-hand the intolerant attitudes towards gays and lesbians, said that a negative attitude toward homosexuality by family and friends creates a confused young adult who, in trying to come to terms with sexuality, often succumbs to isolation and low self-esteem. These traits can lead to self-destructive behaviors - such as alcohol and drug abuse, suicide, and unsafe sex - which place them at risk for all sexually transmitted diseases, and especially for AIDS. Accepting a young homosexual and providing a supportive family climate, on the other hand, could allow these youngsters to value themselves enough to want to stay healthy and live fulfilling, responsible lives, Kytle said. He added that gay and lesbian youths need community role models who promote healthy and responsible choices.

Anti-Gay Initiative Filed in Nevada

CARSON CITY, Nev. (Jan. 26 GayNet) — Lou Mabon, founder of the anti-gay Oregon Citizens Alliance, joined with Daisy Stanley of the newly formed Nevada Citizens Alliance, Tuesday, Jan. 25, in filing a petition to prohibit the "presentation of homosexuality as a positive lifestyle" by any government institution in Nevada. The initiative petition, similar to the voter-approved Amendment 2 in Colorado, needs only 51,000 signatures to qualify for the ballot this November. Gov. Bob Miller had denounced the anti-gay initiative as a "message of intolerance and discrimination." Mabon, however, snapped back that Miller "will ultimately pay the price" for opposing the initiative.

Sir Ian Enters the 'Ring'

HOLLYWOOD (Jan. 5 GayNet) — Sir Ian McKellen, the openly gay noted British actor, is set to co-star as a political adviser in the long-buried Orson Welles movie project, *The Big Brass Ring*, based on a fictional story about a U.S. presidential candidate who must hide his homosexuality to run for office. No date has been set for the delayed film to go into production.

Virtual Safe Sex

SAN FRANCISCO (Jan. 3 GayNet) — The high-tech computer world inched forward (maybe even 8 inches forward) with the premiere of "Dream Lovers," the first gay sex CD-ROM at the MacWorld Expo. For the computer illiterati who don't know a CD-ROM from Baba Ram Dass, suffice it to say that ROM (or "Read-Only Memory") is to your average desktop computer what videotape is to 8mm film - a high-tech zoom that reproduces and generates amazingly sharper, more detailed images. With interactive capabilities, CD-ROM allows the user to manipulate the images in a variety of ways not possible in any conventional medium - which means you can do a lot more with "Dream Lovers" star Joe Romero than you ever thought possible. Romero, who attended the opening of the 10th annual MacWorld Expo where "Dream Lovers" was ... ahem ... being exhibited, said he was surprised by the "number of women who are just going crazy over it." (Well, if you've ever seen the swarthy Romero's "it," you wouldn't be all that surprised.) But without batting an eyelash, Romero points out with perhaps justifiable pride of ownership, that the program's windows displaying the sex-acts menu "is the largest window size. The heterosexual versions [of porn CD-ROMs] have small windows." And because inquiring minds want to know, we can assure readers that Romero's claims of gigasize are not mere hubris or some optical illusion. It's tough work, but someone's got to do it.

'Harvey Milk' - The Opera

SAN FRANCISCO (Jan. 30 GayNet) — At the snail's pace rate the Oliver Stone proposed motion picture "The Mayor of Castro Street" is moving, you may be able to catch the opera based on the assassinated gay politician Harvey Milk's life before it hits the big screen as a biopic. The opera - called simply *Harvey Milk* - is slated to premiere at the Houston Grand Opera on Jan. 21, 1995, followed by a spring 1995 performance by the New York City Opera and a production by the San Francisco Opera in the fall of 1996. The opera was commissioned jointly by the three companies and is the work of composer Stewart Wallace and librettist Michael Korie.

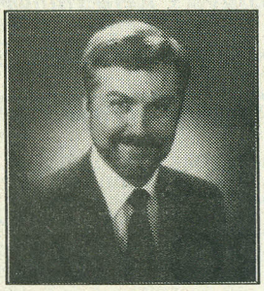
1993's Most Profitable Film? Guess Again!

HOLLYWOOD (Jan. 30 GayNet) — Forget *Jurassic Park, Schindler's List, Philadelphia,* and similar motion picture box office blockbusters, the real profit in movies is in queer films. According to *Variety*, the motion picture industry trade paper's just published listing of the most profitable films released in 1993, *Jurassic Park* came as last year's "second" most profitable film, topped by *The Wedding Banquet*. Ahn Li's film about a racially mixed yuppie gay couple who try to hoodwink Wei-Tung's parents from Taiwan into believing he is straight by mounting a fake wedding grossed more than any

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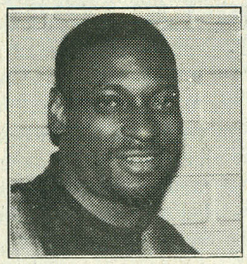
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SPEAK▼OUT HOUSTON

by Chris Price

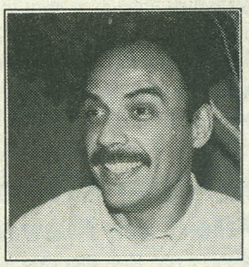
THIS MONTH'S QUESTION:

This June marks the 25th anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion, when members of New York City's gay community, predominately men dressed in drag, first resisted unrelenting police harassment. It was then that the gay liberation movement is said to have been born. Since that time, drag queens have frequently endured severe political and social ridicule from other factions of the gay and lesbian community. Often drag is viewed as embarrassing, demeaning and worse. What do you think of drag?



I feel that I have learned something from drag queens because they're people who aren't afraid to let their other feelings, their other side, come out. They have the courage to say, "This is me. You either accept me or you don't."
—Ray Anderson

I think drag is great. You either like it or you don't. It expresses a fun part about people and it expresses some things that people are afraid of. It's fun if you really feel like it doesn't hurt you. I've had some of the best, best, fun nights of my queer life in drag.
—Richard Cortez





I think if people want to dress that way it's fine. You know, it's up to them. It's a free world, right?
—Sandi Maldonado

I find nothing the matter with drag. Out of curiosity I would try it. I absolutely adore drag queens.
—David C.





Being in drag has been a part of gay society whether it's leather drag, cowboy drag or female drag. It has been a part of us for many years.
—Jimmy Arispe

Want to know what Houston thinks about a particular subject? Send your questions to OutSmart 2990 Richmond #316 Houston, TX 77098 or FAX them to us at 713-522-3275.

film in 1993 compared to its expenditures, *Variety* says. The Hollywood trade paper reported in its annual survey of most profitable films that *The Wedding Banquet* grossed a staggering 23 times what it cost to produce, handily beating Stephen Spielberg's dinosaur blockbuster *Jurassic Park,* which earned only 16 times its production expenses.

GLAAD Honors Philadelphia, Band' and Angels

LOS ANGELES (Jan. 31 GayNet) — Major feature films, TV and theater productions last year got nods for the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation for positive portrayals, giving Hollywood and Broadway a back-door way of presenting homosexuals stricken by the epidemic sympathetically. Jonathan Demme's film *Philadelphia*, the HBO production of Randy Shilts' "And the Band Played On," and Tony Kushner's massive theater piece *Angels in America* were prominent works recognized by GLAAD's media awards for 1993. Also honored at a GLAAD March. 19 dinner are: singer Melissa Etheridge, playwright Harvey Fierstein, syndicated columnist Deb Price, journalist Farai Chideya, and TV reporter Maria Shriver; television shows *Seinfeld, Sisters, Law and Order and Other Mothers,* and independent films *The Wedding Banquet and Forbidden Love: The Unashamed Stories of Lesbian Lives.*

Paperback Version of 'Queer in America' Due

NEW YORK (Jan. 24 GayNet) — Anchor Doubleday will release the paperback edition of Michelangelo Signorile's bestseller *Queer in America* this spring, in conjunction with a national tour by the author. The Doubleday edition will include a new "afterword" by Signorile on recent developments in the gay rights movement, the media's response to the political tactic of outing which he has championed, and "pointing out a growing force on the political landscape: conservative, rigid and intolerant individuals who comprise the new Gay Right."

Louganis Coming Out - Wow, What a Surprise

NEW YORK (Jan. 25 GayNet) — Gossip columnist Liz Smith reports that Olympic gold medalist Greg Louganis has signed a book deal with Random House for his biography in which the reserved athlete-turned-entertainer will finally discuss his homosexuality. Even so, don't expect a kiss-and-tell-all bio, Smith says, because Louganis "fervently hopes this [his sexual orientation] does not become the primary focus of media attention." Revealing an open secret? Ten years after his Olympic fame? After the outing of J. Edgar Hoover? Not likely.

Gender-Bender Barbies & G.I. Joes a Christmas Hit

NEW YORK (Dec. 29 GayNet) — He's big, bad, burley and butch. And the Talking G.I. Joe Battle Commander is supposed to roar off things like "Attack!" and "Vengeance is mine." But instead, because of the work of a group of New York artists, several hundred of the G.I. Joes this Christmas are saying things like "Will we ever have enough clothes?" and "I love to shop with you." The group, which calls itself the "Barbie Liberation Organization" (or B.L.O.), earlier this year bought some 300 G.I. Joe and Barbie dolls and swapped the computer chips that give the popular dolls their collection of set phrases. The switched dolls were then carefully repackaged along with a flyer urging the purchasers to contact their local media "about this funny doll they got" and stealthily put back on toy store shelves in more than 40 states, Canada and England. When Christmas rolled around, of course, the effort, which the B.L.O. admits is an "unabashed publicity stunt," became public as kids found their G.I. Joes exclaiming in the voice of teenage girl, "Let's go to the beach," and their Barbies snarling out in a deep baritone, "Eat lead, Cobra!" The B.L.O. says the voice-change operation was a head-on attack on "gender-based stereotyping in children's toys." And it must have been a success because everyone who's gotten one of the dolls so far seems to be thrilled with them. No one has taken up Mattel's offer to exchange any of the butch Barbies, and several major toy stores have reported a number of inquiries about the new gender-bender dolls.

North-LaRouche-Quayle: Politics as Usual

NORFOLK, Va. (Jan. 27 GayNet) — Just thought we'd point out that Oliver North, convicted Iran-Contra scandal figure with a penchant for telling anti-gay jokes, has formally announced his bid for the Republican nomination to run for the U.S. Senate seat now held by Democrat Charles Robb. The day before, political extremist Lyndon LaRouche, who's fond of urging quarantines for people at risk for HIV infection, was released from federal prison in Rochester, Minn., after serving 5 years for fraud and conspiracy, and promptly announced he would again make a presidential run in the 1996. Just days before, former vice president Dan Quayle, better known as "Mr. Potatoehead," said he also continues to think about a 1996 presidential bid "probably once or twice an hour." And you wonder why Americans are cynical about politics?

The Wedding

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HOUSTONEWALL 25:
Interview with Pride Week Co-Chairs Julie Siska and Ray Ramirez

Interview by Chris Price

OutSmart recently had the opportunity to meet Julie Siska and Ray Ramirez, co-chairs of the 1994 Houston Lesbian and Gay Pride Committee. They talked to us about this summer's Pride Parade and Rally, which will commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion.

Tell me a little bit about yourselves.

JULIE: I'm Julie Siska; I'm a CPA. I got involved with the Pride Committee about two years ago when I took on the treasurer's position. I really got excited because I saw how much fun was available out of being in this project. So when the position came available this year for the female co-chair, and Ray had already taken on the male position, I knew I wanted to work with Ray so I decided to take it on. I'm really excited about working on Pride Committee 1994.



Julie Siska and Ray Ramirez are this year's Houston Lesbian and Gay Pride Committee co-chairs.

RAY: A year ago I became involved with the committee because of my involvement with the skate club; I wanted to know the logistics for my skate club. Then came time for fireworks, and no one was willing to look for money for fireworks. So I went out and found the funds and was pretty successful at that. I became fund-raising chairman, and Julie and I worked together. She was the treasurer. After last year's event our predecessors were getting pretty burned out. They had been co-chairs for three consecutive years. We decided to do it.

JULIE: One thing that Ray and I both are committed to is having a large network of people involved in the organization. In the past, only a very few people have put this thing on—and they've done a masterful job—but what we want to see is more participation. One of our goals has been to fill all the committee positions with some real key people, and they're showing up! It's incredible; we have almost a full line-up of co-chairs.

What we're focusing on—and this was Ray's idea—is to have gender parity, which is to have male and female co-chairs in all the various positions. It's coming through successfully, and we're excited about that.

RAY: We are trying to spread responsibility throughout the community. When we joined the executive committee, there may have been fewer than ten or fewer than seven. Now, when you come to our meetings, we may have more than twenty. It's really building up.

Is there anything you would like to change about the way the celebration has been handled in earlier years?

RAY: Just to make the community aware that it is open to the public. If you want to join us, you just have to come to two meetings, and you'll have a vote in our organization; that's the important thing. It can't be put on by one segment of the community—the social group, the leather group or the business group — it has to encompass everyone.

JULIE: I'd say, rather than changing anything, what we are doing is enhancing the basis that has been established. It's a wonderful framework that they have designed—Pride Week and the programs. All we are doing is taking it on and enhancing it.

Many people who are closeted may stand by and watch the Pride Parade and really wish they were out. Do you have any advice you would like to give them?

RAY: Start small; join a community organization. It doesn't matter whether it's bowling or *Lesbians in Business*. Go to that meeting, and then in small increments you can come out a little bit more and a little bit more and see all the groups that are out there. We have a large variety of groups that are starving for membership.

JULIE: I agree. Also in coming out in small increments, you get to see how many there are out there that are like you. You establish a comfort zone of comraderie, and you can step out further and further to the degree that you are willing to step out.

Every year I hear people in the community say that some group in the parade—drag queens or leather people or some other group—is embarrassing. How do you respond to that?

JULIE: My response is that they are a part of the community. We try to monitor it in a way that it is appropriate to the parade.

RAY: We have a mechanism to prevent it from being too decadent and too unpresentable. We *do* want to present a picture that is marketable. Our

mission statement is to show the lifestyle of gays and lesbians in a positive way. If someone objects to a faction of our community, my suggestion is that he educate himself on that faction. There are some beautiful people out there. They hurt the way we hurt.

If you're afraid of the transexuals, go to one of their meetings sometime and see what they're really like before making the kind of generalizations that we're guilty of sometimes. If you're not familiar with the leather story, go see what they do; they raise a lot of money for our community. Go look at the drag queens; they raise thousands of dollars. Those people need to be patted on the back for the work they do.

I also hear the complaint that the parade is always held at the hottest time of day on the hottest day of the year. Has a nighttime parade ever been considered?

RAY: It's been considered, but Houston city ordinance restricts the time the parade can be held. On a Sunday, it's between the hours of one and seven.

JULIE: One thing we have done is that in the past it has been starting at four or five o'clock. Now we're moving it up. We're saying noontime is the start time, but I think the official start time is going to be one o'clock. We're trying to confirm that with the city. We're trying to make more time for the rally. This year it will be bigger and will start at 4:30 pm.

Any last remarks?

RAY: We would ask the community to give us the opportunity to try some new things. The parade and the rally are growing, and we have to do some new things to facilitate that growth.

JULIE: The focus this year is to be all-inclusive. All the community from the religious section to the bar people to the closeted people, we want them all to be a part of the parade and the rally and the Pride Week events. That's the goal. Remember, there's still time to enter the parade. Applications will be going out March 21.

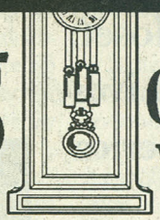
For more information regarding Pride Week 1994 call 529-6979.

Feb./March Houston Lesbian & Gay Pride Week Meeting Schedule

Feb. 15 Pride Week General Meeting—Grand Marshal Nomination and Parade/Rally Application Approval.
Feb. 15 Pride Week General Meeting—Grand Marshal Nomination and Parade/Rally Application Approval.
Feb. 16: Merchandise Out
March 1: Newsletter Mailout
March 1: Pride Week Executive Meeting
March 15: Pride Week General Meeting—Grand Marshals Vote
March 21: Mailout of Applications
March 28: Newsletter Mailout

All Pride Week General Meetings are open to everyone and held at 7 PM at the Metroplitan Multi-Service Center, 1475 W. Gray.

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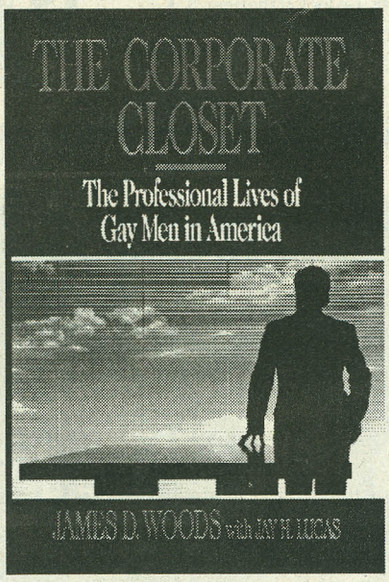


Cracking open the corporate closet door

The Corporate Closet: The Professional Lives of Gay Men in America

James D. Woods, with Jay H. Lucas
Free Press/Macmillan, 1993, $22.95

Reviewed by BARBARA I. BOND
OutNOW! - San Jose, California
GayNet News Service



The corporate workplace usually is not considered a hostile environment. Yet, for gay men and lesbians, that is often what it becomes as they struggle to fit into an extremely heterosexist world. In the recently published book *The Corporate Closet: The Professional Lives of Gay Men in America,* James D. Woods examines the survival strategies of a handpicked group of gay men, and discusses the ramifications of the choices they have made.

Woods says that he hopes his book will reach an audience that includes executives and human resources professionals. He also wants to have a more profound effect on the gay and lesbian community. "Increasingly the workplace is moving up the list of [activism] priorities," says Woods. "People are talking about lesbian and gay workplace issues in a way that they were not even two or three years ago. We've really reached the time when I think the workplace is going to become the frontier of gay and lesbian activism."

In his engaging book, Woods recounts the history of corporate America's relationship to sexuality. Even now, almost 25 years after Stonewall, sexual orientation is usually not included in nondiscrimination policies. He then analyzes how gay professionals get by, in three categories of strategies highlighted by personal examples from the interviews he and collaborator Jay Lucas conducted. These chapters are filled with experiences many readers will recognize as typical survival techniques. Included are elaborate stories of counterfeiting heterosexual lifestyles, acting asexual, or just withdrawing from the office social scene. The tales of the most closeted men are moving and are filled with the hopelessness that seems to permeate their lives.

Woods goes on to discuss some of the alternatives available and what his vision is of the corporate future. He argues convincingly that large corporations can no longer afford the drain on productivity and creativity this type of deception encourages. Sadly, some corporations may never come to support diversity. Instead they will argue that they have to "pander to the customer." The weakness of this argument was part of a discussion in the July-August issue of the *Harvard Business Review.* Woods, an assistant professor of communications at the College of Staten Island, was part of an expert panel called upon to comment individually on a case study involving the coming out of an exceptional employee. He contended that one could make the argument that the obligation to the customer stops with the product itself. Woods also observed that people seem to care about the moral code exemplified by different corporations, and that affects their choices. Commenting further on the *Harvard Business Review* report, he also said, "Some companies will always pander to a group that is homophobic or racist or whatever, but companies stand to gain as much as they might lose by saying we recognize and celebrate the diversity of our work force and we also make a terrific car. If you have a problem with our moral values, you're welcome to shop elsewhere." This is, of course, wishful thinking.



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Squandering human resources is not cost-effective business and, sooner or later, corporations will have to make the connection that heterosexism causes employees to spend needless energy on deception. As Woods points out in the last chapter of the book, "The loss to the organization in spontaneity, creativity, and solidarity is incalculable." Although hard to measure or even document, employers cannot afford to continue this self-defeating behavior. In several chapters of the book, Woods talks about how a "presumption of heterosexuality" pervades the workplace. He thinks that will be one of the first things to go as more people realize that the workplace must become more openly diverse. "It is just getting harder and harder for people to be totally oblivious to the likelihood that they work with lesbian or gay people," says Woods. He points out that some professions and urban areas have become sensitive to the fact that not every employee is heterosexual.

The new corporate emphasis on managing diversity fits right into Woods' philosophy of inclusion. Several examples are given in the book of corporations that have chosen to embrace the diversity of their employees. He thinks that this is the "back door" many gay and lesbian groups use to get management to talk about gay and lesbian issues. Woods calls it the "add gay people and stir" approach. He goes further and contends that companies that have training for diversity in place are more receptive to adding gays as another minority. The places that have no commitment to diversity are going to be the last to change.

Companies may have had to grapple with diversity issues in other contexts. "Sexual orientation has always been framed in moral terms, and what's happening gradually is that the moral vocabulary is giving way to the minority/diversity vocabulary."

Woods has made an important contribution to the growing body of gay and lesbian studies with *The Corporate Closet.* The book does not contain a representative study; however, Woods still feels confident that the information the book contains is dependable. If persons are engaged in behaviors described therein, they will have predictable problems as a result. On a personal note, Woods observed he has not had to have any coming out conversations at the university where he is employed, due to the subject matter of his thesis and other publications. He did, though, find himself forced to come out to several relatives, due to the publicity accompanying the release of his book.

Among those relatives was a very religious, conservative grandmother. It seemed that his whole family was terrified of how she would react. Woods is one of the lucky ones. He said that those experiences "have turned out to be so wonderful. My grandmother fell over herself with pride telling everyone about the book. And this was the woman we really though was going to have a hard time with me being gay." Woods also said, "I am grateful that I was pushed in that way, by my own work, into dealing with those things in my personal life." Hopefully, others can find the strength within themselves to slowly do the same thing and, eventually, the corporate world may catch on. ▼

A Rock and a Hard Place

By Anthony Godby Johnson
Crown, 1993, 213 pp.
$20.00 hardcover, $10.95 paperback

Reviewed by Susan Mortell
OutNOW! - San Jose, California
GayNet News Service

In 1992, Paul Monette received a letter from a 13-year-old boy who had contracted AIDS through childhood sexual abuse. Monette was not quick to reply.

As the author of *Borrowed Time*, Monette received many such letters from people with AIDS who wished to connect with him. Monette had seen enough sadness and hard luck to last a lifetime, and he was living on borrowed time himself. He had barely enough time to share with his own family and friends. However, Monette did write the boy a short letter, if only to clear his desk. Ten days later, Monette received a call from the boy's adoptive mother, saying how much the reply meant to her son. She suggested that Monette call the boy. Monette wanted to bolt, but the mother insisted, "You'll like him, I promise. He's not depressing at all." Thus began a relationship between Paul Monette and Anthony Godby Johnson. Eventually, at Monette's urging, Johnson ended up writing the memoirs of his short life, which became the book *A Rock and a Hard Place*. This is an extraordinary book about an extraordinary boy, and his age should not deter anyone from reading it.

Tony Johnson was born into an extremely abusive situation where he was beaten, raped and severely neglected. Despite all this, he did well in school and, in fact, was placed in a progressive school because of his high IQ. By the time he was old enough to understand that he was being abused, he was intelligent enough to call a crisis line and plead for help. The man who answered the crisis call managed to get Tony into a foster home. Ironically, the man behind the crisis line ended up meeting Tony's foster mother and falling in love with her. They married, adopted Tony, and, through their efforts, Tony's biological parents — who had nearly killed him — are now in prison. When Tony was diagnosed with AIDS, his adoptive parents sought out an HIV-positive gay man for Tony to talk to. In the book, Tony goes into detail about the very close bond of friendship that he and the gay man shared.

Tony also talks at length about his observations of the gay community and of his inability to comprehend the discrimination and hatred that is aimed at them. He tells of attending his first gay pride parade and writing a school paper on it, only to be called a "fag" by his classmates. He also tells us that his own biological father, who raped him and had sex with other men, hated gays. His father called Tony a "faggot" because he read books. He warned Tony that, if he ever caught him fooling around with another boy, he would castrate him.

Tony's observations of life's injustices are not limited to homophobia. He makes some very eloquent remarks about racism (his adoptive father is black and his adoptive mother is white) and about sexism, as he observes how his male classmates harass his female peers. Tony seems destined, in his short life, to be a visitor on this planet and to make a statement about the total ludicrousness of all he sees. Because he is here so briefly, his statements are all the more poignant.

The only weakness that the book has is that, at times, it is too sentimental. But considering the age of the writer, anything that comes off too sappy or innocent is to be justified. Since his AIDS was advanced by the time this book was written, Tony's is an adulthood that this world will never be blessed with. Bright, sensitive, and a excellent writer, Anthony Johnson would have grown to be a wonderful man. Still, we all have much to gain from his short life. Tony was able to draw more meaning out of his life than most people ever will. Anyone who feels cheated by life, especially anyone affected by AIDS, needs to read this book. ▼

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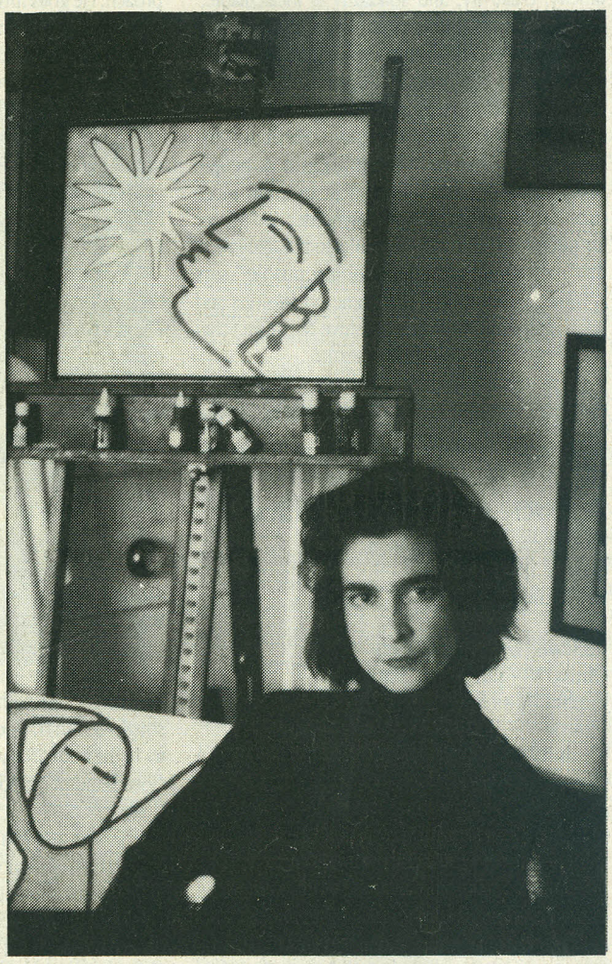
"When I dare to be powerful—to use my strength in the service of my vision—then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid."
Audre Lorde—writer, activist, poet, warrior

Walk into this youthful, old room. It's full of colors and women, bold colors and bold women. It's Missy Gentile and her art.

Her studio room is full of her paintings that enliven the walls of a well lived-in apartment. The natural light from the big windows never seems to leave the room cold. It is from here Gentile works, creates, paints.

"I never decided to become an artist painter anymore than I decided to become a lesbian," says the Italian American originally from upstate New York. She paints because "it's a visual form of expression. I can see my feelings on canvas."

The rows and rows of books are testament to a woman loving women who are strong, expressive and impacting—Audre Lorde, Maya Angelou and Zora Neale Hurston. Gentile says she is drawn to black women for "their passion because of their past-life histories."



Pieces of paper with empowering quotes from magazines or pamphlets clutter door frames and a bulletin board. Cards with inspirational words are positioned between notebooks and work piled on her desk.

She says her inspiration comes from the fabric of her life experiences. These experiences are evident on the many canvases that clutter the room—canvases covered with bold colors and shapes, primal images—mostly of women. Strong, simple, sincere… just like Missy, the artist, painter, woman, lesbian that she is. Gentile says she feels power, beauty and freedom when she paints her women figures.

Her inspirations also include strong women who knew what they wanted from life and overcame adversity to obtain it. Women like Barbara Jordan of Houston's fifth ward, the first black woman elected to Congress. Women like Nobel-Prize-winning author Toni Morrison. Women like her mother, grandmother, her few intimate friends. Women like Sophia Loren, for whom she named her cat.

Her lover is also an inspiration for her because "She allows me to be me. She's the first person in my life who saw so much in me as a person than what was on the outside," Gentile says.

There is another time when Gentile is inspired to be creative. She calls it "menstrual wisdom" (when she is PMSing).

One woman who likes Gentile's work said she felt power when she saw her piece "Feeling Her Power," which was featured in Gentile's first exhibition. "It

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was empowering to look at it; it tapped into my own strengths," the woman said. "Her work makes me smile. You don't have to study it. It's moving in a childlike way."

This reaction is what Gentile wants from people who look at her art. "I want people to smile when they look at my artwork, something that touches them inside," she exclaims. "It is important to be expressive, to get a reaction from people, to bring some feelings out in other people."

Gentile wasn't always an artist. She has been a counselor in a juvenile prison, lifeguard, factory worker, massage therapist and landscaper, but, she says, she knew none of those things were what she wanted to do.

"When I was little, I used to paint my bedroom. I'd paint it crazy, crazy colors, like 50 different colors," she recalls, "all lines and circles. I didn't have permission to do it either. But it's still there."

Gentile's quest for expression sent her away from home. When she was 21 and came out to her parents, her mother told her to leave. Gentile went to Paris for a year and worked as a nanny. Though it was hard for her, she remembers, "I really felt free."

Gentile found her first chance to show her art when she participated in the *Lesbians in Art* show held at Unique Boutique and Gallery in August 1993, to help benefit *Lesbians in Business (LIB)*. She was featured along with other lesbian artists in Houston like Nedra Hawks, Holly Glen Gearheart and Liz Zambrano.

Patti Oriot, owner of Unique Boutique, says she liked Gentile's work because "of the simplicity of it. . . it doesn't reflect any boundaries. It's spontaneous and it's easy to connect with."

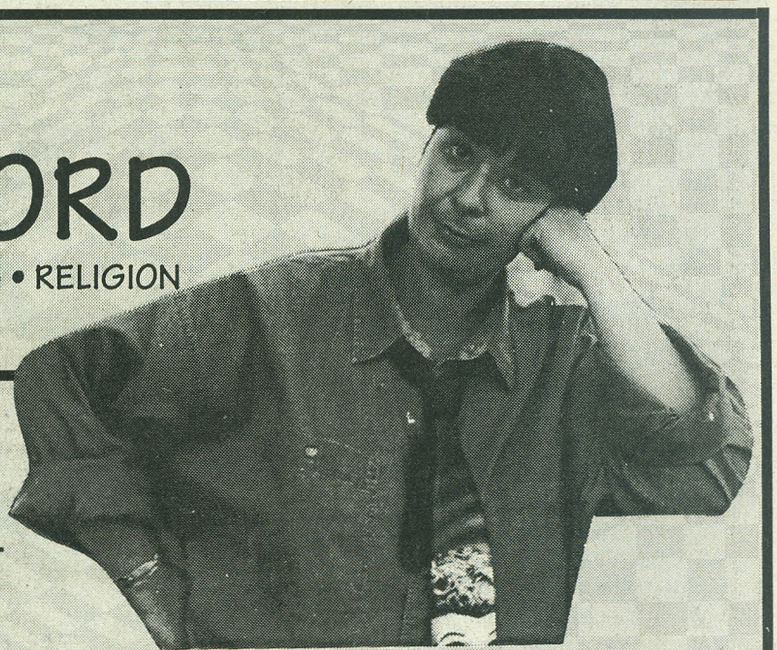
Within five years Gentile wants to be painting full time. "I'm excited about becoming a better artist, deeper and truer to the things I find exciting," she says. "My canvas is my outlet."

Missy Gentile's art is featured at Dreamland Gallery, 239 Westheimer through March 23. Her next show will be in June at the River Cafe, 3615 Montrose.

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Pieces of Paper That I Color On:

Damion Sondergaard's World of Contemporary Surrealism

BY ERIC L. ROLAND

The bright, bold colors of the geometric lines and forms, often transformed into a surrealistic fantasy, are indicative of the artwork of Damion Sondergaard.

"I just love colors," exclaims Sondergaard. "Colors have meanings. For instance, the sphere [in the painting shown here] is blue to represent cool and comfortable."

The inspiration behind all of his works are emotions—feelings of the past and present, motivations for the future. Sondergaard, who was born in Tigueria, Libya, Africa, says he often looks at a finished piece and understands more clearly the emotional intensities he was enduring while the work was in progress. "I've been told that I'm too deep, too intense—which is probably true," Sondergaard admits. "If I'm really tense and quickly need to work it out, I write a poem. Often that poem inspires me to paint.

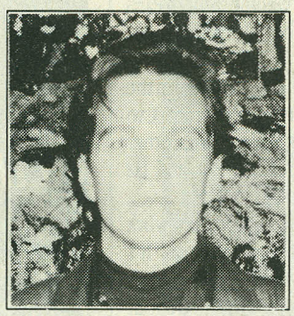
"But if I need to sit and think something through, I usually doodle on paper," he says, "and that usually becomes a larger piece."

The 32-year-old Sondergaard, whose works are often compared to the cubist works of Picasso, began his craft nearly ten years ago as a means of enlivening the bare walls of his apartment. One evening a guest expressed interest in purchasing one of the works.

"I told him I had already sold it for 50 bucks and was waiting on the payment. When he said, 'Oh, I'll give you $80,' I freaked," recalls Sondergaard. "I couldn't believe that someone was interested in pieces of paper that I had colored on."

His reaction was quite similar when he had his first show, organized by Nongalleried Working Artists, now called Houston Artists Society, in December 1992 at Saks Pavillion.

"I wanted to find out if people liked my work," he said. "I walked through the show and was pleased that no one else had art like mine, *and* that people were very interested in my pieces."



Damion Sondergaard



DESTINY

Inside outside
Round about worn
Tittering tattering
Tottering torn

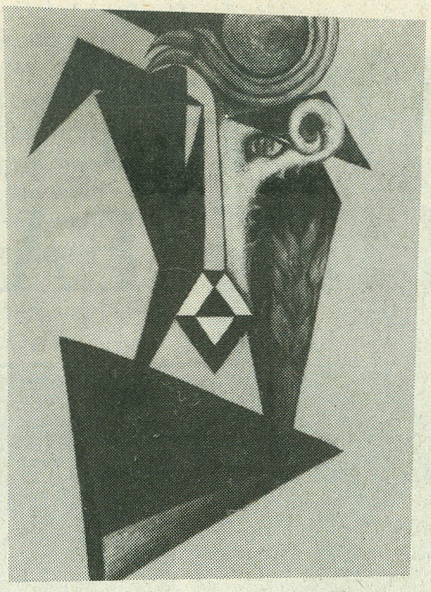
Blueness pitch blackness
Confusion in the,
Oneside rests inside
The other side with me

Lovely rejection
Hate breeding scorn
Middleness and madness
Sadness no mourn

Flipping flip flopping
Settle your mind
Choices loud voices
Internally blind

How is it from outside
Another side can see
Oneside the other side
Inside should be.

Damion. 1993



He sold four works at that show over a year ago, and since then has had 6 shows with the Houston Artists Society.

The untrained artist, who likes to call his work "100 percent natural, learned through trial and error," uses mostly colored pencils. Although he has experimented with watercolors and pen and ink, he says he'll never use oil paint. "I'm afraid I would end up with a big mud puddle."

Damion Sondergaard's work, including ten enormous brightly-colored canvases used as backdrops in some of his exhibitions, are on display (and priced to sell) at Club Houston, 2205 Fannin.

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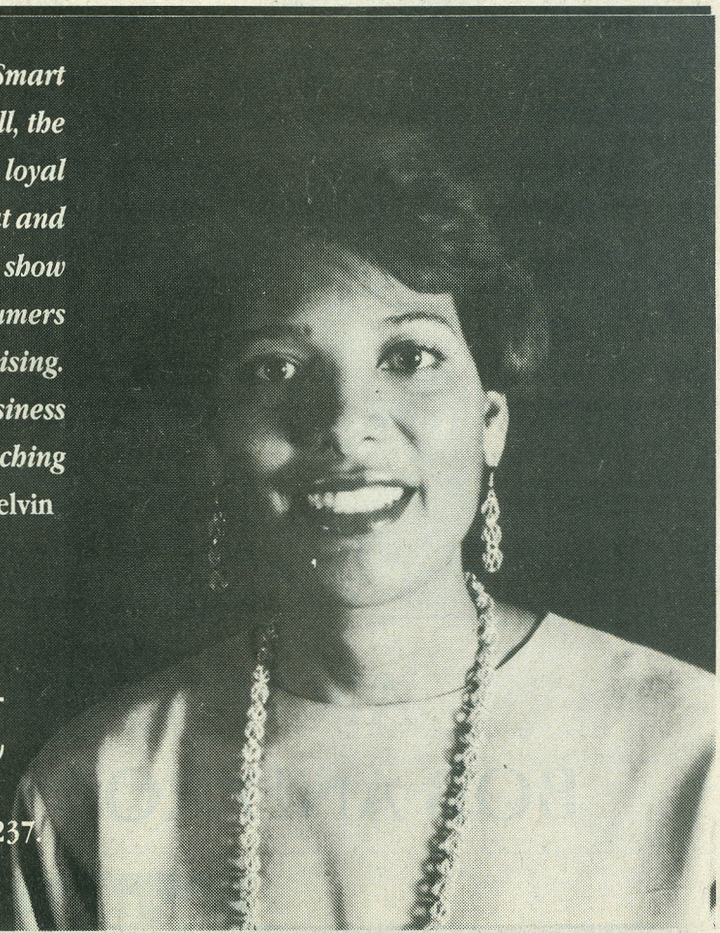
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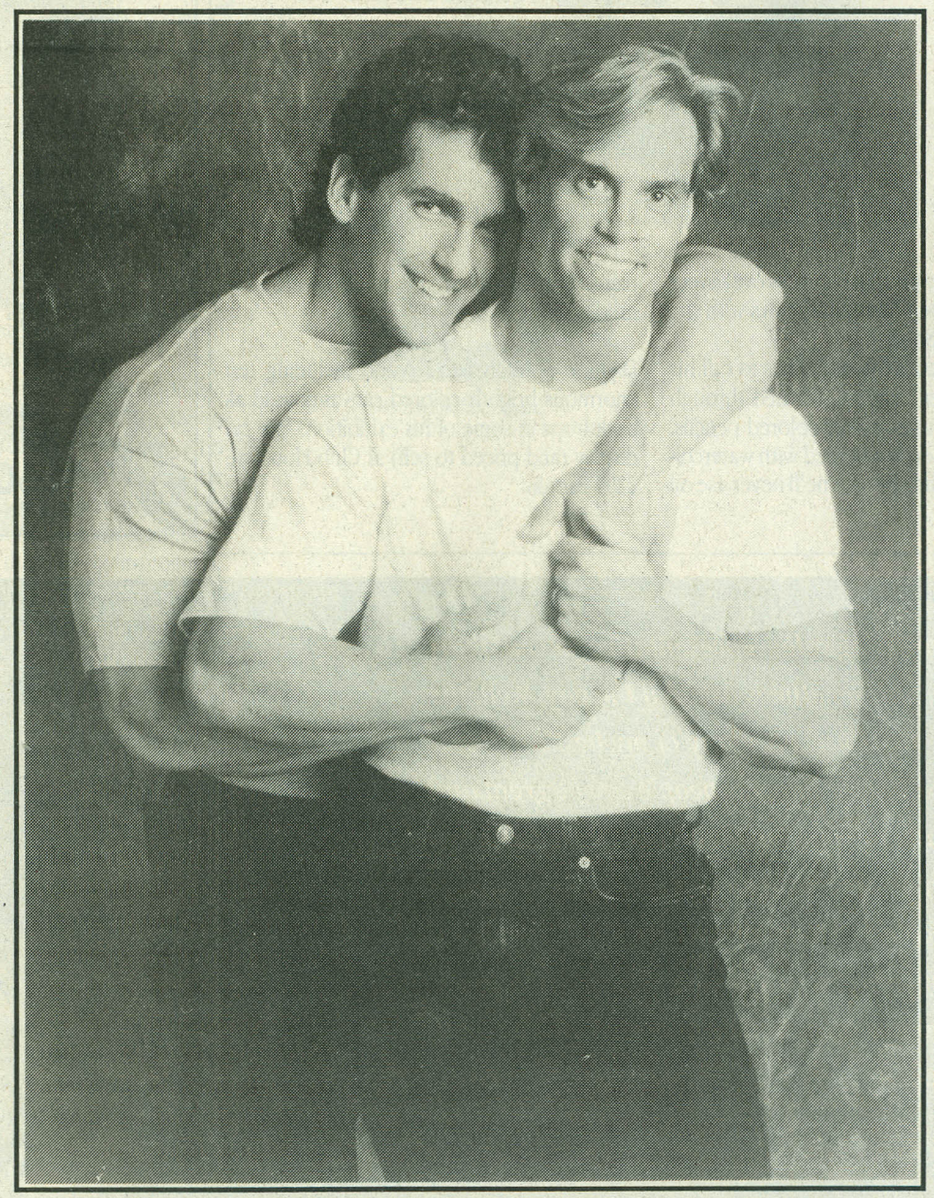


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STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART



AN INTERVIEW WITH BOB AND ROB JACKSON-PARIS

BY ERIC L. ROLAND

You may know them separately as Bob Paris, former Mr. Universe and author of two successful fitness books, and Rod Jackson, former Playgirl centerfold and international model. Or you may know them together as Rod and Bob Jackson-Paris, the famous gay couple who have graced the covers of the *Advocate, Out, Genre,* and *MuscleMag International* as well as appearing on *Oprah*, *Donahue*, and the *Joan Rivers Show*.

But Rod and Bob Jackson-Paris would like you to know them as advocates for the rights of the gay and lesbian youth of America.

"All citizens deserve the right to feel they are a part of American society," says 32-year-old Rod Jackson-Paris, "and that includes the right to an education."

"And to be treated with equality in their education and in the social environment of the school," adds Bob Jackson-Paris, 33.

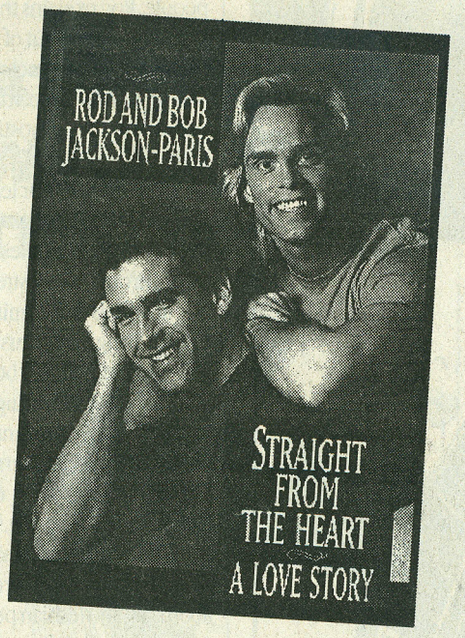
As an educational tool they created an award-winning video titled *Be True to Yourself*, an informal Q & A with gay, lesbian, bisexual and straight teenagers. The video covers everything from teen suicide and homophobia to deciding if and when to come out to your parents. Following the airing of the video on PBS stations around the country, Rod and Bob officially launched the Be True to Yourself Foundation at last April's March on Washington.

"The Be True to Yourself Foundation is solely a funding organization for any 501c.3 [not-for-profit organization] that is specifically oriented to sexual minority youth," explains Rod. "The foundation will support projects that create an environment where gay, lesbian and bisexual youth can thrive, prosper, develop self-esteem, be safe and live free of oppression and discrimination."

Because of their dedication to the empowerment of the gay and lesbian youth of America, Rod and Bob have traveled across the country speaking at colleges and universities about the positive and negative aspects of living in America as a sexual minority.

"What we're doing is discussing the political and social issues around gay people in America through our own personal stories," Bob says.

In his examinations of campuses across the country, Bob has noticed the more diverse campus populations are generally the most supportive.



"That doesn't mean to go to the extraordinary extremes of political correctness," explains Bob, "but it means that all the people that make up the fabric of that campus are appreciated for their contributions."

The presentations themselves frequently elicit campus controversy, as Rod explained, often accompanied by protestors, death threats, and some booing and heckling.

"But we just ignore it," Rod says. "We're so comfortable with who we are now that there's nothing anyone could say to make us shake in our boots."

The controversy usually enters the auditorium wherever they are speaking in the form of a question. Controversial questions, of course, cannot be ignored when your role is as educator. Rod and Bob both say that the ignorance is often padded with religious intolerance. Both being spiritual people, they are affronted by these questions, and their standard response forces people to realize that religion is a matter of choice.

"We just like to say there's no Brand-X God. Nobody owns God. You don't go to the grocery and buy him for $3.95," Rod says. "We always let these people know that their church might share those opinions, but no one can get all of the religious denominations in the world to agree on this."

Despite controversy, ignorance, and difficult questions, the presentations always conclude with a standing ovation from the appreciative audience.

Coming Out

Both Bob and Rod encourage gay and lesbian youth to come out of the closet, but they stress that it should only take place when the time is right.

"I encourage these youths to first develop a support system of friends," Rod advises, "that can support who they are and help them through the troubles that they're going to have in society."

More about Mr. and Mr. Jackson-Paris...

Straight from the Heart: A Love Story (Warner Books, $21.95), written by Bob and Rod Jackson-Paris with Eric Marcus is currently available at most book stores.

Their mail-order-only video, *Be True to Yourself* is available through 21st Century News for $32.95. A resource guide accompanies the video to aid educators.

The coffee-table book, *DUO* (Twin Palms, $49.95), a photo essay shot by Herb Ritts, artfully showcases the two buffed, nude men on the beach.

Another coffee-table book, *Rod and Bob*, photographed by Tom Bianchi, will be available this autumn.

Bob and Rod Jackson-Paris will be participating in an exclusive Houston book-signing for their autobiography, Straight from the Heart: A Love Story, *at Crossroads Market, 610 W. Alabama, on Monday, February 21 from 5:30-7:30 pm.*

Following the book-signing there will be a fundraising reception for the Victory Fund at the Museum Restaurant & Bar, 1512 W. Alabama, from 7:30-9:30 pm. A donation is requested.





Coming out to friends may be one thing, but coming out to your parents and family is usually far more difficult for all gay and lesbian people. Rod explains that the risk is high, since 30% of all gay and lesbian youth are kicked out of their traditional family homes upon coming out. Bob stresses that each situation is different.

"If a kid thinks that coming out to his or her parents will only contribute to the postive aspects of their life," says Bob, "then by all means they should."

"But many gay or lesbian people never give their families a chance," Rod says. "Our self-hate is so deep that we disenfranchise ourselves from our own families without ever giving them the opportunity to work through the issues."

Rod feels that coming out to family and friends is vital to the gay and lesbian struggle because it is only then that the stereotypes with which they were raised will be challenged.

"Society is maturing because we *are* coming out to our families and because the media cannot hide us anymore," Rod says. "And the [gay and lesbian] movement is maturing. We are realizing that it is just as important to express ourselves sexually as it is to go home to our families and come out."

Their personal coming-outs were equally difficult because, as Bob says, "Our families were spoon-fed the same mythology that we were about gay and lesbian people." But in the end they both say that coming out to their families, as well as to the world, has had an extremely positive affect on their lives.

"I've faced obstacles that most people never face," Rod says about their on-going lecture appearances and his national coming out. "It has given me the confidence that has helped me develop. It has been truly liberating."

Mr. and Mr. Jackson-Paris

On July 22, 1989, in a traditional church wedding, Rod and Bob exchanged vows to become the Jackson-Paris duo, which was featured in the photo book *DUO* by Herb Ritts. Subsequently, they came out to the media as a proud, public, and very-much-in-love male couple. Media sensation followed in the sports press, talk-show circuit, tabloids and gay press.

Four-and-a-half years later, they are again in the media spotlight and currently on an 18-city tour promoting their autobiographical book, *Straight from the Heart: A Love Story*. The book, released by Warner Books on February 14, Valentine's Day, tells their individual life histories, both of which included growing up in conservative, small-town families; their first meeting, "a truly cosmic moment," according to Rod; and their subsequent union. In the second half of the book they describe their work with the Be True to Yourself Foundation and chronicle their experiences on the college lecture circuit.

In the book Rod and Bob speak proudly of their love—the love that traditionally "dares not speak its name" in our homophobic society. They have always spoken candidly about their love for one another, especially during their college and university presentations, since, as Rod says, "everyone in that room can relate to that desire."

"The one message we always try to get across is that love is universal," Bob says. "In relationships between two consenting adults, regardless of their gender, love is the bottom line."

Love *is* the bottom line for Rod and Bob Jackson-Paris. Their love brought them together. Their love inspired them to form a union. Their love became the subject of the first *true* gay male love story. And their love is motivating them to break down hate and prejudice across this country in an effort to help gay, lesbian and bisexual youth come out and be true to themselves. ▼

CONSERVATORSHIPS: THE NEW KEY TO CO-PARENTING RIGHTS

by Connie Moore

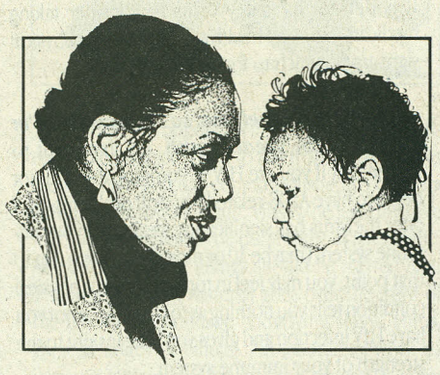
Lesbian and gay couples who share parenting responsibilities have always had to jump through hoops for any type of recognition for the rights of the co-parent (the non-biological parent). Many parents sign powers of attorney to give authority to make medical decisions to their partners. Even then, many outsiders are just not willing to extend certain rights to a co-parent. Insurance companies seem to be the least willing to cooperate, and medical insurance seems to be the most sought after benefit. However, thanks in part to the broad provisions in the Texas Family Code, there is now relief for co-parents through the court system.

The Texas Family Code provides for the appointment of Joint Managing Conservators. Joint managing conservatorship means the sharing of rights, privileges, duties, and powers of a parent by two or more parties. Usually one person is given the power to designate the primary physical residence of the child. Joint conservatorship is a common resolution of the custody issue in the typical heterosexual divorce situation. The same section of the Family Code can be used by same-sex couples to facilitate the sharing of parenting rights and responsibilities.

This provision can be used in several circumstances. The easiest, proceeding from a technical point of view, is the situation which arises when a child is adopted or conceived by artificial insemination and there is only one legal parent. In that case, the parent can fully consent to the sharing of his or her parental rights. This type of proceeding is considered uncontested because there is no party with any interest in the matter to object to the approval of the agreed order.

The next circumstance is the case where the child has two legal parents but the non-custodial parent is agreeable to the inclusion of the co-parent in the joint managing conservatorship. This also makes the case uncontested and fairly easy from a procedural viewpoint. Unfortunately, these conditions are not very common.

More familiar facts involve a second parent who is absent and uninvolved with the care of the child. Proper notice must be given to the absent parent to comply with all provisions of the Family



Code. Many times, after notice, the absent parent will ignore the legal proceeding. This leaves the biological parent and the co-parent free to continue on a default basis. This court can proceed without the absent parent if proof of notice is satisfactory. Again, the case is considered uncontested but can be more difficult because of the notice requirements.

If the non-custodial or uninvolved parent decides to challenge the conservatorship, the case can become the proverbial custody battle. If not resolved by the parties, it will ultimately be decided by the court based on all the facts.

As in all family litigation decisions, the facts must be carefully evaluated, along with the law, to reveal as many options as possible. Only then can the best results be obtained.

Connie Moore is a partner at Moore & Hunt, a lesbian/feminist law firm based in Houston. Since graduating from the University Law Center, Connie has pursued the area of human rights law with an emphasis on lesbian and gay rights. Under Moore's guidance, Moore & Hunt is part of the cooperating attorney network of the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund. In addition to feminist, lesbian and gay issues, the firm concentrates in family law, contract negotiations and disputes, corporation and small business formations, wills, estate planning and probate matters. Moore and her partner, Debbie Hunt pride themselves on creating a warm and safe place for people of all backgrounds to bring their legal matters.

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Exploding The Myths of HIV Testing

by Bart Loeser

As the primary issue of our grneration, AIDS has profoundly impacted Houston's gay and lesbian community. Few gay men or women have avoided the devastation of losing friends, lovers and family. We have been coping with these issues for over twelve years, and, for many of us, it has become an integral part of our lives. Our community continues to stand at the forefront of this epidemic, shaping policy and setting the standards for compassion, advocacy, education and support. We can take pride in the courage and dignity with which we face this challenge.

But as time moves on, we must stay wary of the dangers of burnout, compacency and denial. We must care for ourselves, as well as others. We must also fight the greatest threat to our community: the rumors and the myths that continue to place our lives at risk. Many of these myths center around testing issues, HIV transmission and early intervention. In this article, I will primarily focus on the testing myths.

Myth #1: ***There are too few treatment options to warrant getting tested.*** (Many also use this excuse for doing nothing once they find out they are HIV+). Misinformation prevails regarding the effectiveness of anti-retroviral drugs and early intervention. Many balk at medical intervention because of anecdotal horror stories of drug side effects and other problems. They do not realize that, while no medication is completely effective for everyone, most people are not adversely effected. It is difficult for many of us to consider taking medication to stay healthy if there are no physical signs upon which to focus.

Myth #2: ***I feel fine, so I'm sure that I'm uninfected/in great health.*** It's important to realize that if you are HIV+ you probably will not begin to have AIDS-related physical problems until after the virus has significantly weakened your immune system (maybe 10 or more years later). Up to that point, you may feel in top shape. Your physical condition tells you nothing as to whether or not you have HIV infection and gives you little insight to the strength of your immune system.

Myth #3: ***Instead of getting tested, I'll just live my life as if I was positive.*** (Many make similar assumptions about their sex partners). The fact is you cannot begin to deal with the many vital issues facing you unless you know what you are up against. Nothing can substitute for that knowledge. I encourage everyone at risk to get tested—preferably anonymously with counseling. If you are HIV positive, begin to map out a course of action. Talk with a friend. Get a "buddy" from Body Positive. Attend the Montrose Clinic's "Next Step" program. Read up on the issues. Attend support groups, etc.

Myth #4: ***The test isn't very accurate, so how can I really know for sure?*** While it is true that a negative test cannot guarantee that you are free from infection, the test can be considered very accurate after a minimum of three months—or better still, six months—since your last poissible exposure. There should be no need to continue testing year after year unless you continue to put yourself at risk. Classes are offered to teach risk reduction so that you can learn how to enjoy your sexuality without significant risk.

Myth #5: ***The test is not so important as long as I treat all my partners as if they were HIV+.*** This works great in theory, but unfortunately does not hold true in the realities of many sexual experiences. The fact is that gay and bisexual men today still have unprotected sex occassionally and become infected. According to some estimates one out of every two or three gay/bisexual men is currently infected with HIV. Many men don't worry about safer-sex issues and often "slip," unless their partner actually tells them they are HIV+. Many men who are negative, or who hope they are generally look for reasons not to use protection (e.g. avoiding HIV+ partners, finding someone they consider "low risk," especially partners who state or imply that they are negative). No matter who you sleep with, unprotected sex is a very risky gamble to take unless you can be certain of your partner.

People have a variety of reasons and excuses for putting themselves at risk for this easily preventable disease. There are also are many options for taking control of your life. It is possible to improve the quality and perhaps the quantity of your years. Consider all aspects of your health maintenance: the mental, emotional and spiritual factors, as well as the physical ones. The AIDS Foundation offers many programs for people, regardless of their HIV status. These programs encourage HIV-negative people to remain so, and offer optimism and direction to people learning to live powerfully with HIV.

Bart Loeser is an HIV educator with AIDS Foundation Houston (AFH), coordinating health and education programs for people living with HIV/AIDS, via the AFH Wellness Program. He also supervises the "Safer Sex/Gay Outreach" program and the AIDS Hotline (559-2437). As an openly HIV+ individual, Bart offers a wide array of presentations ranging from living with HIV to risk reduction workshops to all aspects of wellness.

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Change Your Smile

by Bruce W. Smith, D.D.S.



A great-looking smile is a tremendous asset, not only in your personal life but also in your professional life. It's a fact that beautiful people often are more successful in their professions, and that a great smile can be a big self-esteem builder. Methods of improving your smile are legion, but the most popular include bleaching, composite bonding, porcelain veneering, porcelain caps or bridgework and tooth-colored fillings.

Bleaching is the application of powerful peroxide-based chemicals that remove the color from tooth enamel and desiccate the enamel, resulting in a lighter color. This can be done by your dentist in the office or through at-home methods, or sometimes a combination of both. It removes only shallow surface stains, not deeply embedded color such as that caused by antibiotics taken during childhood (e.g., tetracycline). Not all dentists recommend bleaching because of side effects such as pain, temperature sensitivity and chemical tissue burns that can cause the gums to recede. Over use of these chemicals can result in a flat, chalky appearance. Repeated treatments are often needed to keep the original color from coming back, which over time can be very expensive. If you want bleaching, be sure to discuss all risks with your dentist first.

Composite bonding is the adhesion of a tooth-colored composite resin to the front of your smile teeth, which is sculpted and polished to create a lighter, uniform smile line. This is the least invasive method and can often de done without anesthetic. Any decay or faulty fillings should be treated first. Then the bonding material goes over the front of the teeth to camouflage underlying stains, chips, gaps or edges of fillings. No laboratory work or impressions are needed and the process is complete at the end of the appointment. One or two appointments are needed, depending on how many teeth are to be bonded. If a second appointment is needed it is usually for final polishing and touch-ups. Composite bonding will last an average of five years and can be easily repaired. The main advantage is cost, which is more than bleaching, but less than porcelain veneers or caps.

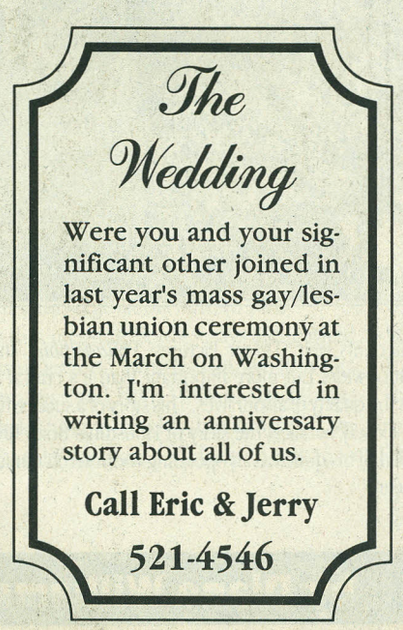
Porcelain veneering is the bonding of thin slivers of laboratory-fabricated porcelain to the front teeth, most often the upper smile teeth and sometimes also the lowers. It requires at least two appointments, the first for shaping and impressions and the second for bonding on the veneers. Just like composite bonding, stains, chips and gaps can be corrected. The main advantage over composite bonding is stain resistance and durability. Your dentist will have more control over change and contour change. Many patients report the porcelain feels more like natural smooth enamel, especially those who have replaced composites with porcelain. While some tooth reduction is often done, and anesthetic is sometimes needed, this is less invasive than full caps (crowns) and is the preferred method if the teeth are structurally sound.

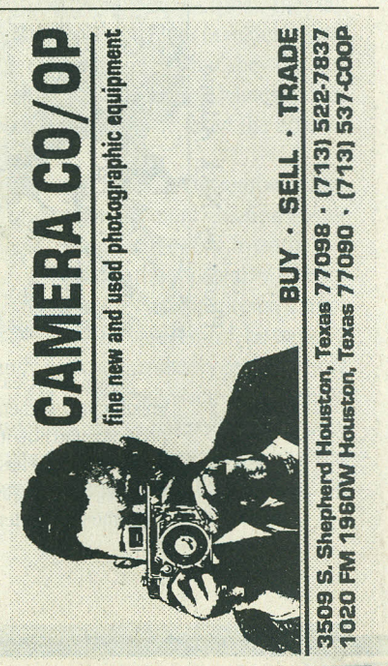
Porcelain caps (crowns) are preferred when the teeth are badly decayed, broken or cracked. If there are numerous large fillings in the front teeth this can result in weak teeth that would not support veneers adequately. Two or more appointments are needed—the first for reducing the size of the teeth, impressions and temporary plastic crowns; the second for fitting and cementing the permanent crowns. This method gives your dentist the maximum control over color and contour and is often the preferred method when strength is needed in addition to cosmetic improvement. While crowns are the most expensive method, they are also the longest-lasting.

Tooth-colored fillings have been available for front teeth for many years, but until relatively recently have not been strong enough for back teeth. Tremendous materials improvement now allows this option for white back teeth. Composite resins similar to those used for composite bonding can be used where only silver amalgam or gold could be placed before. Slightly more expensive than amalgam, composite fillings take approximately twice as long to place.

Cosmetic dentistry has become increasingly popular, and its methods legion. If you have questions, please write to Dr. Smith at 1006 Missouri Street, Houston, TX 77006. Questions on all aspects of dentistry are welcome, many of which can be addressed in future columns.







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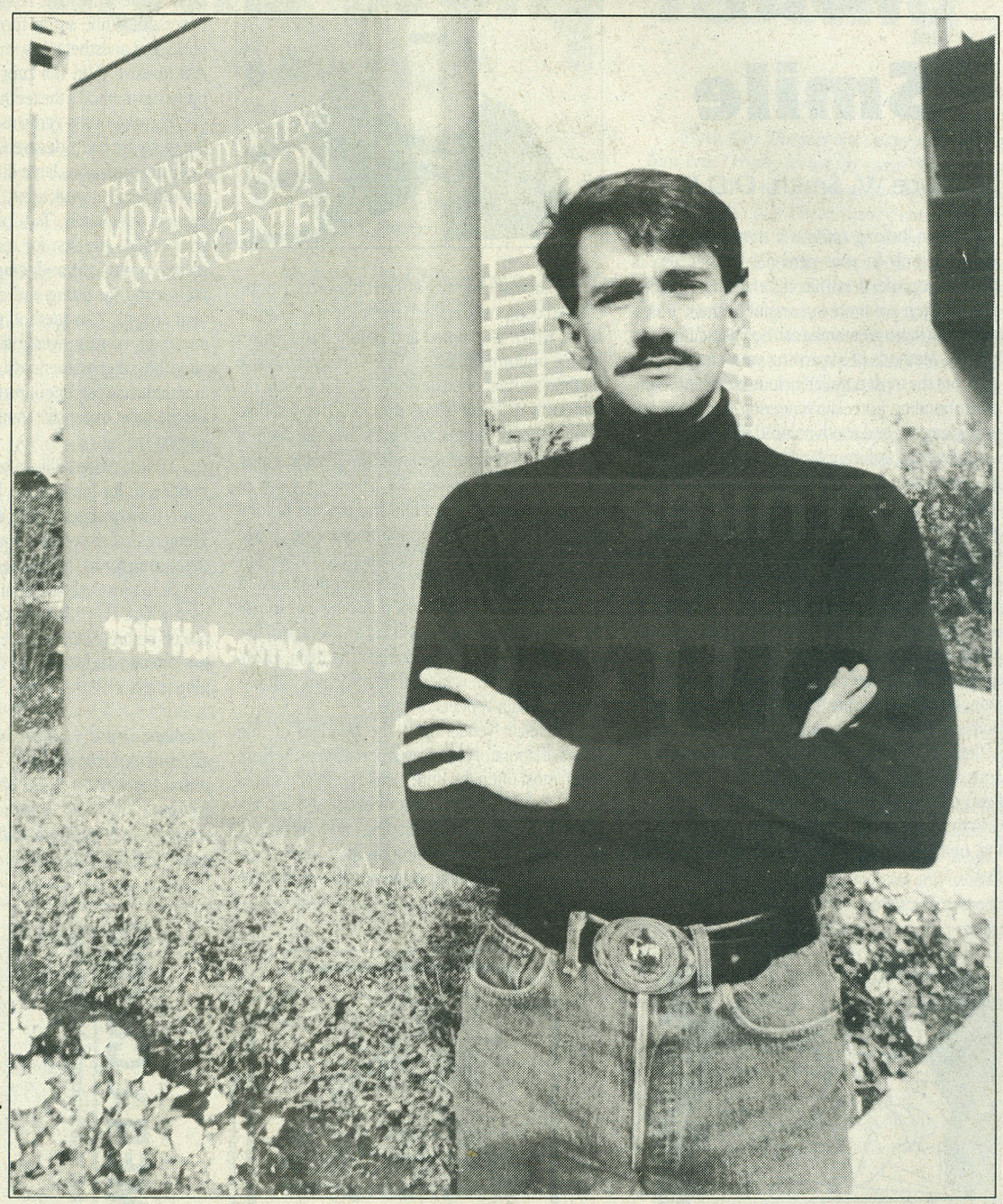


Photo by Nick Adamo

Since it's release earlier this year, TriStar Pictures' *Philadelphia*, starring Tom Hanks, has been entertaining and enlightening audiences nationwide. But more important than it's critical success, is its focus on homophobia and AIDS prejudice and how it affects the quality of all our lives. This story of a successful business professional, fired after his employers discover that he has AIDS, closely parallels the story of Houston's Brian Bradley. A heathcare worker with M. D. Anderson hospital, Bradley was relieved of his duties as an operating-room scrub nurse without medical basis. His case goes before the Supreme Court later this year.

by Diane Williams

. . . TEXAS?

Brian Bradley used to lead a quite life in Washington, D.C. with his companion and lover, Josh, who was a much decorated military hero, veteran of two tours of duty in Vietnam and receipent of the Bronze Star. Josh's duties at the Department of Defense, where he was an employee for 20 years, included briefing and debriefing ambassadors. Their lives were forever changed, however, when the telephone rang at their capitol city home. It was for Josh. "You have HTLV III," said the voice on the other end of the line. "Report ASAP to Walter Reed Army Medical Hospital."

For the two years preceding Josh's death, Brian's energy was directed toward taking care of his partner and enjoying the little remaining time they had together. In 1987 the pair moved back to Brian's previous home of Houston, and Brian went to work for M.D. Anderson Hospital. He was hired as an operating-room scrub nurse and soon became known as a stickler for perfection.

Following Josh's death in 1989, Brian realized that he must do something to challenge the injustice Josh and others like him faced as a result of HIV discrimination. Soon he found himself frequently quoted in newspapers and on television, speaking out for gay and lesbian civil rights and about what it means to be HIV positive.

He was out of the closet at work and was often approached for support and advice by other gays and lesbians and people with HIV. Brian says, "It was a well known fact that I was HIV positive." Less than two years later, the secure environment of his employment and the family of co-workers he had developed changed dramatically.

"When Kim Bergalis proposed to the world that her dentist in Florida had given her AIDS, the medical community went into a whirlwind of hysteria," explains Bradley. "The CDC [Centers for Disease Control] made some statements to the press, before investigating any claims, to the effect that a cluster of people appeared to be infected with HIV by their healthcare givers .

"Then Senator Jesse Helms proposed a ten-year imprisonment and $10,000 fine for any practicing HIV+ healthcare workers," adds Bradley.

"I was put on administrative leave until the next day—she said, 'Until Dr. Cox and public affairs can figure out what to do with you.' "

On Friday, July 19, 1991, Bradley gave an interview with the *Houston Chronicle* and, even though he was very widely known for speaking out on AIDS issues, he had never gone on record that before that he was HIV+ or that he worked at M.D. Anderson.

"The article appeared Saturday the 20th of July," Bradley says. "Monday the 22nd when I returned to work, I didn't have a job."

Bradley made arrangements to meet with Georgia Thomas, Doctor of Employee Health at M.D. Anderson, to discuss this impending legislation that Sen. Helms was promoting. His intention was to not necessarily discuss his case, "but just hospital policy and what might happen if this legislation were to pass."

At this meeting Bradley says he learned that his supervisor, "who had known for years that I was gay and HIV+," faxed Dr. Thomas the article that appeared in the *Chronicle* . Dr. Thomas told Brian she could see no reason to keep him from going back into the operating room other than his having talked to the *Chronicle*.

"That's why I am suing Dr. Thomas and her supervisor, Dr. Cox," explains Bradley. "I was put on administrative leave until the next day—she said, 'Until Dr. Cox and public affairs can figure out what to do with you.' So the bureaucrats in the Public Affairs office got to decide what should be a medical question."

Dr. Cox met with Bradley two weeks later, in late July of 1991. He was given his choice of five jobs throughout the institution, "totally away from patient contact." In order to continue receiving a salary and, more importantly, health insurance, Bradley was forced to abandon his nursing skills.

"I accepted a job in the purchasing department," he says, "I had to."

"I filed suit in federal court charging that they violated the 1973 rehabilition act, which states that a person with a handicap or perceived handicap must be accomodated in their job if at all possible," Bradley recalls. "M. D. Anderson never attempted to do that. They say they used the CDC guidelines in removing me [from the operating room] but they did not even have a copy of the CDC guidelines in their hands until after they were faxed the article I appeared in."

Brian Bradley contends that removing him from his original employment situation was an inappropriate reaction to public hysteria.

"They want to give the appearance of security. They had said they have instituted a zero-risk policy at M. D. Anderson," he says. "I vehemently oppose mandatory testing in any form, but if M. D. Anderson were consistent to their statements of zero-risk policy, then every single solitary healthcare worker there would have been tested at least one time by now. No

one has [been tested] but me."

Bradley continues, "Subsequent to the media fallout created by Kim Bergalis and helped along by Jesse Helms, it was determined that there are no cases of patients being infected by their healthcare workers, though there are some 40,000 plus (it's estimated) healthcare workers with HIV."

The CDC guidelines that were published at the time basically reiterated current hospital procedures used nationwide.

"It did not, and still does not, call for removal of a person [based on his HIV status]," exclaims Bradley. "It calls for prudence and sound public-health policy. It calls for a peer review process. That never occurred. I have also charged them with the violation of my right to free speech."

Even if I hadn't known that all this was going to have such a negative effect on me, I should have been out there... just living life.

Bradley filed suit in federal court in January 1992, was assigned a federal judge and was made aware that it would be some months before the case would be heard.

"Judge Kenneth Hoyt said clearly I have a complaint that needs to be brought to trial," Bradley states. "A visiting judge from New York came to hear my case, and this particular judge has a reputation for clearing dockets without even perusing, much less considering, the cases."

Bradley says that this particular judge, in accordance with his reputation, didn't want to take the case to trial. However, after arguing with both Bradley's attorney and the state's attorney, he finally set a trial date, only to totally dismiss the suit two days later. The quick judgment, earlier requested by M.D. Anderson and denied by Judge Hoyt, had been granted.

Bradley then took his battle to the United States Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans. He thought he had proven all of the neccessary points to win his case when the court decided to drop his suit without completing the hearing. The next step was a writ filed with the Supreme Court in January of 1994.

Many people have told him, he says, that this will be a long and ardous fight, possibly for nothing, if his case fails at the Supreme Court level.

"*I* didn't do a bad thing," retorts Bradley. "M.D. Anderson did a bad thing. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals did a bad thing. Federal Judge Milton Pollack did a bad thing. Even if in this case the bad people win and this is used against others later, I have tried to do what's right. If you don't try, you are certainly not going to get anywhere."

Bradley believes that, in general, cases involving HIV+ people are purposely drawn out, awaiting the death of the defendant that will spell the end to appeals and possibly costly settlements. But Bradley says he won't give up.

"I have contacted all five of the principles in this case by letter and told them that I have every intention of staying alive," he says with determination. "This has been two and a half years of court so far, and some estimated $300,000 in legal fees."

Certainly beyond his personal means, Bradley's court costs are underwritten by the Texas Human Rights Foundation and his attorney is charging no fees.

The effects of the case, states Bradley, have been both postive and negative. He has received death threats, and his mother and sister were both denied employment as a result of media attention.

"I don't have my friends in the operating room anymore," he explains. "The gays and lesbians that work there are scared of me. HIV+ individuals in the institution are scared of me—that somehow there's going to be a finger pointed at them, that they're guilty by association or whatever.

"But on the other side we've seen major medical institutions in Houston and throughout the world formulate positive policies in dealing with people who are HIV positive," Bradley continues. "That's the legacy of this case.—That was the whole idea—to [create] sound public policy."

After viewing the movie *Philadelphia*, Bradley says it was uncanny to watch a ficticious person go through ficticious events not dissimilar to the ones he has been going through. Reflecting on the film's outcome, Bradley states that he "felt glad in the sense that they were found to be wrong and were punished; but no amount of money in court victories for me or for Andrew Beckett in *Philadelphia* is enough.

"He [Tom Hanks' character] spent a lot of his last moments dealing with [the court hearing] when he should have been spending time with his lover, being with his family and having fun," Bradley relates. "I've spent a tremendous amount of time and effort and energy and T cells on this whole matter. Even if I hadn't known that all this was going to have such a negative effect on me, I should have been out there...just living life. I guess sometimes the price of living life is just—living life. You just do what you have to do." ▼

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S.F. Supervisors Take First Interstate to Task

SAN FRANCISCO (Jan. 28 GayNet) — Shocked that banking giant First Interstate Bank, under pressure from anti-gay fundamentalists, had unceremoniously dropped its personnel policy barring discrimination based on sexual orientation, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors has sent a sharply critical letter to First Interstate BankCorp president William Siart, expressing its "disappointment" in the bank's decision.

"There is no restriction against First Interstate BankCorp prohibition of discrimination based upon sexual orientation in all of the states in which your subsidiaries are located," the letter states. "Such a policy would be far more consistent than allowing such discrimination in those states where it is not prohibited."

Last year First Interstate, which operates banks in 11 Western states, became the target of anti-gay fundamentalists after ChristNet, a national computer network for far-right Christians, urged its subscribers and their supporters to write to the bank protesting FIB's anti-bias policy including sexual orientation. The bank then quietly changed its employment discrimination policies to specify only "race, age, color, religion, national origin, sex, veteran status, disability or any other basis protected by federal, state or local law"—discretely omitting "sexual orientation" from the list.

Idaho Business Dodging Ballot Stand

BOISE, Idaho (Jan. 28 GayNet) — Idaho business leaders have made it clear that they have every intention of trying to avoid any involvement with the state's anti-gay ballot initiative, either pro or con. "The issue is so far outside the normal context of day-to-day business operations that business people are really uncomfortable in trying to correctly analyze all the legal implications," Steve Ahrens, president of the Idaho Association of Commerce and Industry, told the *Idaho Statesman*. Earlier in January, Kelly Walton of the Idaho Citizens Alliance, which is backing the initiative, got a cool reception during a meeting with the Boise Area Chamber of Commerce, which also appears not to want to take a stand one way or the other on the ballot measure. Even TJ International Inc. chief executive officer Walt Minnick, who has publicly opposed the initiative as discriminatory and "anti-American," is not committing his firm to officially opposing the proposed measure out of concern it might upset customers and suppliers.

Gays Too Much in Sex-Harassment Policy

FT. LAUDERDALE, Fla. (Jan. 29 GayNet) — Ronald Episcopo has filed an employment discrimination lawsuit against his former employer, Blockbuster Entertainment Corp., charging he was fired as a manager at the firm because he included gay and lesbian samples in the materials he created for the company in its anti-sexual harassment policies. Episcopo's suit claims that his former supervisor at Blockbuster didn't like the material and said it would make the firm look "gay sympathetic." Blockbuster denies Episcopo was fired because of the lesbian/gay materials, but instead was let go following a corporate restructuring move.

'Domestic Partners' Fly Free

JERUSALEM (Jan. 29 GayNet) — A gay flight attendant with Israel's El Al Airlines has won a court ruling that requires the air carrier to extend to the unidentified gay worker's domestic partner the same annual free ticket the airline makes available to the married spouses of its employees. The court ruled that in refusing to give the freebie to the gay man's boyfriend it was violating the nation's anti-bias laws, which include sexual orientation.

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IN GOD'S NAME—

by Rev. Ralph C. Lasher, M. Div

Christianity is a religion based on the ministry and teachings of Jesus, whose life was clearly one of love, healing and forgiveness. He summarized his own teaching: "Love the Lord, your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind... Love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-40).

His message was inclusive: "For God so loved the world that God gave the one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16).

Yet we all know that atrocities have been cloaked in Bible verses and committed in Christ's name. Several examples include:

- The Crusades, in which men, women and children were slaughtered in Jesus' name;
- The Inquisition, which tortured and murdered and called it "Holy";
- The enslavement of persons throughout the world by "Christians" and others who bred, branded and beat fellow humans;
- The lynchings, floggings and castrations of African Americans in the United States of America by hymn-singing, white sheeted Ku-Klux-Klan members;
- The murders and rapes during the conquest of Mexico and the destruction of an entire civilization;
- The persecution and discrimination in our nation against persons of color and women;
- The Holocaust in Ger many where two National Denominations turned their heads while millions of human beings were exterminated;
- The massacre and bombings in Ireland;
- The burning of witches in our own country.

Today another monstrous injustice, cloaked in Bible verse, is being committed



against people for whom Christ lived and died. It is the oppression, bashing and sometimes even murder of gays and lesbians. Those who seek to justify their homophobia and the behavior it encourages cite several Biblical passages, which they claim condemn gays and lesbians. Most often they quote from the King James Version. I was raised on the King James and can recite large portions of it. I love its poetry and beautiful language. But I don't use it or recommend it for study. For study, I prefer the New International Version.

Before it was written, the Bible circulated in oral form, some parts of it for several hundred years. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek. The King James, written in 1611 when James I was king of England, is not the oldest English translation of the Bible, which was first translated into English 229 years earlier in 1382, by a man named Wycliffe.

Modern Biblical scholars generally do not regard the King James as the most accurate English translation. They cite its numerous misspellings; the use of a variety of English words to translate the same Hebrew or Greek word; the overuse of terms derived from the Latin, which resulted in inaccurate translations; and the obscurity of Elizabethan English to today's speakers of English. In addition, more accurate Hebrew and Greek versions of the Bible have been discovered since the mid 19th century. But perhaps because of its longevity and poetry, the King James is still the best known and most used, though more and more churches today also use the newer, more accurate translation.

Accuracy becomes an issue, for example, when the King James uses the word "sodomite" to mean "homosexual." There is no such word in the original language. Respected English translations such as the Revised Standard Version (1952), the New International Version (1978), and the New Revised Standard Version (completed about a year ago) speak of "male cult prostitutes," which is not the same as "homosexuals."

THE SODOM STORY

Persons who use Scripture to condemn gays and lesbians usually begin with the Sodom and Gomorrah Story (see Genesis 13-19). The word Sodom has given birth to the word "sodomy," which as a legal term usually refers to sexual activities between two males.

But the Sodom story would more accurately be called the Story of Lot. Whatever else it is, it is not a condemnation of a loving relationship between men or even of consensual sexual intercourse between men. Lot, a good Hebrew, invited two men who were traveling through his town to spend the night in his house. In those days, there was no Holiday Inn for travelers, and it was customary for good Hebrews to be hospitable to Hebrew travelers. Lot was hospitable. Shortly after he had taken the two strangers into his house a mob of men began banging on Lot's door and shouting to send the two guests out so they could rape them. The Hebrew word means "know" which is a euphemism for sexual inter-

Rev. Ralph Lasher, who holds a Master's degree in divinity, was an Episcopal priest who was asked to resign from the church 35 years ago after he announced he was gay. He is executive director of Houston's Montrose Clinic and serves as a volunteer member of the clergy staff of the Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection, where he teaches a course on "Homosexuality and the Bible."

GAYS, LESBIANS AND THE BIBLE

course. Rape of a man in that part of the world was a custom usually reserved for prisoners captured in battle. It was an extreme humiliation since it treated a man like a woman, and women were considered inferior to men.

Lot, the good Hebrew and a "righteous" man, had a different suggestion. He told the mob that they shouldn't rape his male guests because they were his guests and under his "protection" in his home. Instead he suggested they rape his two virgin daughters.

Lot and his family were allowed to escape from the City before it was destroyed. Scripture contains two explanations for the sin of Sodom, neither of which refers to anything having to do with sex between two males (see Ezekiel 16:48-58 and Luke 10:8-12). The explanations given in Scripture say that the sin of Sodom was failure to meet the needs of the poor and worship of false gods. To complete the Lot story, his wife was turned into a pillar of salt. Then Lot and his two daughters had sexual intercourse, and both became pregnant by their father. The Lot story is one of rape of men and women, violence and incest. It has nothing to do with same-gender love. It isn't a condemnation of gays and lesbians.

LEVITICAL HOLINESS CODE

The Levitical Holiness Code comprises the majority of the Book of Leviticus and specifies what a Jew had to know to be a good or righteous Jew. In the heart of this codification of laws are two verses, both of which say the same thing:

"Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman. It is detestable."

—(Leviticus 18:22).

Yet those who claim "God's Law" condemns gays and lesbians never claim that the hundreds of other provisions of the Holiness Code also apply to Christians.

The rest of the Holiness Code forbids such things as eating shrimp, clams, crawfish, lobster and oysters; eating meat with blood in it; eating pork or rabbit; drinking milk while eating a roast beef sandwich or putting butter on the bread used to make that sandwich...

"If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable."

—(Leviticus 20:13).

It is these verses that the Religious Right and other verbal bashers of gays and lesbians quote as "proof" that homosexuality is an "abomination" and "detestable" to God.

The Hebrew word variously translated as "abomination" or "detestable" is the same word and simply means ritually unclean. In the context used in the Holiness Code it referred to practices associated with idol worship, i.e. persons whose religion worshiped a god other than the god of the Hebrews. The practice condemned in the two passages from Leviticus is male prostitution in the temple. Yes, pagan cults often had male and female prostitutes working so to speak as members of the temple staff. It was this practice, rather than loving relationships between persons of the same gender that the Holiness Code condemned. The Hebrew religious leaders had reason to be concerned about this pagan practice. For three hundred years even the temple in Jerusalem had male prostitutes until they were finally once and for all removed (see Deuteronomy 23:17-18, I Kings 14:24 & 15:12, and II Kings 23:7).

Yet those who claim "God's Law" condemns gays and lesbians never claim that the hundreds of other provisions of the Holiness Code also apply to Christians.

The rest of the Holiness Code forbids such things as eating shrimp, clams, crawfish, lobster and oysters; eating meat with blood in it; eating pork or rabbit; drinking milk while eating a roast beef sandwich or putting butter on the bread used to make that sandwich; men shaving or cutting their hair; planting tomatoes and carrots in the same garden; having sexual intercourse with one's wife during her menstrual period; a woman from talking in church or going to church during her menstrual period; wearing clothes made from two yarns, such as cotton and polyester, etc.

How can one say that these two verses are "God's Law" while completely ignoring all the other hundreds of provisions in "God's Law?" Even if the Hebrew Law condemns homosexuality—and it does not—both Jesus and Paul say that Christians are not bound by the Law of the Old Testament, but by the new Law of Love described in the New Testament.

CELEBRATED RELATIONSHIPS

Loving relationships between persons of the same gender not only weren't condemned, they were in fact celebrated in Scripture: Jonathan (the son of King Saul) and David (great hero of the Hebrews) were lovers. Jonathan we are told "became one in Spirit with David and loved him." (I Samuel 18:1). He made a covenant with David and stripped himself of much of his clothes and gave them to him (I Samuel 1:3-4). They embraced and kissed (I Samuel 20:41). When Jonathan was killed, David wept and said: "Your love to me was greater than the love of a woman." (see II

Samuel 1:26). Ruth and Naomi also seem to have been lovers. Ruth's pledge of love for Naomi—bizarre as it may seem—is often used at heterosexual weddings: "May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me." (see Ruth 1:17).

THE NEW TESTAMENT

The most important thing to note about homosexuality in the New Testament is that Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Jesus never once mentioned it. Why then do the Religious Right and others talk as if homosexuality is their single most important concern? Bigotry. A prominent contemporary Episcopalian Bishop and theologian attributes it to fear and insecurity.

The absence of discussion of homosexuality in the New Testament leaves the Religious Right two passages in the writings of the Apostle Paul often used to condemn homosexuality. The first is from a letter Paul wrote to the Romans (written from Corinth) and the other from a letter written by him to the people in Corinth. Rome and Corinth were both appropriate targets for someone like Paul who was concerned about morality, especially sexual morality. Both cities were centers of Pagan worship which used idols in their worship of gods and goddesses of fertility.

For more than a half century several Biblical scholars have tried to build a case that Paul himself was gay, that his "thorn in the flesh" was a homosexual orientation. This may or may not have been true, but in any case Paul didn't approve of anyone having sex. Convinced that the end of the world with the return of Jesus was imminent, he believed that marriage and reproduction were unnecessary. For Paul, the only excuse for marriage was a man's inability to control his sex drive and remain celibate.

Though Paul was essentially opposed to all sexual activity, the passages from Romans and Corinthians are not condemnations of loving relationships between persons of the same gender. The first reference, Romans 1:26-27, speaks of women exchanging "natural relations for unnatural ones" and "men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another..." These references follow a condemnation (Romans 1:18-23) of persons who don't worship the one God whose Son Jesus had called Paul as an apostle. Paul harshly condemned (Romans 1:23) idol worshipers who worshiped images of gods "made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles." The references in verses 26 and 27 are in the context of worship of idols, and speak about male and female prostitution in the pagan temples. The reference has nothing whatsoever to say about loving gay and lesbian relationships.

The second reference is in I Corinthians 6:9-10 which equally condemns idol worshipers, drunks, slanderers, swindlers, thieves, the greedy and people he calls in Greek *malakos* and *arsenokoitai*. These words have been translated in many different ways, and scholars can't agree on what Paul meant. Malakos has been translated variously as "people who wear clothes of soft cloth" (like rich people) or "effeminate persons," "masturbators" or "homosexuals." Based on other usage of this word, the latter translation is the least likely to be accurate. Arsenokoitai is a word, possibly invented by Paul, combining two Greek words for "bed" and "males." An early Greek church leader, John Chrysostom, used this word to mean anal intercourse. Chrysostom assigned different penances for anal intercourse, depending on with whom it was done: one's wife, a woman not one's wife, another man, and so on. The most likely meaning of the word as used by Paul is male prostitutes.

It is regrettable that the Religious Right and others who oppress gays and lesbians have taken the Bible captive and are using it to further their private agenda. This, unfortunately, is not something new. People of the same state of mind and persuasion wrote and published a book in the U.S. back in 1904 called *The Negro a Beast*. These Bible bigots tried to use the Biblical quotations to prove that African Americans aren't human and, therefore, don't have souls. Not surprisingly, they arrived at the conclusion that African Americans couldn't have eternal life. Gays and lesbians were simply next in line, the last group of "different" human beings that could be slandered in public.

The Bible does not condemn homosexuality. Numerous books examine this subject in great detail. I recommend: *Christianity, Social Tolerance* by John Boswell; *Jonathan Loved David* by Tom Horner; *Living in Sin?* by Bishop John Spong; *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalists* by Bishop John Spong; *Don't Be Afraid Anymore* by Troy Perry.

Scientific/medical professionals have long ago shot down the view once held by oppressors of gays and lesbians that homosexuality is a sickness. The same disciplines are in the process of destroying the myth that homosexuality is a matter of choice. Researchers have clearly established the fact that gays and lesbians constitute a substantial portion of the people on our planet.

Bigotry, unfortunately, is based on fear and insecurity rather than reason.

I find consolation, however, in the history of the church. God has always raised up persons, within the church, to purge the church of the inquisitors.

The purging may already be underway as clergy and lay persons force denominations to re-examine their long standing beliefs about gays and lesbians. In the past 30 to 40 years, more and more Biblical scholars and theologians are recognizing that Scripture doesn't condemn gays and lesbians. The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Churches, a worldwide Christian church with an outreach to the gay/lesbian community, is determined to be admitted to the National Council of Churches of Christ in America. And in the secular world, political leaders are questioning anti-gay and anti-lesbian policies. Courts of law are calling an end to discrimination against gay and lesbian citizens.

One by one, those who oppress lesbians and gays in the name of God are being stripped of their respectability. As this happens, more and more gays and lesbians are understanding that our sexuality is a gift to us. The Bible does not condemn that gift. t

Loving relationships between persons of the same gender not only weren't condemned, they were in fact celebrated in Scripture...Ruth's pledge of love for Naomi—bizarre as it may seem—is often used at heterosexual weddings: "May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me."

DRY BODY BRUSHING— It's Not Just for Flakes

by Alan Davidson

Dry body brushing, one of the simplest and least expensive skin-care methods, has been used in European spas for decades. It requires only five minutes of your daily time and a natural bristle, long-handled brush, but it is essential in keeping your skin soft and supple. Even beyond these cosmetic enhancements, the benefits of a daily body brush are threefold: the skin is cleansed, the lymphatic vessels are stimulated and acupuncture meridians are energized.

The skin, which is the largest organ in the body and thus should be taken very seriously, is also a primary organ of excretion along with the lungs, colon and the bladder. Healthy skin can release up to two pounds of toxins each day, but, if the skin is not healthy, the body must excrete these toxins elsewhere. Dry brushing exfoliates or removes the dead cells from the outer layer of skin; therefore, brushing away the toxins that saturate this outer layer. Remember, this type of brushing is done *before* showering, creating more friction. Unfortunately, regular showering or bathing does not remove built-up chemical wastes at this level of the skin.

The most important benefit of dry brushing, especially for those who are HIV+, is to the lymphatic system. The lymph and immune systems are closely related since much of the body's immune response happens within the lymph system. There are only three ways to flush the lymph system: regular exercise (the body's natural movement for lymph), Manual Lymphatic Drainage (an Austrian massage technique) and dry body brushing. Brushing helps to gently flush the cells of the skin and move the lymph through its vessels to the lymph nodes for further filtering. This daily assistance to the immune system cannot be understated.

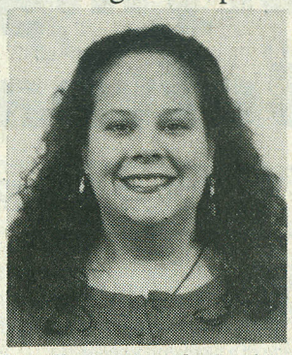
The final appeal of body brushing is directed to the more spiritually minded individuals among us. The ancient Chinese describe energy patterns that flow throughout the human body, connecting all the organ systems. This energy and its movement is called Chi. All well-being in oriental medicine is determined by how freely Chi energy flows in the body. Dry brushing activates these energy meridians and increases the flow of Chi energy. Furthermore, popular *Quantum Healing* author Dr. Deepak Chopra suggests that the skin is saturated with hormones. By massaging or brushing daily we can infuse the blood stream with this healing flow of hormones.

So what are you waiting for? Choose your favorite music—something stimulating—grab your brush, and rub your way to a healthier you!

Alan Davidson is a licensed massage therapist with Essential Touch Therapies. To learn more about Dry Body Brushing and other forms of therapeutic massage call him at 942-0923.

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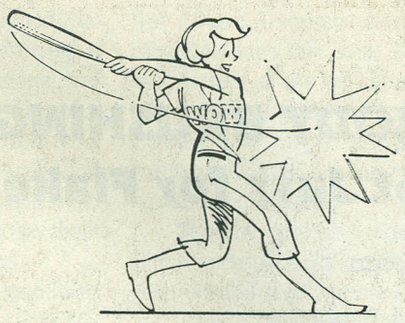
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There's No Crying in Softball!



by Dr. Jackie Doval-Graziani

Did you know that a majority of the sports injuries affecting the musculoskeletal system come from weekend warriors?

Winter and the early sunset days are almost over and out! Springtime is arriving and it is time to be out, out, OUT!. "Tis the story and life of a weekend warrior...

There's nothing like that perfect weather to get out there with the buddies and play softball. The joys, the cheers, the sweat and—uh-oh!—the tears?!? You can almost hear Tom Hanks complaining, a la *A League of Their Own* "There's no crying in softball!"

Did you know that a majority of the sports injuries affecting the musculoskeletal system come from weekend warriors? Who is this weekend warrior? A person who engages in a serious and physically demanding sport that occaisionally takes places on the weekends and/or during the week but in a very sporadic fashion.

There is nothing wrong with being a weekend warrior. But it is important to strategize in order to prevent injury. Before you start any exercise program, it is important you consult with a physician (chiropractor or medical doctor) who is knowledgeable in exercise physiology. Your exercise program should incorporate a warm-up routine, endurance and strengthening exercises as a well as a proper cool down. Sport-specific training and cross-training of your body for 30 minutes 3-5 days per week will help get it ready for the weekend and aid in the prevention of injuries.

When the weekend comes around and it is almost playing time you should perform your warm up routine by holding both ends of the bat with your hands. Once you have stretched, walk a large lap around the playing field. On your second lap gradually begin to jog.

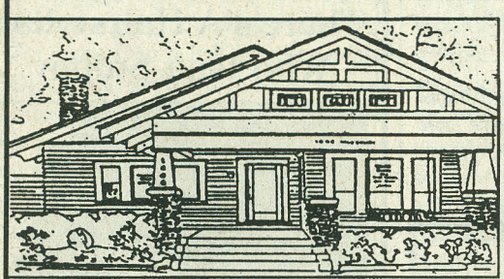
Jog for one lap and decrease the intensity by walking your last lap. After doing a few laps, practice throwing the ball, then practice swinging your bat in slow motion a few times, gradually increasing the intensity of the swing. Then practice hitting the ball and running the bases.

Avoid a sprain, strain, dislocation and/or fracture by using proper running and footing technique. When running the bases your foot should land directly on the base mat. Sliding into bases without having learned the proper sliding technique can also result in a serious injury. Do not forget to keep the muscles warm while on the bench waiting for your turn at bat and/or while on the playing field. Cooling down and then resuming play may result in a strain or a sprain.

Chiropractors are bone, muscle and nerve specialists who have been known mostly for treating neck, back and other musculoskeletal and sports-related injuries. Bottom line: Be prepared, be aware, get out, have fun and play safe. But most important, let's not see any tears should your team choke and suffer humiliating defeat. You may have lost the game, but your musculoskeltal system will thank you in the morning for employing this proper warm-up regimen. Remember—there's no crying in softball! ▼

Dr. Jacqueline A. Doval-Graziani is a graduate of Texas Chiropractic College, Pasadena. She is an active member of the American Chiropractic Association, Texas Chiropractic Association and Texas Chiropractic College Alumni Association. She is very active and supportive of the lesbian and gay community. She is a member of the Houston Hispanic Forum and holds an executive committee position on the Board of Directors at Amigos Volunteers in Education and Services (A.V.E.S.) She is currently in private practice at the Alternative Health and Wellness Center, 2615 Montrose Boulevard, 522-WELL.

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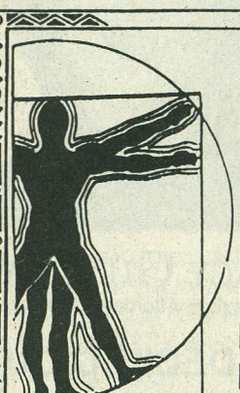


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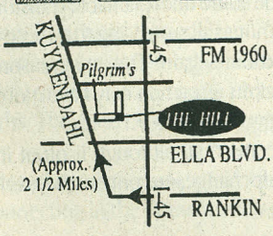
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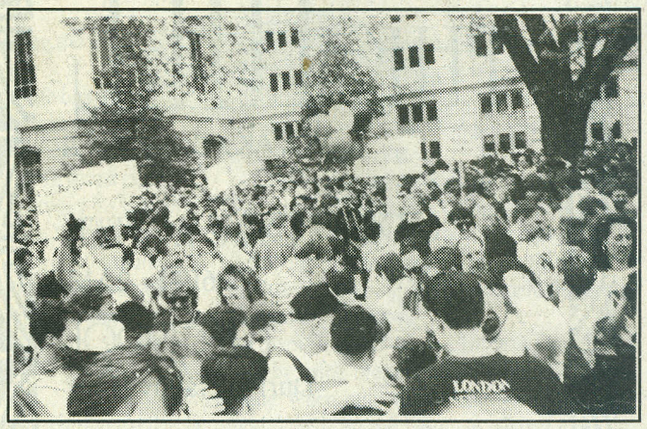
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Imago Relationship Therapy—

Tools for Building Durable Relationships

One of the most uplifting moments of last year's March on Washington was the commitment ceremony officiated by Rev. Troy Perry, uniting nearly 2,000 brave gay and lesbian couples in "marriage"—brave because of their public announcement to the world and C-Span, and inspiring for their collective optimism for a long-term future together.



It seems most appropriate that in this month dedicated to love and lovers that this article be dedicated to the formation and maintenance of committed love relationships.

The ideas and principles brought forth here are in part derived from a model developed by Dr. Harville Hendrix, author of the best-selling book *Getting the Love You Want*. Although originally developed as a heterosexual model called Imago Relationship Therapy, I have found, through my personal experiences working with both opposite-and same-sex couples, that the model is virtually unilaterally applicable. This may be true in part because the foundation for the type of people we will attract as partners, as well as the issues likely to be problematic, are seated deeply and securely through childhood experiences, long before most individuals are consciously aware of their sexual orientation. There are, however, many social, legal and cultural co-factors that may contribute to some subtle differences between opposite-and same-sex relationships.

Over the last several years working as a clinical social worker, I have had the opportunity to work with many individuals, groups and couples. Through watching my clients interact in sessions (as well as myself), many themes seem to arise.

Many clients, both male and female, report of endless searches for partners. Many seem to pursue these partners with résumé in hand and defenses well in place. The résumé almost always includes the usual: looks, intelligence, sense of humor, sensitivity, income and age. The search takes place anywhere from parties, bars and social events to volunteer work, organizations and other venues. The search often seems endless with individuals giving up, feeling defeated, or submitting to a "Mr. or Ms. Right Now."

Another familiar theme involves individuals who seem to get involved in serial short-term relationships. Finding the person whom they think is the perfect match, they connect—only to find them seemingly transformed before their eyes into their biggest nightmare. On countless occasions, I have heard my clients proclaim, "I seem to attract the same man/woman over and over again, always a different face, sometimes a different name, but always the same person."

A third common scenario is that of couples who have been in a relationship for some length of time and then report that they are not "in love" anymore. For those who are unable to state their feelings so clearly, a couple might notice an increase in tension or conflict within the relationship or an increasing desire to exit the relationship in an attempt to have needs met elsewhere that might best be kept within the confines of a committed love relationship. In these cases, there seems also to be some unexplainable transformation into someone different.

It is not at all surprising that these types of scenes seem to play out time and time again. The main reason for this lies in the fact that our unconscious attraction may have more influence on us than we would like to give it credit for.

It seems that, although it often involves an element of pain and ultimately change, our unconscious is likely to guide us to just the right

BY PATRICK VACHON, L.M.S.W.-A.C.P.

person to help us heal our childhood wounds and ultimately maximize our growth potential. This, however, can only be achieved if we are willing to remain conscious and aware during the dating and relationship process.

The Imago Model identified above is in part based on two very important premises. First, the mate selection process does not occur only by chance. Certainly, whether or not we meet someone is chance (that is, if you believe anything occurs by chance). However, our willingness to commit to a long-term relationship is more methodical. Second, the progression of a committed love relationship is fairly predictable, as relationships develop in stages. Consciously, we select our mates based on what we see are his or her positive traits. Specifically, we seek out the traits that remind us of what has historically given us love in some form.

On countless occasions, I have heard my clients proclaim, "I seem to attract the same man/ woman over and over again, always a different face, sometimes a different name, but always the same person."

That, however, is not enough, because unconsciously we choose individuals who have the negative traits of our primary caregivers in childhood, usually our parents. In the midst of an argument, how many times have you said, heard or thought: "You sound just like my mother/ father" or "You act just like my mother/father." The reason this occurs is that we have an unconscious desire to "get it right this time," thus recreating an environment to do so.

Often, if our partner does not hold a specific trait,we will project that trait on the person. For example, if we came from a family that was emotionally unavailable, we might project, predict or assume that an emotionally available partner will not be there for us when we may need her or him. If all else should fail, another way to recreate the negative trait might be to provoke it into reality. For instance, a very honest person might be provoked into lying because of his or her partners antagonistic attitude or behavior. This could potentially make it much easier to lie than be truthful, often because of double binds or no-win situations that occur from honesty.

The first stage identified in the Imago model is the "Romantic Love" stage. This is the stage with which most of us are very familiar. It is the stage where we cannot wait to see each other, where we fantasize endlessly of time together. It is a time where nothing else in the world seems to matter, where every moment spent together appears to be full of fun and laughter. It is a time when often our other friendships fall to the side, and our careers may seem comparably insignificant. In short, we are in an altered state of consciousness emotionally, and to some degree physiologically. Fortunately or unfortunately, this phase rarely lasts more than three to six months. The good news is, *it is supposed to end!*

This may be the result of some universal or cosmic trick. After some length of time has been spent connecting in the Romantic Love phase, the ecstasy subsides and the work begins. The identified factor in the shift out of the Romantic Phase is "commitment." This can take many forms: from a formal dedication to monogamy, living together or exclusive dating, to something more subtle such as an unspoken understanding that the pair will now spend all weekends together. This transition out of the Romantic Love phase instantly begins the "Power Struggle Phase." Even the simplest of decisions involve some form of disagreement. In many situations I have observed people in this phase decide that it is too difficult to continue. They end the relationship and return to the beginning once more. In short, they begin a relationship, "hit the wall," and end the relationship—only to repeat the cycle over and over again.

The basis for the beginning of this phase is fear. The fear generally takes one of two faces—fear of abandonment and/or fear of enmeshment. To the primitive part of the brain, which controls survival responses, abandonment of a partner equates to abandonment of a parent or caregiver. To a baby, this would eventually end in death, unless someone else rescued the child. Thus, as a result, a survival response is evoked. On the other hand, enmeshment in a relationship confronts individuals with another form of perceived loss of life. It is sometimes stated, "I am afraid that if you get too close I will lose my identity (and therefore myself) in this relationship." This is often what people refer to as "fear of intimacy." As this dynamic plays out, the unconscious mind fears death, and, in its struggle to survive, the "Power Struggle" begins.

Both these phases are identified in Imago terminology as "The Unconscious Marriage." In the Romantic Love phase, we are unconsciously "in love," and, in the Power Struggle phase we are, unconsciously fighting for our lives. This, then, is the foundation for the Imago Relationship Model, which teaches individuals to become conscious in their relationships. The road to consciousness is begun by learning how to effectively communicate, identify wounds and triggers, and by reclaiming split-off or "lost" parts of ourselves. The relationship then is transformed from one which perpetuated the dysfunctions to one where safety is provided so that mutual growth and healing can occur.

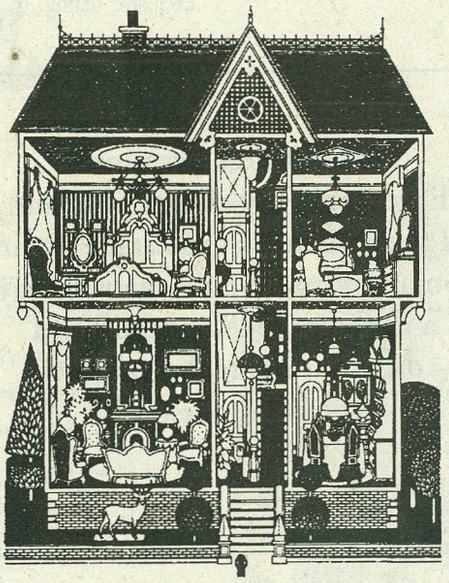
It is through committed love relationships, therefore, that we are able to resolve old internal conflicts and heal potentially deep and painful wounds. The requirements however, is total commitment to a process that is potentially long and painful. The rewards, however, can be a lifetime of enlightenment, peace and "true love."

Δ Patrick J. Vachon, L.M.S.W.-A.C.P., a Licensed Therapist, Advanced Clinical Practitioner and Certified Imago Relationship Therapist, is in private practice as a psychotherapist at the New Counseling Center in Houston. He can be reached at 529-1913.

How To Buy Real Estate Together

Part One: To Buy or Not to Buy

by Donald Vaughan
GayNet Wire Service



Most of us grew up believing that owning a home with a husband or wife was a major part of the "great American dream." Although some of us may still end up with the cottage on the hill, for most of us the dream has changed. Gay men and lesbians are now more interested in a condo in an urban center, a multifamily dwelling in a city neighborhood or a vacation home, to say nothing of our partner's non-traditional gender. Buying real estate with our mate is still a strongly felt desire for many of us. This is the first of a three-part OutSmart series of articles that will explore:

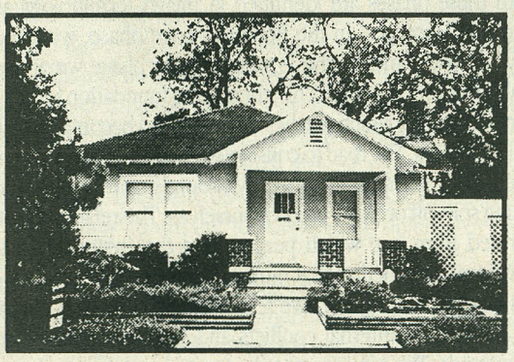
• the process of deciding the type of property, the location, the search process and financial options;

• negotiating and closing the deal, moving in, running the place, then selling;

• the merits of co-tenancy or other legal agreements, which define the rights and obligations of the individual owners.

Is buying real estate together a good idea? The decision to buy real estate together often times is the major choice a couple makes after establishing their relationship. Generally there are three advantages and three disadvantages gay and lesbian couples need to consider when making this decision. Eager would-be buyers tend to think of the

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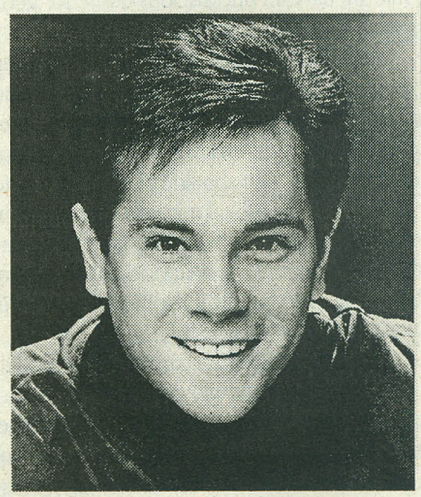


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pros first. Owning real estate:

- is economically and emotionally rewarding;
- gives a solid state of return;
- creates equity;
- provides income tax benefits.

With real estate prices at rock bottom and interest rates much lower, why not take the real estate investment plunge?

Why, indeed? As in any situation, the pros are always accompanied by the cons. Buying real estate can be the type of commitment for which neither of you is ready. It can accentuate differences in taste and long-range personal goals. If you break up, dissolving real estate assets can be messy, even with adequate legal agreements in place. It can cripple a couples' income should one partner lose his or her job.

In terms of finance, an excellent question the prospective home-buying couple should ask themselves is "How large an investment are we able and willing to make?" A financial advisor or accountant can advise a couple about appropriate savings plans and disability and life insurance programs that may limit the financial risk involved. Co-tenancy agreements can define who pays what if problems within your relationship develop. Buying property together is a serious commitment. Having a detailed plan from the start always simplifies the process, not to mention aiding in maintaining your sanity!

Next month: Location, Financing and Finding: Laying Your Groundwork. (Editor's note: This article is written from a real estate lawyer's point of view. Couples interested in buying real estate together should consult their own legal, tax and financial advisors.)

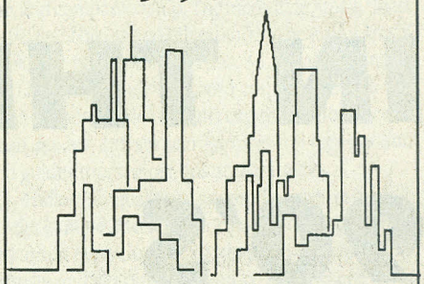
A prominent Houston property-management company executive revels in the telling of this story. It seems that he was showing a piece of property to a woman, a health-care professional who was interested in obtaining a home in the Montrose area to be close to her job in the nearby Medical Center. Upon viewing it, she was very pleased with the property and its location and price, but wanted assurance from the agent that "an active homosexual" had never lived there. The deal disintegrated when she was told that not only would it be logistically impossible to inform her of the sexual orientation of the home's previous tenants, but that it was also illegal. His parting advice to her, as they suspended their business dealings, was that, if she didn't want to be confronted with "active homosexuality," she should probably get out of Montrose.

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GAY TRAVEL IN THE 90'S

By Sandra B. Wilkins



The explosion of exclusive lesbian/gay travel opportunities underscores the positive movement toward an integrated culture being possible in America and reinforces the impact our community is having on mainstream American business.

I guess any industry will do, and I hope the same rapid proliferation of products and services is happening in other areas, but I think that the travel industry will always be somewhat special. Why? Because other than architecture, design, fashion, publishing and the creative arts, no other industry in American business has so many queers in it's ranks. Not long ago at a dinner party I heard a competitor say, "the travel business is riddled with gay people." Though I bristled at this comment, my mind immediately converted those words to "the travel business is blessed with an enormous number of dedicated, talented, creative, caring and progressive individuals who are happily gay." I know I'm right, and I know every segment of the travel industry from airlines to hotels to car companies to tour operators to cruise lines to bed/breakfast establishments benefit beyond measure from the lesbian and gay personnel they employ.

Before entering my 40's, taking on serious avocations like golf and gardening, I used to think the best I could ever hope for as a gay person would be to have my family accept me, maneuver my work environment to allow for the occasional appearance of my girlfriend, participate in and create a special circle of gay friends and live a pretty good life in a closet with louvered doors.

Hello 90's, when it's very in to be out. Thank you Stonewall 25 years ago. Thank you ACT UP New York for literally and legally pushing the AIDS crisis to the doorstep of our government. Thank you to the countless and selfless lesbian and gay individuals across this country for so many years who have devoted, and many times given, their lives to promote understanding and acceptance of the selves we have chosen not to deny.

1993 was an important year for us, touched as always with triumphs and disappointments. Vitally important was the stunning success of the March on Washington last April. That weekend delivered so much to so many, and seems to have been a catalyst for releasing pent up energy, emotion, direction and purpose in our community.

June 1994 has been designated Gay Pride Month in New York City and promises to continue the progress for acceptance and civil rights celebrated in The March on Washington last year. Remarkable events await us in New York this June. Gay Games IV will host 15,000 athletes from around the world and draw an estimated 500,000 spectators...more than participated in and attended the Olympics in Barcelona. Sunday, June 26th, will be a historic day in the lives of gays and lesbians around the world, as thousands gather for New York City's Stonewall 25 March on the United Nations. The celebrations, festivities and activities throughout the month will enrich and empower all who attend. Mark your calendar and make plans immediately to ensure your place for this landmark month in gay and lesbian history.

Sitting in Houston, Texas in February of 1994 feels mighty good. Being on the cutting edge of the exciting and explosive world of lesbian and gay travel is a dream come true for me and my business partner, Pat Brown.

A mere three years ago I was discussing the success of RSVP and Olivia Cruises with a sales rep from a major cruise line. I suggested that my lesbian and gay clientele was growing rapidly and that it would be possible to promote a cruise for lesbian and gay travelers from Houston. Would he be interested in working with us to put an exclusive departure together? His response was "Well Sandra, I certainly don't have any problems with this concept, but it will never fly with my upper management."

Something wonderful has definitely happened in a short period of time, because today we get calls weekly from major cruise lines who are all too eager to promote exclusive gay cruise weeks. And it's not just the cruise lines who have done a 360 turnaround. It seems to be the right time, right place, and all travel suppliers are clamoring to get on the bandwagon for gay vacation dollars.



In May of 1993, the first-ever Gay and Lesbian World Travel Expo was held in San Francisco and was a fantastic success. The event drew 137 travel agents and over 500 attendees from the general public. Forty-seven gay-owned and gay-friendly exhibitors participated, promoting tours, airlines, B & B's, hotels and cruise companies. The Expo then traveled to Atlanta, Los Angeles, Seattle and New York, and has its first appearance in Houston February 10, 1994.

Tom Roth, Expo's coordinator and director of The Marketing Department, a travel marketing company, says, "there is a growing boom of interest from gays and lesbians in travel directed toward them. According to the IGTA, the International Gay Travel Association, member agencies wrote over $1 billion in travel business in 1992."

The good, no, wonderful news is that your wildest vacation dreams have come true. You'd be hard pressed to present a vacation wish list that can't be fulfilled by "family"-owned and -operated companies. Gay guys want a bare-bottomed cruise for a week...can do. Something a bit more uptown? Not a problem. What about a private yacht, sleeping 6 to 20, playground of the Caribbean, Mediterranean or South Pacific...your guest list, pick up when you want, drop anchor at your whim, and let's kick in $1125 per person for a week, all meals and beverages included on a typical one-week charter for Caribbean ports of call.

Are you smiling yet? Sweating yet? New news *is* good news, isn't it? Barry Rice, an experienced master sailor, owns and supervises a wonderful company that provides beautiful vessels, complete with all water-sports equipment, comfort amenities like hammocks and floats, TV, VCR, Camcorder, CD player, library, cellular telephone, ice-cream maker and deeeep piled carpet throughout. Mmmmm.

Another big winner is Dan Ware's Toto Tours, a first-rate tour company, producing innovative tours of superior quality for our community. Our favorite is the Family Values: Gay and Lesbian Parents Adventure Week. After the stunning success of this tour last summer, Dan has increased the scope and time for 1994 and offers a camping/canoeing trip in Minnesota July 2-8 with a focus on family. This tour was created, in part, as a protest to the narrow definition of family promulgated by the religious right. This wonderful week affirms that our alternative families do provide every bit as much loving, nurturing and healthy family atmospheres as those more restrictively defined. Priced at $595 inclusive tour cost, this enriching experience makes your typical one-week "summer camp for kids" pale by comparison.

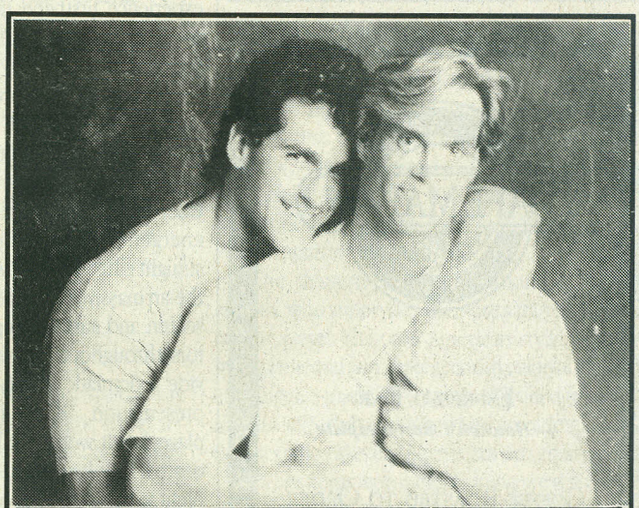
During the past 15 years as a travel professional, I've been able to observe a pattern in the travel habits of my gay and lesbian clientele. The most frequent and preferred vacation is small groups of friends traveling together to explore their common interests. This is exciting because so many of the top-notch tour operators cater specifically to small groups of six to 18 like-minded individuals.

I have a long-running love affair with France and Italy, and these destinations offer two of the most enriching and relaxing tour options you can imagine. In France, there are a couple of companies that provide luxury-barge cruises on the famous rivers and canals of France. The barges themselves sleep six to 14 passengers, and you can chart your own course, choose your menus and determine how to fill your sun-drenched days, puttering along the waterways at a leisurely pace.

Lauren Heffron, owner and leader of Cicilismo Classico, lived in Italy for four years, loved to bicycle, and, from these combined experiences, returned to the U.S. and started her unique tour company. She provides exclusive tours to groups as small as eight participants, or you can join one of the many scheduled tours, operating from April through October, for an unforgettable adventure in scenery, cuisine, and companionship. The incredible Amalfi Coast Stroll and Roll tour gives you 9 days of biking and hiking and the beautiful Amalfi coast, and is priced at $11,980 per person for the tour. All of Lauren's tours include accommodations in charming family inns, and countryside B & B's, continental breakfast daily, all dinners while on tour, experienced service of two to three bilingual Italian guides, private van support for luggage and assistance, wine tastings and guides tours, most tips and gratuities.

The possibilities are truly endless for quality vacations, designed especially with the gay and lesbian traveler in mind. Memorable vacations can be short or long in duration and tailored to suit every budget. So what are you waiting for? Dream your wildest travel dream and get out there and go somewhere.

Sandra B. Wilkins, M.A. is Vice President of Sales with ***Brown-Wilkins & Associates Travel, Inc.,*** *3311 Richmond, Suite #230, Houston Texas 77098. Get your American Tourister off the shelf and call her. 713.942.0664.*



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ALWAYS MY KID
Premieres at Rich's

by Nancy Ford and Greg Jeu

Always My Kid, produced by Houston-based TriAngle Video Productions, is the first in a series of educational videos exploring the different aspects of being gay and lesbian. Designed as a family guide to understanding homosexuality, the video series offers information to the straight and gay communities covering topics ranging from the coming-out process, religious issues, equal rights, prejudice and the "real story" about gay life.

Produced in cooperation with the Houston Chapter of Parents Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (P-FLAG), *Always My Kid* is a groundbreaking family guide to acceptance of a gay or lesbian child or sibling. Through one-on-one interviews with parents and their gay or lesbian child, viewers are given an opportunity to experience firsthand the emotions of coming out from both the parent's and the child's perspective.

Always My Kid premieres February 18, 1994 at 7 p.m. at RICH'S, 2401 San Jacinto. Rich's is one of Houston's largest videodance clubs, catering to an energetic crowd of gay and straight patrons. Rich's state-of-the-art massive video projection screen and surrounding monitors throughout the club provide a dramatic venue for the presentation. "Rich's is a big place, but it would thrill me to death if it looked like a Saturday night at 1 a.m." says Steve Baker, TriAngle producer.

Baker speaks with great passion about this project and the people involved. "Everyone who gave me their time gave me a part of their lives. They were open and honest with a private part of their life. Some of these parents who talked to us—their neighbors didn't know yet. Some of the people aren't out on their jobs yet. A few of the people have put their careers on the line."

> Every gay person owes it to themselves and to the gay community to come out. Maybe in small steps. Get a rainbow sticker for your car. When we're driving down the street it feels good to see some one else in a car with a freedom flag or a pink triangle. It's important for us to realize how many of us there are out here.
>
> —Steve Baker, TriAngle Video

The motivation to create TriAngle Video Productions was two-fold. Baker's main impetus was the pervasive negative media portrayals of gay people. "I look at my friends and the people I know and the school teachers I know and the police officers I know—all these reponsible people in society. There's too much misinformation out there, and that's what I want to correct."

He continues, "The Christian Right is my biggest motivator. I owe everything to them. In my office I have a copy of their video tape (*The Gay Agenda: Gay Rights—Special Rights*) sitting across from my desk where I can see it. Whenever the day gets too long or the project gets too complicated, I look at the video. They're not telling the truth. It's always angered me, and this is a way to express that anger, by getting the truth out."

TriAngle Video Productions has grown from the two of them to a staff of 12 including Russell Byrd, Steve's business and life partner, and Trevor Brock, a straight man with a conscience to accompany his smart business sense.

The video will retail for approximately $25, with a portion of the proceeds returned to charitable organizations in Houston's gay and lesbian community. Expect to see advertisements in "traditionally straight" media as much as, if not more than, the gay media. "It's made for parents with gay children, and most of those parents are straight," reasons Steve. TriAngle Video Productions is dedicated to addressing any and all issues that either directly or indirectly affect the quality of life, civil rights and human dignity of all gay, lesbian and bisexual persons. Upcoming videos include spotlights on gay and lesbian relationships and a "We-Are-Everywhere" themed production identifying gays and lesbian in mainstream America.

For more information please call TriAngle Video Productions, 869-4477.

Red Ribbon Restaurant Review

The Red Ribbon Project is a fundraiser for various AIDS charities in which participating restaurants mark certain tables in their establishments as "Red Ribbon" tables. A portion of the receipts from persons eating at these tables is donated to the Red Ribbon Project. OutSmart has made a commitment to review restaurants that participate in this worthwhile project.

A friend for many years, Ruggles Grill assists in a wide variety of events benefitting our community. But that's not the only reason they're a great success!

Read on...

by Tom Fricke

Before trekking off to Ruggles, I phoned ahead and made a reservation. Though not required, reservations are very helpful at this popular venue.Don't let all those Mercedes and Lexus automobiles backed up on Westheimer fool you; Ruggles caterers to a very mixed clientele. Though many patrons are in coat and tie, you will find an equal number of folks dressed casually. The upper dining area is usually filled with the "banker types."

I requested the lower dining area. Its simple decoration, closely placed tables and modern art create a pub-like atmosphere. Not only does it tend to be more fun, you get a soothing feeling from the trompe l'oeil clouds painted on the ceiling.

Ruggles Grill, a fine Montrose eatery for over 20 years, has been under the ownership and direction of Bruce and Susan Molzan since 1986. Both Bruce and Susan are graduates of the prestigious Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, N.Y. Bruce has received many culinary honors and was named to *Who's Who in Food & Wine in Texas* last year.

What is the secret to Ruggles great success? According to Mr. Molzan, "We are a by-product of the recession which started here in 1982 and we are the way restaurants will be in the 90s. We serve good food at a reasonable price. We by the same quality ingredients as expensive restaurants, we just don't charge as much."

Gary, my waiter, whose dynamic personality contributes so much to the restaurant, suggested the Gulf Crabcake ($6.95). When it arrived it was so enormous that I almost thought I had received an entrée. The cake was golden brown, and was presented with a roasted tomato and shrimp butter sauce. It was bursting with lump crab meat spiced effectively, but delicately enough to keep the flavor of the crab.

I followed my appetizer with a Caesar Salad ($5.25). It arrived perfectly chilled with greens so crisp that one would think they had been grown on the premises. The salad came dressed with just the proper blend of garlic, herbs and fresh Parmesan cheese. Just a note, Ruggles serves their Caesar with whole Romaine leaves, which may be why they are able to maintain the high quality. (If you are of the kind that requires your food run through a food processor first, you may want to try another item.) I was feeling a little "fullish" at this point, but undaunted I placed my order for the salmon. My meal may sound a little "fishy," but, when the opportunity to enjoy fresh seafood presents itself I indulge. And Bruce Molzan is noted for his seafood dishes. The Fresh Salmon is served roasted in a ginger and black pepper crust. It is accompanied by a black bean soy vinaigrette positioned picture-perfectly with a colorful assortment of about twelve fresh vegetables. The intriguing combination of ginger and vinaigrette is a delight.

The desserts are the creation of Susan Molzan, who supervises their preparation with a watchful eye. They are American style, homemade, large and are presented with colorful sauces and Ruggles-made ice creams. All priced reasonably at $4.95, they include: white macademia nut tart, domino cake and peanut banana cream pie.

Other items worth mentioning are the Corn Chowder with roasted pepper & crab salsa ($4.25), Wild Mushroom Soup ($3.95), Skewered Beef, Chicken and Pork with spicy peanut sauce ($6.95), Snapper Meuniere ($13.95), Spicy Angel Hair Pasta with shrimp ($9.95) and Smoked Duck Pizza ($9.95).

Appetizers and salads start at $4.50, soups at $3.95. Pasta dishes, entrées and pizza start at $9.95.

For more information or to make a reservation, please call Ruggles Grill at 524-3839.

RUGGLES GRILL

903 Westheimer
713/524-3839

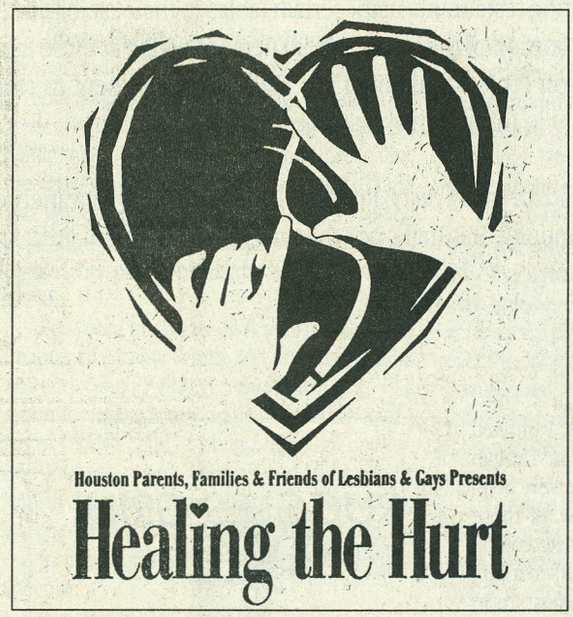
Hours: Lunch, Tuesday through Friday 11:30 am-2:00 pm; Sunday Brunch 11:30 am-2:30 pm; Dinner, Tuesday -Thursday 5:30 -11 pm, Friday & Saturday 5:30 pm- Midnight, Sunday 5:30-10 pm. Closed Mondays. All major credit cards accepted except Discover. Reservations encouraged but not necessary.

P-FLAG Conference on Homophobia March 11

The Houston Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (P-FLAG) will present a day-long conference on homophobia Friday, March 11.

Officially titled "Healing the Hurt," the educational conference is intended to give the participants an opportunity to examine the myths, misinformation and misleading stereotypes about gays and lesbians. P-FLAG especially wants to reach professionals who encounter homophobia on a day-to-day basis, including psychologists, clergy, police officers, social workers and the medical community.

Included in the conference will be a morning keynote address by Bruce Hilton, author of *Can Homophobia Be Cured?* and a Methodist minister who has been the director of the National Center for Bioethics for the past 20 years.



"Not to press on with the struggle [against homophobia] means continued pain and separation for many of our sisters and brothers, and will stunt our society's moral growth just as racism and sexism do," said Rev. Hilton.

Dr. Diane Mosbacher, Medical Director for Mental Health in San Mateo County, California, will present the luncheon keynote address on her years working with gays and lesbians in the mental health field. A lesbian, she was publicly outed after her father, former Secretary of Commerce under President Bush, was quoted in *Newsweek*.

Conference participants will not only be able to listen to these two guest speakers, but will be able to attend one of six workshop sessions offered that day.

Morning workshop sessions range from dispelling myths about homosexuality, keeping families together, and gay and lesbian civil rights to spirituality, mental health and lesbian and gay teens. Afternoon workshop sessions will discuss the origins of homosexuality, the Judeo-Christian perspective, teen suidice, overcoming oppression, the battle over legislation, and being the parent of a gay or lesbian child.

Workshop presenters include Houston City Councilperson Sheila Jackson Lee; Dr. Robert McLaughlin; The Rev. Dr. Donald Sinclair of Bering Memorial United Methodist Church; State Representatives Garnet Coleman, Debra Danburg and Glen Maxey, and The Rev. Carolyn Mobley of MCCR.

The conference will be held at the University Hilton, 4800 Calhoun on Friday, March 11. A registration fee of $80 is required (group and student rates available). For more information please contact P-FLAG Houston, P.O. Box, 692444, Houston, TX 77269, (713) 867-9020.

THIRD ANNUAL SOIREE AUBERGINE FEB. 18

The third annual Soiree Aubergine, features a silent auction, with a litho graph by Karin Broker, who was recently named "1994 Texas Artist of the Year." The auction also features other artwork by local artists, fashion items, home furnishings, hotel accomodations and other products and services. Proceeds from the auction and all other Soiree Aubergine events benefit the Bering Care Center nutrition program. The auctions open at Gentry, 2303 Richmond, with a 6 pm buffet on Friday, February 18. Items will remain on display through February 25.



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Guess Who's Humming to Dinner: Music to Digest By

by Norman Brockman

The honey-lime chicken is succulent. The wine—perfectly chilled. Even the Caesar salad—which, in haste, came directly from Epicurean's salad bar—is fresh and nicely croutoned. The candles are lit, the Bird of Paradise posies are arranged dramatically in crystal. Your dinner companion(s) are eager to enjoy a sensual, sumptuous feast for the eyes, nose and palate.

But what about their ears?

Please, for your guests' sake and your own, give at least as much thought to dinner music as you would to your guest list. Your choice of tapes and tunes can be equally enhancing or detracting to a successful dinner party. Would you invite your homophobic uncle to your Gay Pride bar-b-que? Well, maybe you would, but that's another matter for another column.

Regardless of their popularity, Guns 'n' Roses is NOT dinner music. Neither is two-step music or techno music. It has been known to cause indigestion and possibly gas. Not good for any party. Select light jazz or New Age music. It's relaxing and enhances digestion and you won't be compelled to line-dance while you're trying to eat.

Another point to remember is volume control. Unlike Lyle Lovett's hair, more is not better. Less is best. Keep your music at background level, not internal organ-jarring. If that honey lime chicken is doing the funky chicken on the plate, obviously your music is too loud. Either that, or call U-Haul: you're living on a fault line.

Following these few, simple guidelines will ensure that your dinner party, or at least, the auditory ambiance of it will be tantalizing. People will flock to your next event, knowing that once again it will be excellent.

RECOMMENDED RECIPE FOR A GREAT DINNER MIX TAPE

Start with one 90 minute blank cassette tape, fresh from the package. Place in recorder. Gently fold in the following melodies, taking care not to allow "dead air" to seep in between selections. Serve with friends and sparkling conversation.

Romance Dance by Peter White
Heart of the City by Frank Mills
East River Drive by Stanley Clarke
Mecca by La Vienta
Miles Away by Oystein Sevag
Moments in Love by Art of Noise
Ever Returning by Bernward Koch
Song of Ocarina by Diego Modena
A Little Bumpin' by Lee Ritenour
Europa by Gato Barbieri
Inner Vision by Hisham
Into the Night by Exchange A
October by Steve Laury
Chris by Pat Metheny
Kei's Song by David Benoit
Promenade by Peter White
Just Is by Henry Robinett Group
Mr. Chow by Acoustic Alchemy

Norman Brockman is an award-winning electronics wizzard who has designed/assisted in the design of virtually all of gay Houston's better dance clubs. Audiences coast to coast have danced to and enjoyed his music mixes.

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Scan the ads listed, perusing them somewhat as you would a menu, but not nearly so callously. Make your selection of the person(s) you would like to meet, decide on a salad dressing, and dial 1-900-370-8687. You will be instructed to record the verbal response. Make it dazzling and descriptive, giving the box-holding person incentive to return your call. Be sure to speak clearly when recording your message, because your momma didn't raise no mumbler. A charge of $1.95 per minute will appear on your next telephone bill. Would you like dessert with that?

If you're more of an old-fashioned kind of guy or gal, write a reponse to your potential love interest, and put it in a **stamped envelope** addressed with the box number in question. Put it and $2 in another envelope, and mail the whole she-bang to **Out▼Smart** Personals, 2990 Richmond, Suite 316, Houston, Texas 77098. We'll forward your letter to your new honey within 48 hours. After that, the two of you are on your own. We aren't reponsible for fireworks or fizzles. Love's funny that way.

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Mail us your 50 word or less personal ad by the 15th of each month for publication in the following issue. (Add 25¢ for each word over 50). We will not publish a last name, address or phone number. We do, however, require this information for our files. After we receive your personal ad you will be assigned your own voice mail box and sent instructions on how to record your free voice personal introduction.

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Respondents to ad will hear your greeting and if they like what they hear, they can leave a message. They'll be charged $1.95 per minute on their phone bill...

AND THEY'LL GET YOURS:
Use our toll-free number to call your mailbox and check how many messages you have waiting for you. Then call 1-900-370-8687 to listen to your responses! There will be a charge of $1.95 per minute which will appear on your phone bill.

THEN GET TOGETHER:
Once you've listened to your messages, you'll decide whom to contact and arrange a meeting. Only then do you make your identity known. It's completely confidential!

1-900-370-8687

$1.95 PER MINUTE
You must be at least 18 years old to use this service.

Closeted lesbian, homebody, enjoys shallow conversation, limited stimulation, Wonder Bread and cheese food. Inclined to unpredictable moods swings. *Wait a minute, that's not me*—that's the kind of woman I'm trying to avoid. Try this: GWF, late thirties, out, spiritual, independent, articulate, flexible, adventurous. Not a beauty queen, but not a mirror-shatterer, either. Like the song says, I need a lover who won't drive me crazy.
OutSmart Intro Box 70054

Brainy Bear Wanted. Attractive GAM, 34, healthy and fit, stable, spiritual and compassionate, seeks down-to-earth, handsome and hirsute (beards and 'staches a plus) stable nonsmoking GWM age 33-40 with sense of humor for friendship. (Recently widowed and longing for companionship, but not ready to rent the U-haul.) Enjoy a variety of interests from working out, cooking, movies, metaphysics to bad drag shows. Seeking adventure, laughter and bear hugs. Wanna meet a good friend? Call or write me.
OutSmart Intro Box 70058

GWM, 48, 5'8", 160 lbs. New to Houston. Likes quiet nights at home, cooking and bicycle rides. Looking for sincere, professional man. No smokers, please.
OutSmart Intro Box 70107

GWM, mid 30's, entrepreneur, attractive, healthy and full of charm. Success-oriented and seeks same. Some say my quick wit and sparkling blues are hard to match. I enjoy traveling, dining out, entertaining, working out, movies and friends. A positive attitude and hearty sense of humor a must. Although my schedule and projects keep me busy, I'm looking for a special person to spend quality time with. Please, no drugs, smokers and light-to-no alcohol. Call or write me. Everybody enjoys new friends.
OutSmart Intro Box 70076

Chocolate for the cold weather, perhaps forever. If you are an active, masculine black male (in preference) or a white guy; honest, healthy, realistic, who loves life, spirituality, walks, conversations and a special friendship, this SGHM, 31, 5'7", 153 lbs., somewhat attractive, self-disciplined, passive, sincere is waiting for you.
OutSmart Intro Box 70075

GF, night owl, seeks poker buddies. No high stakes, just fun and games. Ante up.
OutSmart Intro Box 70054

Looking for affectionate, healthy, trim GWM who likes being cuddled by GBM, 34, 5'9", 146 lbs. Seeking drug-free, healthy, straight-acting GWM for friendship. Let's develop a discreet, caring relationship, slim GWM! Please send photo!
OutSmart Intro Box 70053

Easy-going GWM, 33, eager to meet others whose interest runs toward leather. Write or call me.
OutSmart Intro Box 70109

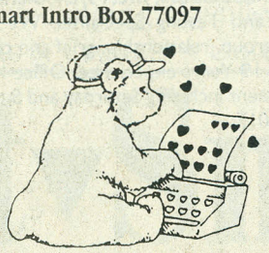
GWM, 35, 5'9", 160 lbs., blonde/green, Hobby area. Looking for Renaissance Man with the heart of a warrior and the soul of a poet. Please be sincere, affectionate, confident, communicative, sentimental, creative, adventurous, humorous, self-sufficient, spiritual rather than religious and drug-free. Smoking and responsible drinking is fine. Not interested in perfection, ego or Adonis types, but hoping for enduring romance with a *real* type. Ethnic background unimportant.
OutSmart Intro Box 70009

I KNOW WHO YOU ARE! Like me, a GF with a passion for life; one who works and plays hard. Rugged, independent, yet enjoys sharing enthusiasms. Emotionally, both strong and sensitive. If that's who you are, please tell me *where* you are. Somewhere also, I hope, outside my dreams!!
OutSmart Intro Box 70013

Desiring totally drug-free, slender GWM for friendship and to meet occasionally. Seeking GWM who wants a passive friend. I'm a discreet, professional GBM who's also responsible, dependable and humorous. This GBM is 33, 5'9", 145 lbs., heathy, drug/smoke free. Seeking lasting friendship with slender-built, healthy GWM cuddler. Let's share discreet, enduring friendship!
OutSmart Intro 70015

GBM, 24, handsome, toned body, 5' 8", 150 lbs. Student who enjoys music, theater, reading, biking, eating out and stimulating conversation. Enjoys socializing, but not into the bar scene. Seeking a handsome, slender, GWM, 25-35 who is honest, open-minded, spiritual, humorous and wants a relationship with someone special.
OutSmart Intro Box 70023

Good-looking, friendly, professional, 26-year-old GWM seeks other gay men for friendship, conversation, fun. I'm involved in a committed relationship, however, I/we enjoy being in the company of other men at bars, for dinner or just hanging out.
OutSmart Intro Box 77097



Earring Magic Ken

shorts. *Who's* first Ken? Poindexter's? *Native American, Australian* and *Italian Barbie.Spring Parade Barbie. Police Officer Barbie.* What *is* it about a woman in a uniform? There's even *Troll Barbie* for the cosmetically challenged adolescent. Perhaps preparing for HRC's potential 1996 political aspirations, *Presidential Barbie* is now available. Hmmm.

If *Earring Magic Ken* (If?) catches on, prepare to see the following B & K characters as gays and lesbians take their place at the Playskool table of 21st century civilization:

- *Drag Queen Ken* comes with his own karaoke machine and Ru Paul tape. You go girl.
- *Bondage Barbie.* This doll will never catch on unless toy designers give her pierceable little nipples on the ends of those perky, plastic DDDDD's.
- *Military Ken.* Tighten a pair of khaki fatigues and put electrical tape over his mouth. Don't ask, don't tell, don't put him in a pup tent with GI Joe.
- *Bitter Ex-lover Barbie* stalks you and your new girlfriend Midge wherever you go.
- *Closet Barbie and Ken* look like any other Barbie or Ken, except they have no spine.
- *Totally Fem Barbie.* In a special salute to lipstick lesbians, TF Barbie would be clothed in her lavendar, pink or light blue, and work 9-to-5, M-F. But remove her tasteful linen business suit and pumps and she becomes...
- *Totally Butch Barbie.* Comes with her own lick-on tattoo (which by the way is an excellent substitute for those lesbians unwilling to commit to permanence).

And on and on and on. Bottom line, anatomically speaking, aren't all Barbie and Ken dolls little more than post-operative transsexuals? I swear. Da—. Oh, never mind. Why all the fuss over one little earring?

In fact, why all the fuss, period?

Let's all just play nice.

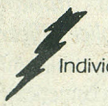
Nancy Ford is a comedian, frequent contributor to the gay press, and Queen of the Texas Lesbians.

Homosexuality is not all self-hate, or guilt feelings, or love, or domination or submission, or any one thing; it's a many-branching path, down which we are all walking.

—Samuel Steward

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Tony Carroll, LMSW-ACP. Certified IMAGO Relationship Therapist. See display ad this issue regarding upcoming seminar: FINDING LOVE and KEEPING LOVE. Call for information. (713)522-3045.

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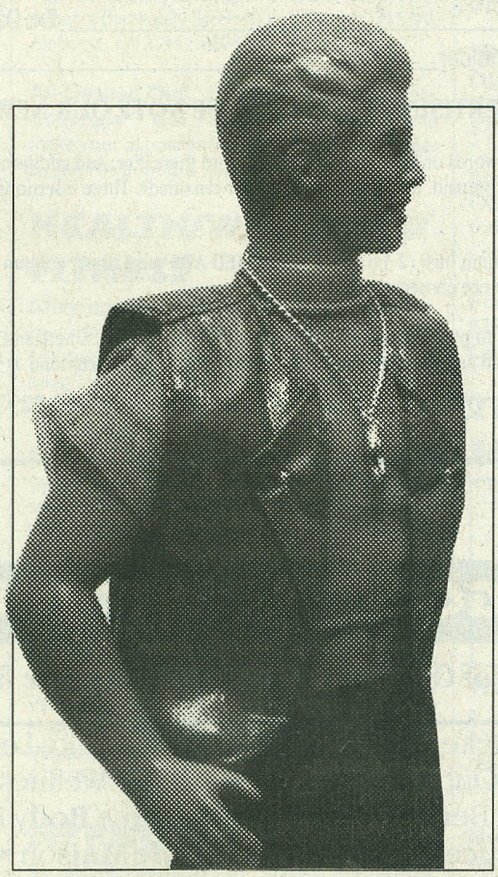
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HOUSTON'S GAY & LESBIAN MONTHLY MAGAZINE

WHAT A WORLD, WHAT A WORLD...

Can Earring Magic Ken Come Out & Play?

by Nancy Ford



He's clothed in a lavendar vest with a matching see-through mesh t-shirt. Jeans. Black loafers, no socks. His necklace is described by the national media as resembling "a device available in sex shops," which could mean anything from a cock ring to a cash register. He retails for $9-$12, depending on where you do your toy shopping. *And* he wears an earring. Which ear? Not important. If we simply ignore the old *left is right, right is wrong* homophobic fashion mantra, Mattel's got a lot of 'splainin' to do.

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, homos and hets, please welcome *Earring Magic Ken*. Not quite as flaming is the accompanying *Earring Magic Barbie*, clothed in a fake leather bustier dress and lots of hardware. Evidently the name *Whore Barbie* didn't pass demographic testing. Fire Island Ken may be lounging on the drawing board as we speak.

Welcome to the Gay Nineties.

The Big Shots at Mattel swear that the choice of the lavendar color scheme is market-research based. It seems little girls prefer soft, light colors, like pink and light blue. Do little girls also prefer a hunky, metal accessory hung near the belt that suspiciously resembles a handcuff?

A little herstory: I seldom played Barbies as a child. I found it interferred with my television-watching, twinkie-eating and ritual torment by siblings. When *forced* to play, I worked Ken. Always. Invariably. You'd think this might have been a clue to my parents that they needn't worry about spending a lot of money on my prom gown. I wonder if people who are into water sports as adults got their start by playing with Betsy Wetsy.

Earring Magic Ken was introduced just in time for the big Christmas gift-buying blast. What a co-inkydink. Could it be that *toy* is among the most recent of industries to wise up to the fact that, collectively, gay men and lesbians enjoy an unusually high disposable income? Admittedly we are, as a community, famous for spending *way* more than $9-$12 on colorful kitsch that draws attention to ourselves. If these items can be displayed in our homes to laugh at with wild abandon, all the better. Tell the truth—don't most of your friends own lava lamps, or is it just me?

Though I'm certainly not above it, I'm not making any of this up. I swear. Damn it. See? If you don't believe me, visit your local national chain toy store. That's what I did.

Picture this. There we were, myself and my outest, proudest friend, strangers in a strange land. Not having any children of our own (that we know of) neither of us have reason to spend much time in a toy store. At least not *that* kind of toy store.

Wanting to blend as unobtrusively as possible into the suburban environment we were about to invade, we donned appropriate attire: she in her *Lesbian Avengers—We Recruit* t-shirt and me in my freedom rings. I could be wrong, but I think I heard an alarm when we entered the store. Various mothers seemed to bustle their offspring out of and away from our sphere of influence.

Maybe you're not a "kid" person. Many folks in our gayborhood aren't. To somewhat avoid the small folks for whom this very store was designed, go directly to the Barbie and Ken department. Do not pass Barney. A hint: watch for a throbbing pink glow emanating from floor to ceiling. Pink is Barbie's signature color, you know. Soft, light pink this ain't. It's more like a beacon in the night. We made the mistake of veering briefly ithrough the Nerf department, where I accidently smacked an unarmed 3-year-old in the head with a Nerf bat. Accidently. I swear. Damn it. See? The little trooper took it pretty well. Good thing we weren't in the Spalding department.

My friend and I strode down the throbbing pink-box-lined Barbie Lane. We were shocked. Times have changed since I didn't play Barbies. *Barbie* whazoo has become very sophisticated. Gone are the days of using a Dominoe's Pizza lid plastic holder-upper as a Barbie kitchen table. For every occasion, every phase, every pre-pubescent whim, a theme *Barbie* is available:

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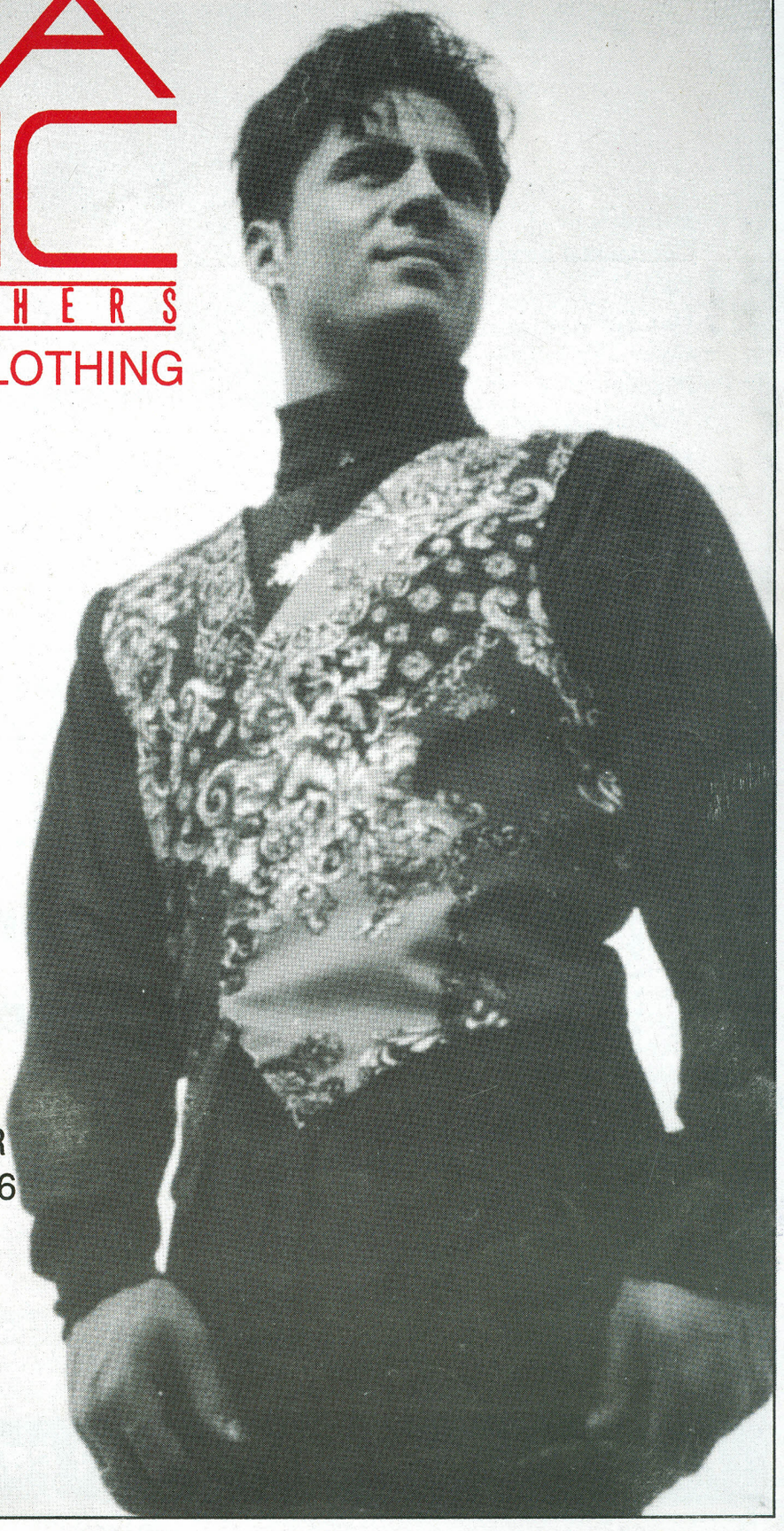
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