

PRIDE 04

THE OFFICIAL
MAGAZINE OF
HOUSTON PRIDE
2004

ZACKIE ACHMAT
ONE MAN'S WILL

THE
RETURN
OF JOBRIATH

LOVE
after 50?

Part
2

PLUS
EXCLUSIVE
HOUSTON
PRIDE GUIDE

UNIONS

InterPride



2003 Parade Review

The 25th anniversary "Silver Celebration" Pride Parade was truly a commemoration. We've come so far from where we began. Our city held worldwide attention because the Texas Homosexual Conduct Law was struck down within days before the Parade because of people in our very own community. What a way to celebrate 25 years of Pride!

A record crowd of est. 170,000 strong came together that night to watch the parade, catch beads, celebrate, and just be together. The weather was perfect and the lights on the floats were fabulous, not to mention the beautiful chandelier that hung over Montrose & Westheimer for the first time. Another first was the festive performance put on by The Strangerettes from Dallas. Seeing all the past 25 years of Grand Marshals on one float was a very moving and motivating experience for all.

Almost every year the Parade grows larger and the 2003 Parade was no exception totaling 135 entries. The 2004 Parade promises to be bigger and more spectacular than ever and we look forward to seeing a crowd as big as Texas enjoying themselves and celebrating Pride!

Silver Celebration



2003 SILVER CELEBRATION TROPHY WINNERS

RUBY SLIPPER

(Best walking unit)

Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce

GYPSY ROSE

(Best out-of-town unit)

Turtle Creek Chorale / The Strangerettes

EDISON

(Best lighting on a non-professionally built unit)

Community Gospel Church

HOUSTON

(Best non-professionally built motorized unit)

The Krewe of the Moons of Uranus

RAINBOW LIGHTS

(Best lighting on a professional built unit)

Diageo & Smirnoff Twist

TEXAS

(Best professionally built motorized unit)

JP Morgan Chase P.R.I.D.E. Team

STONEWALL

(Best commemoration of pride)

Donald R. Watkins Memorial Foundation

SILVER CELEBRATION

(Best interpretation of theme)


Gulf Coast Archive & Museum of GLBT History, Inc.

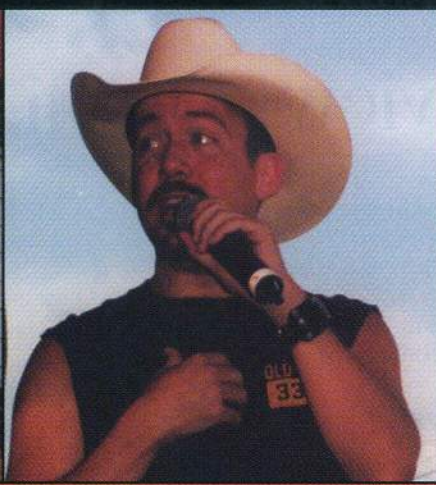
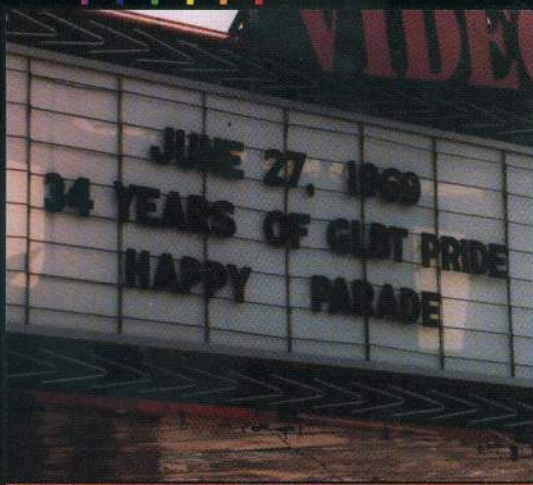
SPIRIT OF MONTROSE

(Best overall entry)

Turtle Creek Chorale / The Strangerettes

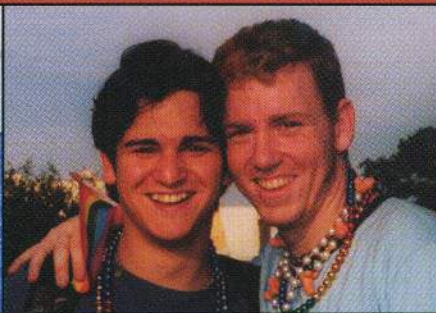
PRIDEHOUSTON.ORG

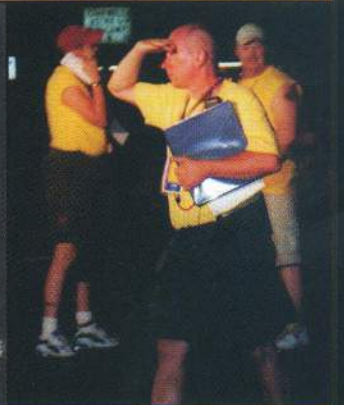
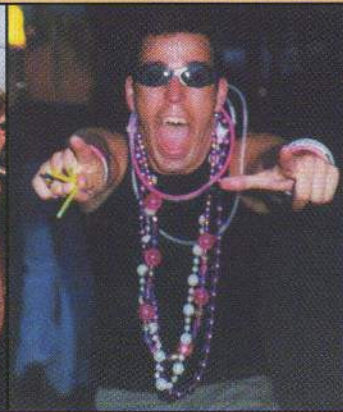
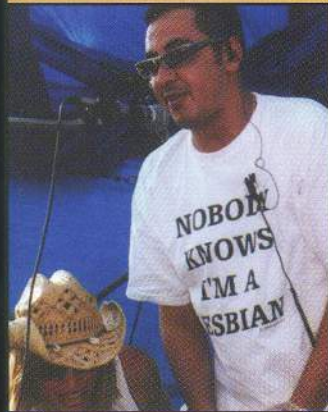


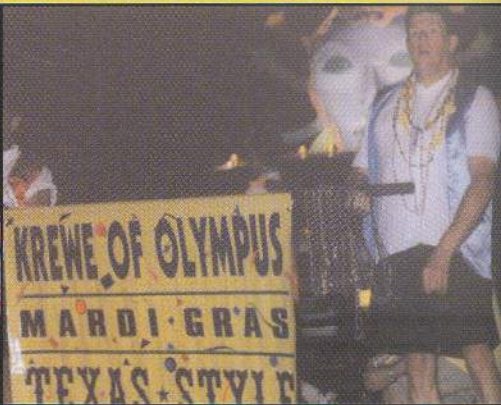
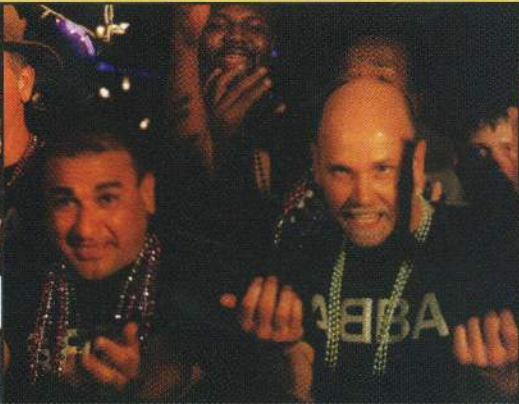
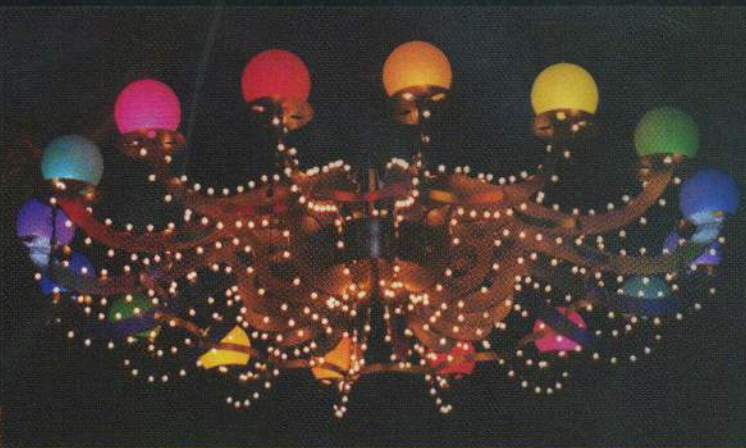


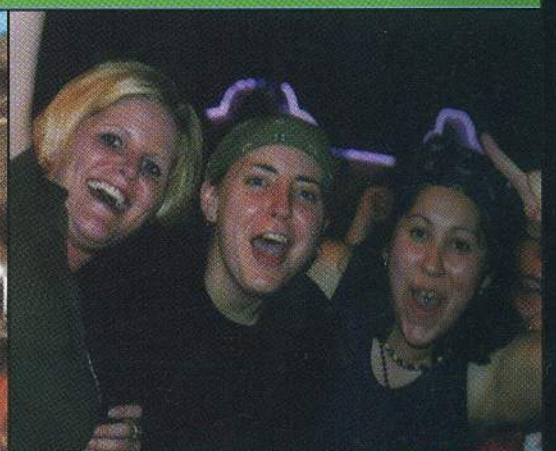
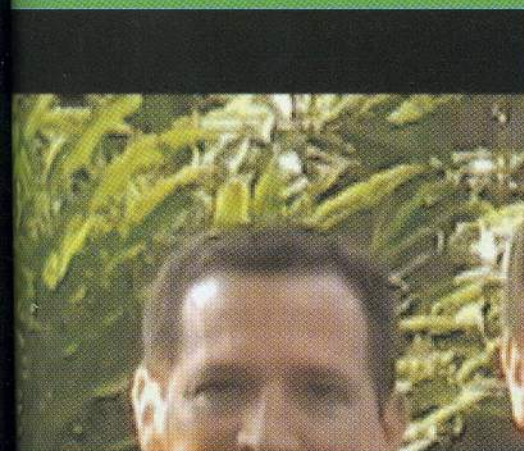
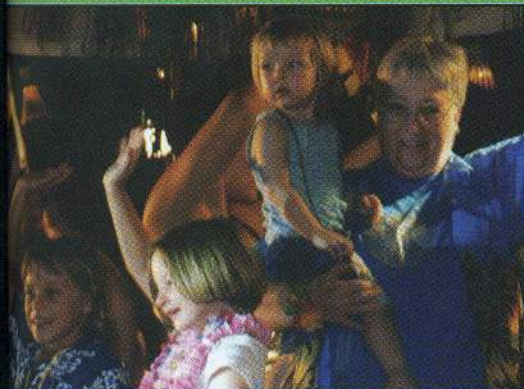
HOUSTON PRIDE PARADE 2003

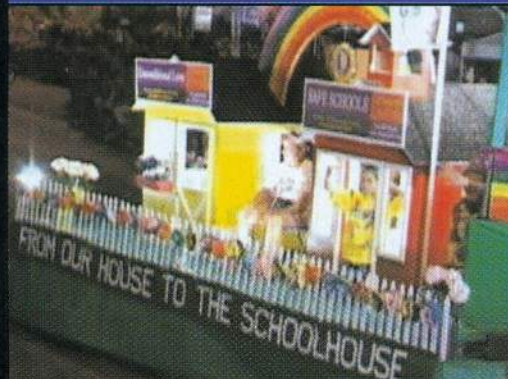
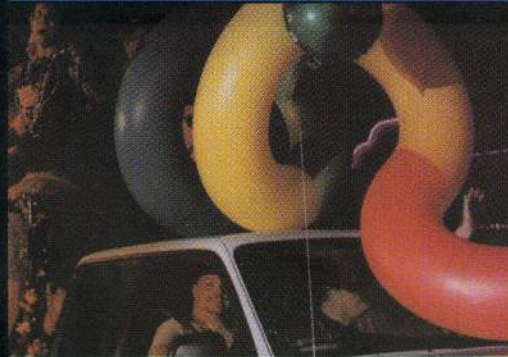
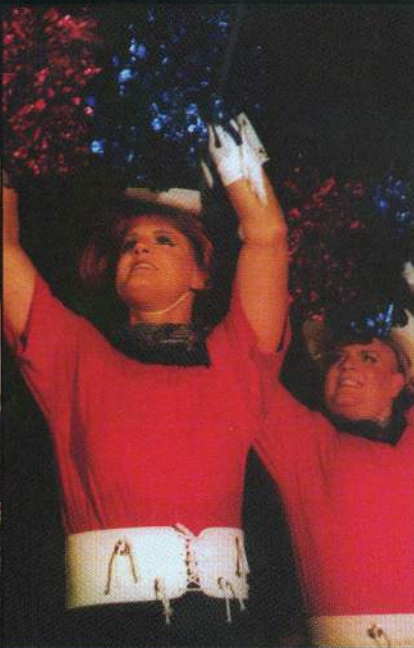
Photography by Yvonne K. Feece & Rob Martinez

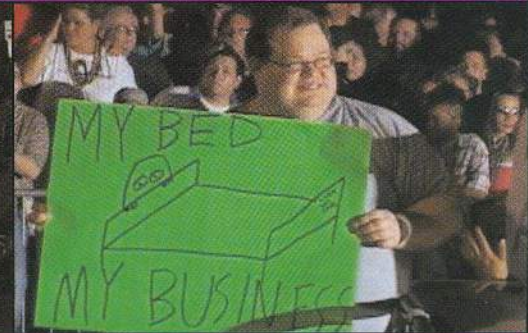
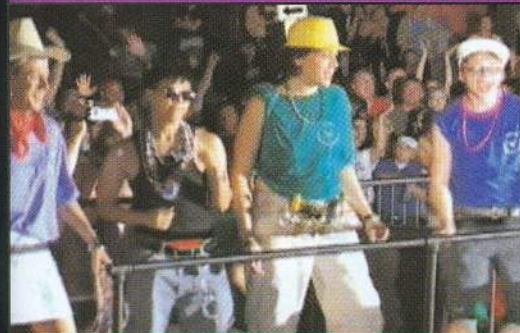
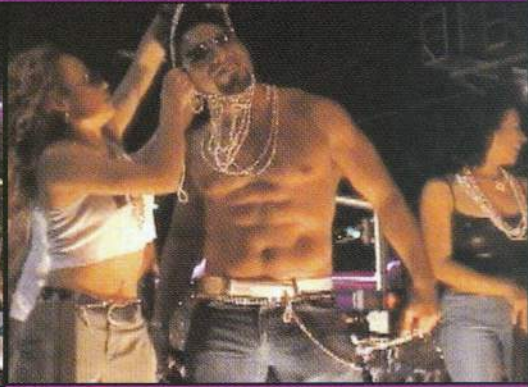
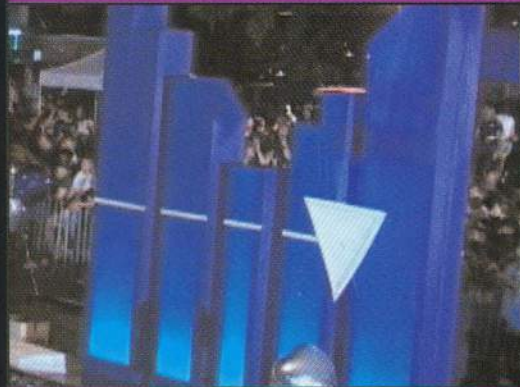












The Best of The Best

2003 Silver Celebration Trophy Winners

2003 SILVER CELEBRATION TROPHY WINNERS

RUBY SLIPPER

Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce

GYPSY ROSE

Turtle Creek Chorale / The Strangerettes

EDISON

Community Gospel Church

HOUSTON

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STONEWALL

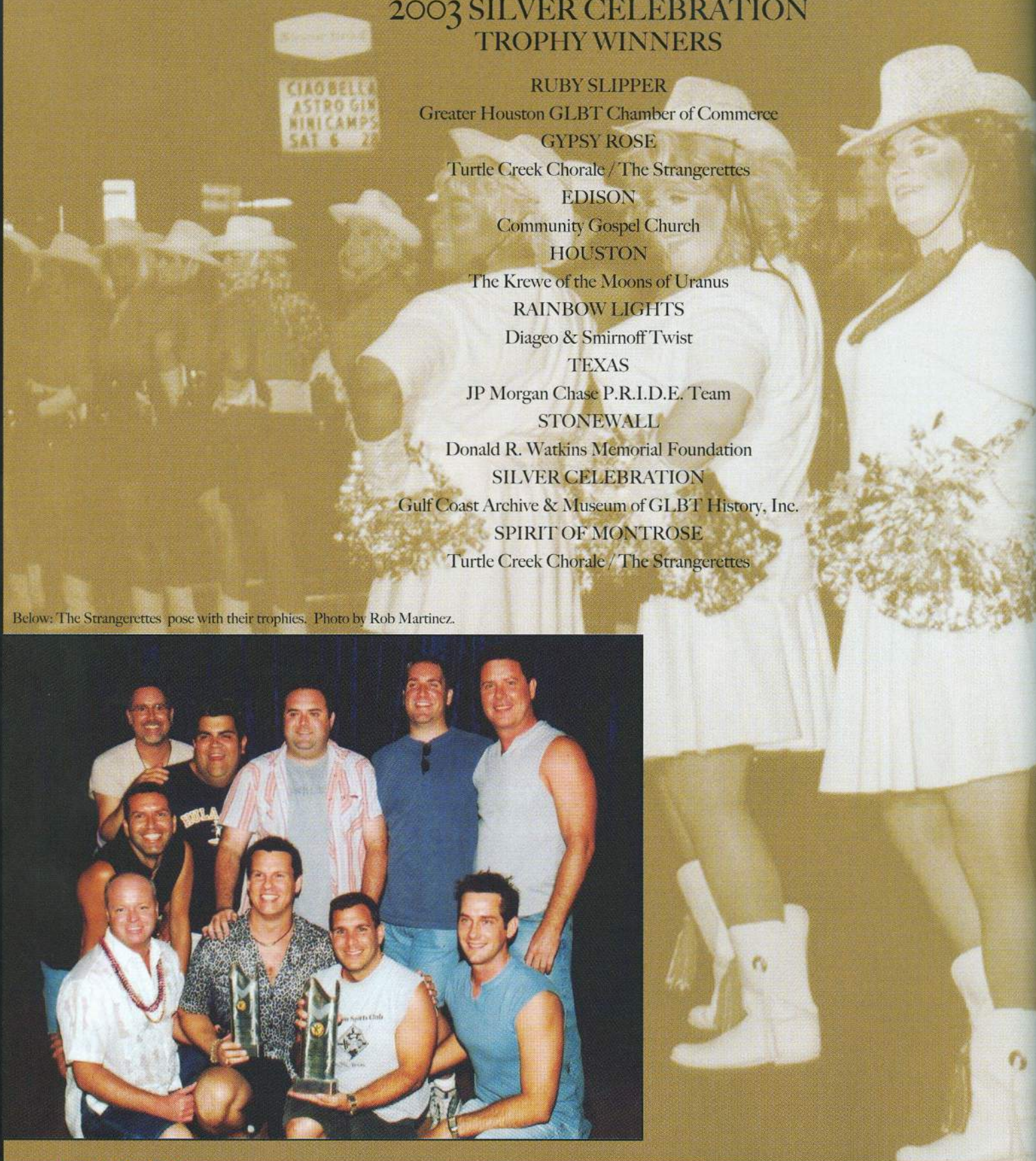
Donald R. Watkins Memorial Foundation

SILVER CELEBRATION

Gulf Coast Archive & Museum of GLBT History, Inc.

SPIRIT OF MONTROSE

Turtle Creek Chorale / The Strangerettes



Below: The Strangerettes pose with their trophies. Photo by Rob Martinez.





Above & Below: Diageo & Smirnoff Twist



Above: Aaron & Manny giving out trophies



Above: Community Gospel Church



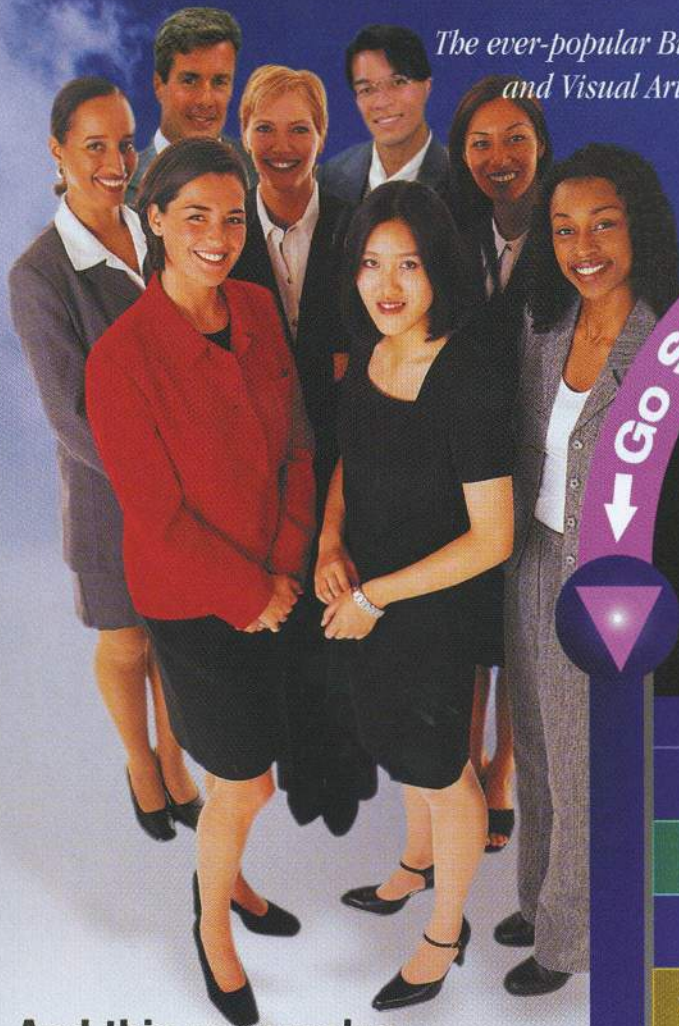
Above: Coy Fow excepts the award for The Chamber



Photo by Rob Martinez

**New! Empower 2004 has moved to Pride Week.
June 12th & 13th • Sat 1- 8 pm & Sun 12- 5 pm**

The ever-popular Business Expo, Job Fair and the Performing and Visual Arts that make Empower a great event.



Go Straight to the Gay Market™

JUNE 12-13

**EMPOWER
2004**

← FUN →

FREE GIVEAWAYS

DOOR PRIZES ➔

↻ **ENTERTAINMENT** ↻

➔ **SHOPPING**

↻ **NETWORKING** ↻

ROCK CLIMBING

SPORTS & OUTDOORS

← **GOOD FOOD** →

theChamber
the greater houston gbt chamber of commerce

And this year we've added more attractions to the list, including:

- Pet Pavilion, Kids Pavilion
- Home & Garden, Performing Arts
- Visual Arts, Food/Beverage Service
- Big Time Entertainment

For information about becoming a vendor or sponsor, and associated benefits, contact the Chamber at www.ghglcc.org or call **713.523.7576**



A Day in The Life of . . .

Ruston Alsbrooks - Houston Police Department

“When you look back and your heart rate goes up, that’s me!”

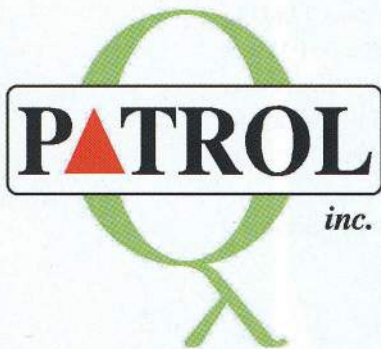
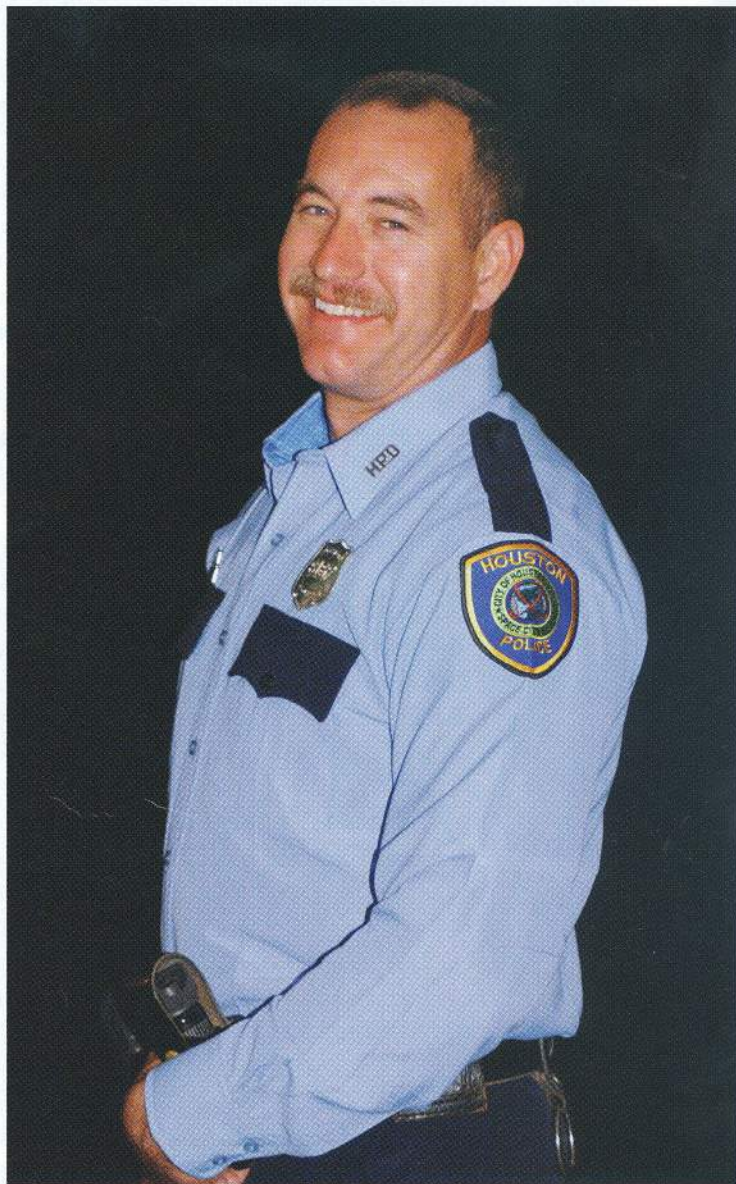
You know the type. Big. Strong. Waiting over the hill to catch you zooming by at over 70mph. You guessed it! Ruston Alsbrooks is a 9-year veteran police officer for the Houston Police Department. His current position with the department is in the specialized division of Traffic Enforcement.

“I’m a police officer who just happens to be gay.” For Alsbrooks, there was never a question of being out at work. After about a year on the force Alsbrooks came out to his peers by introducing his “other half,” of now going on 11 years, to his co-workers as his “partner” which eventually made its way through the department. “Did you hear Alsbrooks is gay?” Although Alsbrooks’s riding partner is his complete opposite (ex-military, Republican and, of course, straight) they are best friends on and off duty. Not everyone is comfortable being out on the force, but for Ruston “being gay was never an issue. [Besides,] you can’t lie to police officers.” Working as closely with each other as they do in the department makes it practically impossible for anyone to remain ambiguous. But for those who aren’t yet comfortable with being out on the force, Alsbrooks stands as an example of a successful openly gay officer.

What few problems did occur after Alsbrooks came out were handled “quite harshly” through the department with great speed. “My supervisor is the one who stood up for me” and made the complaint. Personally, I couldn’t imagine anyone wanting to pick a fight with this guy!

“For gays as well as straights, you get out just what you put into it. If you go in with a lot of negativity then people are going to pick up on that and you’re not going to have job satisfaction. I have tremendous job satisfaction. I can’t wait to put my uniform on in the morning . . . and when it’s over I’m not ready to go home. I was meant to be a police officer. That was my calling.”

—RM



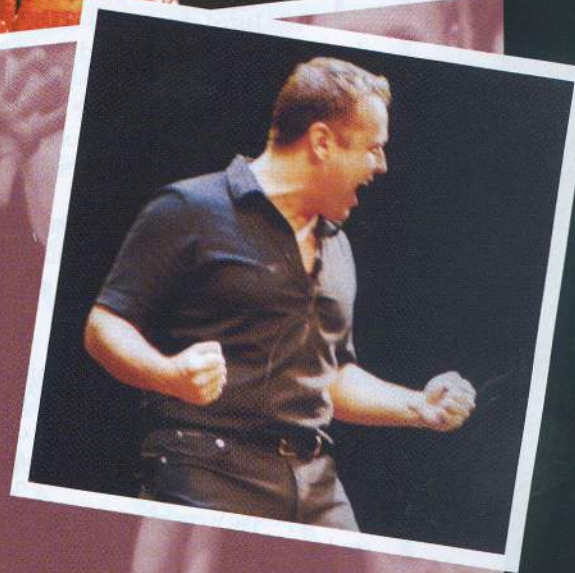
Q-Patrol was formed 10 years ago following the gay-bashing murder of Paul Broussard in the Pacific Street area. Since then, the Q-Patrol volunteers have dedicated themselves to making sure the Montrose streets are safe on the weekends. Q-Patrol organizes at the Houston Lesbian and Gay Community Center every Saturday night. Help keep your community safe. Call 713-528-SAFE (7233) for more information. QPatrolHouston@yahoo.com

2003 Pride Cabaret

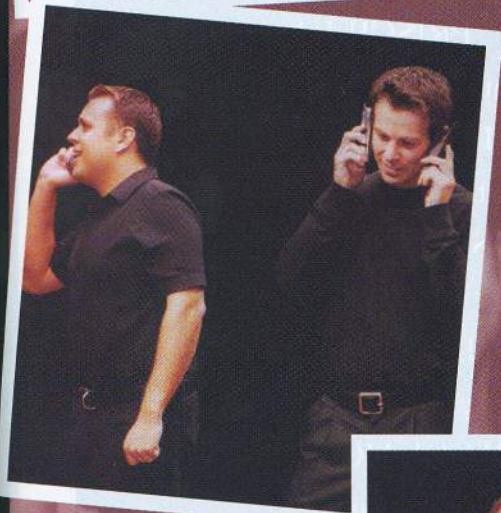
MUSIC!



The collaborative effort of Troy Menn and Ken Williamson were the driving force behind the 2003 Pride Cabaret.



Thanks to last year's fabulous cast and crew for making the show a smashing hit!



DANCE!

SONG!



All photos courtesy of Yvonne K. Feece

Pride As Big As Texas

Houston's GLBT Pride Parade 2004

This year marks the 26th annual Pride Parade. Our parade has lasted through all of the modern GLBT history in the Southwest of the United States to grow into the largest Pride event in our region. In the early days the Parade was a great undertaking just to get the street closed and raise the money for a permit. Actually, one year the Parade was only on one side of the street. As years passed on, the traditional Sunday afternoon Parade took its toll. Houston's heat and humidity wore down spectators, we suffered a major political defeat in 1985 in a vote against nondiscrimination in city employment and a number of our people were sick due to complications of AIDS.

Yet we are resilient, as a community we worked together. No matter what happened to us we seemed to be able to pull together every year to assemble a celebration of who we are. Our Parade has always been that symbol.

GLBT people were people of the night. So in 1997, after a lot of study and debate we decided to do a night Parade. This was our Phoenix of rebirth. We were able with music and light to express whom we are. And that expression shows our many different faces of a community.

The Parade serves every year as a renewing of our commitment of a people who have been discriminated against. We see hope. We see that we are not alone. We see that we have friends both within the community and from our non-gay friends.

We invite you, your friends and family to come to the neighborhood on Saturday evening, June 26 and help us celebrate. We celebrate all our community. We celebrate the work of everyone who volunteers in our community. We celebrate the journey we all made in being who we are. And we remember everyone who we lost be it by violence, by AIDS or other medical condition, or by not having self worth.

2004 PrideParade Awards

ARIA

Best creative sound

FABULOUS

Best costumes

RAINBOW

Best overall lighting

RUBY SLIPPER

Best walking unit

PRISCILLA

Best float (non profit organization)

PINK DIAMOND

Best float (for profit organization)

STONEWALL

Best social commentary

JUDY GARLAND

Best performance

SPIRIT OF MONTROSE

Best entry

PRIDE AS BIG AS TEXAS

Best interpretation of theme

JUDGES CHOICE

For entries not fitting in other categories

PRIDE



AS BIG AS TEXAS

Saturday, June 26, 2004

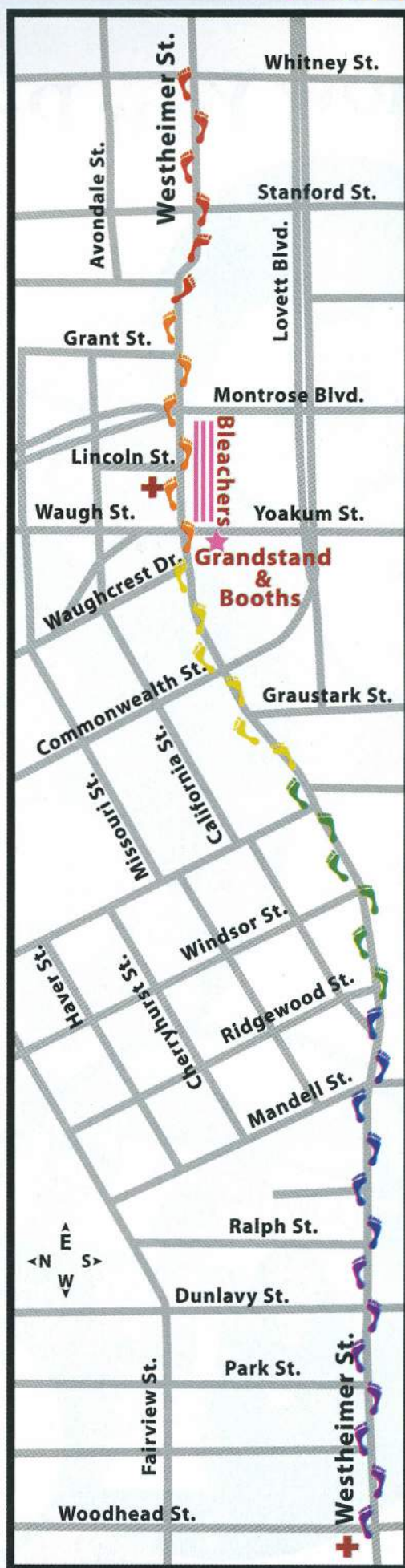
8:45 - 11:00 pm, on lower Westheimer

Between Woodhead and Whitney

Be a part of the nation's original nighttime parade!

Here are a few suggestions to make everyone's pride more enjoyable...

1. Drink plenty of water. Houston in June is very hot, even at night.
2. Get there early. We recommend that you take some time to find the spot that is best for you.
3. Walk, take public transport, carpool. Parking can be scarce in the area on Parade night and the traffic leaving can be heavy.
4. Respect the neighbors. Help keep Montrose the unique, friendly, beautiful neighborhood it is. Please do not park on lawns, block driveways, or disturb the neighbors. You can also show your respect by using a trash can.
5. Dress light. Don't know what to wear? Why not try a new Pride as Big as Texas T-shirt or tank top!
6. Keep the pets at home. Sure your pet has Pride too, but a crowd of 150,000 might scare the GLBT right out of Fluffy!
7. Don't worry, be happy. If you encounter any problems please let one of the many volunteer parade marshals along the route know.
8. Invite everyone. Pride celebrates our diversity and the Parade just isn't the same without it.
9. Play it safe! This may be Montrose, but you're still in a big city! Don't ruin your celebration by becoming a victim of crime. Call 911 if there is trouble!



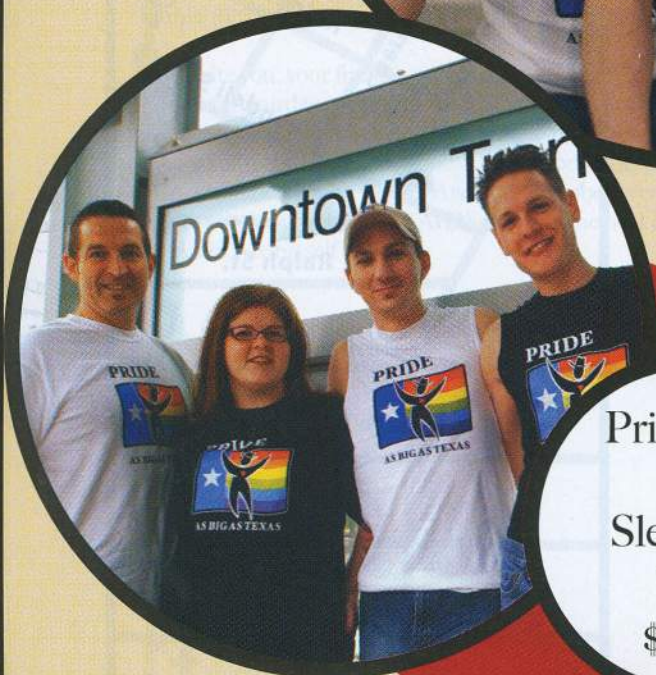
Show Your Pride!



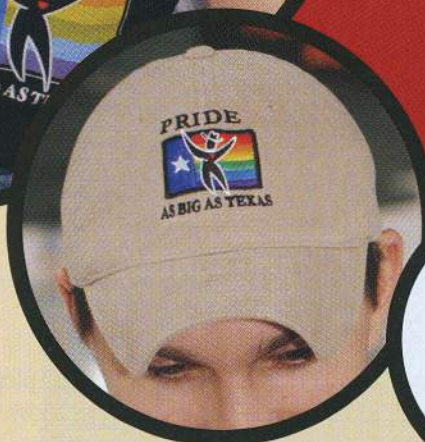
Pride Ringer Tee
\$16.00



HOUSTON
GAY
LESBIAN
BISEXUAL &
TRANSGENDER
PRIDE
2004



Pride Tee & Sleeveless Tee
\$15.00



Pride Baseball Cap
\$22.50

Order Online at pridehouston.org

Winds of Change

The LGBT Political Climate in Texas by: RANDALL ELLIS

Over the past twelve months, the LGBT community in Texas and across the nation has achieved unprecedented progress in our struggle for equality. The United States' Supreme Court in *Lawrence v. Texas* declared that states could no longer demean the existence of LGBT Americans as it struck down the sodomy laws used by law enforcement to target and harass LGBT people. Soon thereafter Wal-mart announced, after years of staunch resistance, that it had adopted a policy to protect LGBT workers from discrimination in the workplace. The Capitol

Area United Way of Austin followed with its announcement that it would no longer fund the Boy Scouts of America because BSA would not comply with the United Way's new non-discrimination policy covering sexual orientation. The momentum of change continued to escalate when the Massachusetts Supreme Court decided that the state of Massachusetts could no longer deny LGBT couples the right to marry. Back in Texas, openly gay Houston city council member Annise Parker was elected to the office of Houston Controller, representing two million constituents — the second largest number of constituents represented by an openly LGBT public official in the country.

Across the nation the winds of change have begun to blow in our direction and the marriage issue appears to have kicked up the most dust. Although the national debate of LGBT rights has centered on the issue of same-sex marriage, it is important that the Texas LGBT community take a step back from the eye of the storm and remember to focus on the current political landscape of Texas. As we craft the Texas "gay agenda" we must not forget that the Bible Belt runs deep through the heart of Texas, helping to secure the religious right's tight grip on the state's political ideology and our elected officials. Only one month before the United States Supreme Court announced its historic decision in the *Lawrence* case, lawmakers in Austin read from the Bible as they attempted to ban LGBT Texans from adopting children or serving as foster parents. The fight for marriage equality must not become a self imposed obstacle that sidetracks us from the issues where we have already made enormous progress.

We cannot and must not ignore the marriage issue. The religious right has for too long steered this debate with vicious rhetoric. At the same time, we must not let our advancements on other issues fall to the wayside. Currently, five school districts in Texas have recognized the importance of protecting LGBT youth from harassment and discrimination and enacted policies to ban this behavior. Five Texas municipalities have extended some form of protection to LGBT workers in the public and private sectors. With the passage of the James Byrd Hate Crime Act in 2001, gays and lesbians were recognized and protected by Texas law for the first time. These advancements were won with well thought out strategies, tailored to fit the local political climate. We must continue to build on these Texas victories as we plot our movement's course of action in the coming months.

Dallas, Houston, Austin, Denton and Hays County Independent School Districts have adopted policies to protect LGBT youth from harassment and discrimination. Numerous studies have shown that this type of protection reduces hostilities in the classroom and improves the learning environment for all students. As Texas lawmakers seek innova-

tive ways to improve our public education system without increasing the tax burden on taxpayers, we must continue to push for safer schools as we tout the potential cost savings of non-discrimination in education policy. LGBT

youth cannot be left out of the Bush mantra of "Leave No Child Behind."

Austin, Fort Worth, Dallas and El Paso have local non-discrimination employment ordinances that include sexual orientation, and Houston has protections in place for city workers based on sexual orientation. These pockets of progressiveness differ greatly from most of Texas, where one can be fired from her/his job simply because she or he is gay. Throughout this state, qualified, hardworking people are denied job opportunities, fired, paid less or otherwise discriminated against for reasons that are unrelated to performance or abilities, but instead due to sexual orientation, perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. With the demise of anti-gay sodomy laws, which criminalized homosexual activity, a new opportunity for advancement has emerged. Texas lawmakers can no longer cite Texas Penal Code 21.06, otherwise known as the Texas Homosexual Conduct Law, as an excuse to justify resistance to protecting LGBT Texans in the workplace. Denying LGBT Texans the fundamental right to hold a job and contribute to society stands in stark contrast to the rugged individualism and self-sufficiency that typifies the Texan's mentality. If we are to succeed, we must seize this opportunity and challenge the status quo with a message adapted to the Texas state of mind.

Texas has always reveled in its no-nonsense, tough-on-crime justice system. Lawmakers demonstrated this with the passage of the James Byrd Hate Crimes Act, which allows for enhanced penalties in crimes motivated by an anti-gay bias. Sadly, the transgender community was left out of this legislation. If we are truly to create a safer place for all Texans, we must endeavor to expand our hate crime legislation. We must take advantage of the tough-on-crime attitude in the Lone Star State as we work to create a safer place to live for all Texans.

Given the current political climate in Texas, these goals will not be accomplished overnight. We must remember, though, that none of our victories have come easily. The tenacity of the Texas LGBT community and the commitment of courageous lawmakers have gotten us where we are today. If our community remains focused and thoughtful in how we engage those who oppose equality, nothing will be able to hold us back and the victories will continue. ▼

Take a step back from the eye of the storm
and remember to focus on the current
political landscape of Texas.'

A Day in The Life of . . .

Phyllis Frye - Transgender lawyer/activist
 (713) 723-8368
 prfrye@aol.com
<http://members.aol.com/prfrye/>

PRIDE: You have so many moments of your life for which you are recognized, acknowledged, and remembered. What are a few that stand out most to you?

PHYLLIS FRYE: I was thrilled that the local LGBT lawyer group (Stonewall Lawyers) named an annual award after me. I was also thrilled that the State Bar's LGBT Section and the national LGBT lawyer group (NLGLA) each gave me their highest awards. I was pleased several years ago that the Corpus Christi Pride Parade named me to be its first Grand Marshall. And I have been honored by similar honors from the largest TG groups and other national gay organizations.

But I have been most pleased with three particular events.

One deals with my relationship as a lawyer with my professional peers. To have the first TG law article to be published as an out TG lawyer (with co-author Katrina Rose) in the journal that is sent to every lawyer and judge in Texas is a "high" for sure. The State Bar of Texas has come a long way from back in the late 1970's when it invited gay-bashing Anita Bryant to its annual convention. Now the State Bar has an official nondiscrimination employment policy that includes LGBT, and I was central to that policy being adopted. In passing that provision, the then State Bar Board Chair likened me in his remarks to the Board as an "Atticus Finch" from the novel "To Kill a Mockingbird." I can ask for no higher praise.

I also include my accomplishments as a lawyer. During my thirteen years of criminal defense law, I know that I saved over two dozen innocent people from going to prison either via jury trial or from good investigation that persuaded the prosecutors to dismiss. And I know that I saved another several dozen who were guilty from prison time as felons because I was able to demonstrate that the prosecutors were overzealous in over charging or "piling on" when the infraction deserved mere county jail time.

In the area of transgender law, I pretty much invented many of the notions and arguments currently being used, such as name change with gender identification correction on the drivers license at the beginning of the transition. That is, a change of name without an accompanying correction of gender on the identifying document acts as an incomplete change of name. I have personally freed hundreds and hundreds of TG people in courts across Texas using these argu-



ments — this is the **ONLY** law that I still practice.

Another such notion was using the Littleton court debacle and turning it on its head to get TG same-sex marriage in San Antonio. Go to my website at transgenderlegal.com and go to Littleton and click on Wicks for details.

And the other is to be accepted as an out TG in my neighborhood. When I transitioned in 1976, our home was vandalized often and obscene phone calls were made during the two major Christian holidays. Two months ago, I was elected without an opponent to serve as an officer of our 5000+ home civic association.

P: You've been married for over 25 years. Tell me a little about your spouse. How has your spouse been an inspiration and a source of support for your work? How did you manage to attain a legal same-sex marriage 25 years ago? What do you recommend to those seeking same-sex marriages now?

PF: Actually, it will be 31 years this coming June 23rd. My spouse and I became best friends before we fell in love. In my experience, love has highs and lows, and if the partners each experience a low at the same time and have no solid friendship to hold them together, then it fizzles. My darling is my bestfriend, and I am hers.

As to me being TG, she decided before we married, that if that was ALL that might be wrong with me, then she had a good deal.

As legally married people, we benefit from so many, many government and legal assumptions that I cannot even fathom — although I know as a lawyer — what gay couples go through to get just portions of the same protections.

Marriage for same-sex people is worth fighting for as a basic civil right. We must as an LGBT people, continue to fight for this right. I say LGBT rather than LG because many BI folks and TG folks are in LG relationships that they would like to have the marriage benefit. So it is an LGBT struggle. The media needs to be told this. For more details go to my website at transgenderlegal.com and click on the Albany Law Review article on same-sex marriage.

P: When you first came out, I imagine you knew you'd be discharged from the military. What was the experience of your discharge like then? How were you treated by your fellow officers? Have you had to deal with the military at all since you completed the transgendering process (please forgive my naiveté as I'm not too familiar with the process aside from seeing the Christine Jorgensen Story). Did you receive any flack when you applied to use your GI benefits to get your law degree?

PF: I was outed by my first spouse as she was leaving me in Germany to return to the states and file for divorce. Luckily, I had a regular army commission and was a federal ROTC scholarship recipient. When they tried to discharge me, I told them if I did not get an Honorable, that I would go to the press and embarrass the military.

It was all such a waste of government funds. The Army had paid for four years of college and gotten only 14 months of service because of their own transphobia. I was a good officer and would have continued to be so.

My tour of duty was during Vietnam and I was glad to be assigned somewhere else for sure. That Clinton avoided the draft and Bush went National Guard does not bother me. What bothers me about Bush is that it seems that he shirked even that duty and now is being such a hypocrite Christian liar about it all while he meanwhile trumps up a war and sends people off to die so that he can run around on an aircraft carrier in a flight suit.

I used the GI Bill to buy my house and to go back to college for an MBA and law degree. The government, therefore, paid for all four of my college degrees and made me the lawyer that I am to stir up so much trouble. Funny, isn't it!

P: In your opinion, what are some ways society has taken steps forward in terms of LGBT issues over the past decade? Are there any ways society has taken a step backward? What are you most happy to see in terms of public perception/treatment of the LGBT community? What are some changes you want to see most?

PF: Let us be completely frank on the positive changes that have occurred. These have occurred for only one reason: LGBT people have come out to family, friends, employers and to elected officials. There is no other way.

Having said that, I am very optimistic that our civil rights will continue — if we continue to be out and proud.

Oh, of course a backlash is coming. But so what! The bigots can holler all they want, I will be free, because I want to be free. And so will you if you are out, proud and willing.

I think it is highly amusing that the Supreme Court that crowned King George in 2000 is the same court that gave us the Lawrence decision. Have you noticed that none of them have retired during King George's first term in office? Could it be that they each realize what a mistake they made in crowning this guy?

P: What do you love most about being Phyllis R. Frye? What do you love most about your life and being alive? What gets you up in the morning? How do you want to be remembered?

PF: I enjoy my life because I am the very who that I am. I am true to myself, I have a very best friend, and I make a difference in people's lives. And I finally have the time to enjoy the muse of music (via singing with my guitar) that I was certainly born with.

How do I want to be remembered? As someone who crashed open the barricades and held them open while others came through. But even more so, as someone who taught and encouraged others to crash open other barricades as well. The barricades are to freedom, of course. I guess you could call me a PROUD LIBERAL!

- ED

Pride Week 2004
Interfaith Worship Service & Community Reception
"Be the Love"
A celebration featuring Dr. Louie Crew
Sunday, June 20 7:00 PM at Bering Memorial UMC
For details contact:
713-812-9014 • or • rmarr@netropolis.net
Sponsor: Houston's Interfaith Alliance for Inclusiveness
"That all might live in loving community"

Love Knows No Boundaries

But the Government Does by: ERIC A.T. DICKMAN

Immigration law. For many of us who were born U.S. citizens, what goes on between the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS—formerly the Immigration and Naturalization Service or INS) and immigrants is unknown. We assume a little and move on to the next thought. “Sure, it’s probably a little difficult to get into the U.S., but we’re a country of privilege; you’ve got to earn the right to live here; but I’m sure it’s a fair enough system . . .” What few of us ever hear about is the discrimination gays, bisexuals, transgenders, same-sex couples, and those living with HIV and AIDS have to deal with. Obviously, the U.S. does not recognize same-sex couples for the purposes of immigration, as it generally does for heterosexual married couples. There are fifteen major countries on the globe that do. Even Germany, a country we historically stereotype as a nation of intolerance and hatred, recognizes same-sex couples for immigration purposes. Immigration law bans the HIV+ from immigrating into the U.S., with very few exceptions. (There must be a spouse, child, or parent who is a citizen or permanent resident to be eligible for a waiver, which is often not the case for GLBT’s.) Also, the number of successful cases wherein a GLBT has fled to the U.S. for asylum due to sexual orientation-based discrimination is small.

For Justin Blane Smith and Frank Castellanos, the procedures of the USCIS play a role of their daily life.

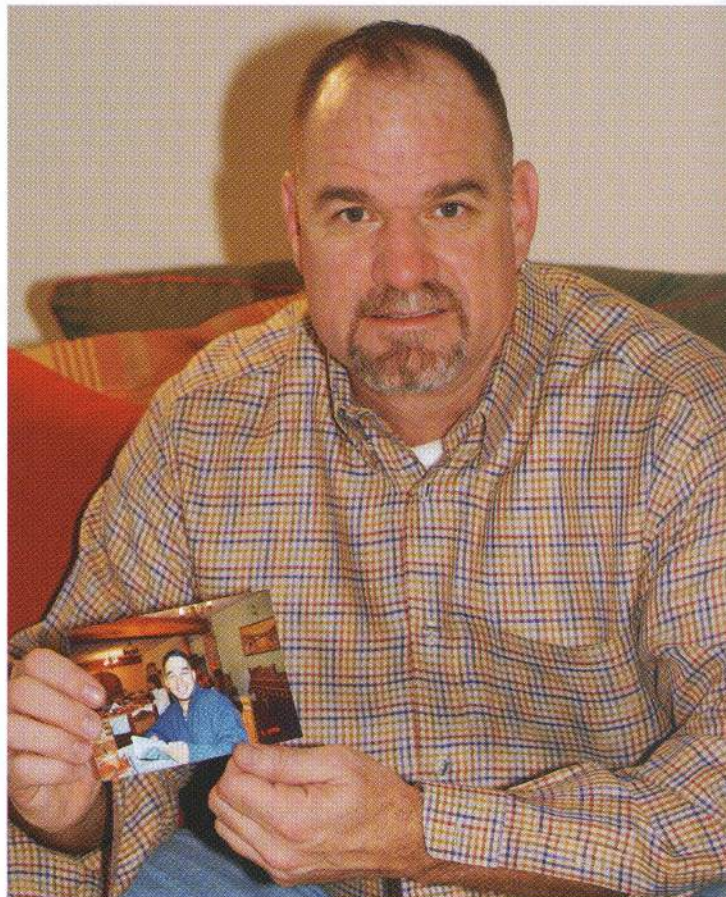
Castellanos was born in Caracas, Venezuela, April 21, 1968 and grew up there and in Valencia (an industrial city west of Caracas). After receiving his degree in Caracas, he worked in the media. Journalism, producer of TV and radio, creative director and columnist, you name it. He was a mixed-media jack-of-all trades. Additionally, he managed and was chef of his own restaurant. Castellanos decided to move to the U.S. and succeeded in entering the media here, working with companies including Liberman Broadcasting, 4 Communications (which publishes El Dia Newspaper in Houston) and Radio Unica, Inc.

Smith grew up in infamous Vidor, attended high school there, then moved to Beaumont to attend Lamar University, getting his Bachelor’s degree in Graphic Design in 1983. For the past fifteen years, he’s worked at the Houston Chronicle as Creative Supervisor in the Creative Services Department of the Marketing Division.

Castellanos and Smith met over a year and a half ago at a birthday party that a mutual friend threw for his partner. “I had a date at the same party with another person,” says Castellanos (by e-mail from Venezuela), “but I do like better my big musclebear — LOL!” “We discussed common interests,” explains Smith, “the advertising field, media, music, the U.S. Open tennis tournament, and Houston Texans football.” Later that week Smith invited Castellanos to attend a social hour sponsored by a Hispanic business organization. They were a couple almost instantly.

Then on November 16, 2003, Castellanos was on a business trip in McAllen, Texas working for Radio Unica’s Health Fair. He decided to join a friend on a leisurely trip across the border into Reynosa. “I was a

big stupid! It was for candies and souvenirs,” he recalls. “I crossed the border without a passport.” When he returned four hours later, goodies in hand, he had nothing but his driver’s license to get back into the country. He did not have his passport and visa. The border officer fit the male Latino homophobic stereotype. “He was a Latin guy, with too much attitude. He was dry and short with us and hostile to my friend.”



Justin Smith holds a photo of his boyfriend Frank Castellanos

Castellanos is sure that the fact that the two of them being openly (and noticeably) gay inspired the officer to act out of intolerance, making the situation as difficult as possible. Castellanos was denied reentry into the U.S.

Since then, Castellanos and Smith have been speaking with attorneys and organizations to get him back into the country. It’s a difficult and many-layered process to say the least. Although his passport and tourist visa are in order, Castellano does not have a stamp from the border going into Mexico, which raises a bureaucratic issue. Without a stamp entering, how can he get a stamp to exit? To worsen conditions, the company he contracted for a “special work number” to work in the U.S., Latinpro (now Latpro) assigned him an incorrect number and illegal paperwork with fraudulent information. Without knowing it, he was working illegally for Radio Unica. The only group that is helping him with this issue is the Ministry of the Exterior in Venezuela. Then

there's an even bigger issue at stake. The USCIS is contained within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Since, "Venezuela is a country on the terrorist's list of the Bush administration," as Castellanos explains, the only thing that will get him back in the U.S. is "a good, honest, and cheap lawyer. Or a miracle." So far, the frustrated Smith has not obtained assistance from any organizations in the U.S. "... people should not be denied their dreams of pursuing a better life if they work hard and are a productive part of society." Castellanos may be able to return in the Fall of 2004, or maybe in five years, "or never!"

In the meantime, Smith and Castellanos keep up with each other, mainly through technology. "We talk almost three times daily," says Castellanos, "and we e-mail each other almost every single day." Needless to say, it has been rough on both, who express confusion and sadness at the predicament. Smith has managed to visit his partner in

Venezuela; however, once for New Year's, and plans to visit again in March. "I miss our togetherness," says Smith, "just hanging out, going to the grocery store, or watching favorite TV shows and movies. He's my best friend and we are never at a loss of words."

Both hope to see Castellanos return to the U.S. and continue their lives together and—if another U.S. policy changes—become a legally recognized married couple. Castellanos is hoping to gain legal residency here. From there, he plans on building an organization to help gay people with immigration issues, "and a serious gay magazine for the Hispanic target." If legal marriage is out of the question, Smith is sure they will in the very least become, "even more committed and better friends than ever!" ▼

If you are in need of help regarding a partner's or personal immigration issues, there are a number of groups that may be of assistance. Here are a few that can help.

American Civil Liberties Union Lesbian/Gay Rights & AIDS Project

www.aclu.org

Self-described as "our nation's guardian of liberty," the ACLU strives to preserve the rights and liberties of everyone protected by the American Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Founded in 1920, the ACLU works through education and litigation to defend rights such as freedom of speech, separation of church and state, racial equality, lesbian and gay rights, the right to privacy, reproductive freedom, immigrants' rights, and others.

Stonewall Law Association of Greater Houston

www.slagh.org

Founded in 1990, this is an educational and networking resource for law professionals and others interested in legal issues that affect the GLBT and HIV/AIDS community. As a member of the National Lesbian and Gay Law Association, an affiliate of the American Bar Association, it provides continuing education for practicing attorneys looking to learn more about these issues. The group also provides a number of networking

and community involvement opportunities; for example, they hold mixers every second Wednesday at Meteor (2306 Genessee, 6-8 pm), they provide an education and referral service to people with HIV/AIDS through the Southeast Texas Legal Clinic (3400 Montrose, Ste. 233, 713-523-7852), and host official Pride events and participate in the Pride parade each year.

Lesbian & Gay Immigration Rights Task Force LGIRTF-Houston

www.lgirtf.org

E-mail: sdryam@houston.rr.com

Now in its tenth year of service, this group is changing its name to Immigration Equality. The new name better reflects its mission to inclusively reach equality in immigration treatment of all individuals, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or HIV status. Founded as a group of volunteers in New York, LGIRTF/Immigration Equality is a coalition of attorneys, activists, and immigrants who dedicate their lives to challenging immigration laws that discriminate against the GLBT community and immigrants living with HIV/AIDS. Their chief tools of

defense include education, outreach, advocacy, and a nationwide resource network. In addition to Houston, they have chapters throughout the country and another in Amsterdam.

Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund South Central Regional Office

www.lambdalegal.org

This national organization is committed to securing full recognition of the civil rights entitled to all GLBT and HIV/AIDS affected people through education, public policy work, and impact litigation.

National Center for Lesbian Rights

www.nclrights.org

A national legal resource center, the NCLR aims to advance the rights and safety of lesbians and their families and everyone else in the GLBT, HIV/AIDS community. The group provides free legal counseling and advice, public policy advocacy, education, litigation, and otherwise.

Discreet

by: KEN DONNELLY

Discreet (di-skret')
adj. 1. Having a judicious reserve in one's

speech or behavior; prudent. 2. Term used to describe a GLBT person who is not quite out of the closet.

There is a growing phenomenon in the GLBT community; the use of the term "discreet." Everyone has met a person who uses it. "I am discreet at work." "I am a looking for discreet connections." "I am gay but I am discreet." But why are they defining themselves this way? Moreover, is this a healthy behavior? The answer is not simple.

Homophobia

The main driver behind the label is internalized homophobia: self-hatred for being GLBT or at least its stereotypes. The current conservative social climate only helps to perpetuate this behavior. According to Chris Kerr, Program Coordinator for the Montrose Counseling Center, who has directed several "Coming Out" groups at MCC, the University of Houston and the Kolbe Project, internalized homophobia forces many to remain completely "closeted" or "discreet." He notes that society fears homosexuality because it is different. Myths that GLBT people are promiscuous or overly nelly/butch or one of the other stereotypes are learned at an early age. One "discreet" man put it this way, "Why would I ever bring home a guy to meet my parents? I am not going to have sex with a guy in the middle of the living room in front of them!" This homophobia also manifests itself in other ways. States Kerr, "Anything beyond, 'Gee isn't it wonderful that people are free to be who they are,' is internalized homophobia." That's why Kerr thinks that events such as the Pride Parade are good for the community. There is such a variety of people represented just being themselves. Unfortunately even positive events such as the Pride Parade can trigger internalized homophobia, as a person focuses on every negative stereotype that justifies their fears.

"Internalized homophobia forces many to remain completely 'closeted' or 'discreet.'"

Fight the System

There are plenty of outside forces at work to help perpetuate this self-loathing cycle. Discrimination is still a very real danger to "out" persons. Systematic intolerance at work, in social situations, in political institutions and within our families punishes diversity and rewards uniformity. People lose jobs, are denied health benefits, have no surviving partner rights to property and insurance, and are even disowned by their families because of their sexual orientation. As another discreet individual stated, "My family will disown me if I come out. They won't understand."

The current arguments against gay marriage highlight systematic intolerance in politics. Instead of celebrating committed relationships, laws such as the Defense of Marriage Act are passed in reaction to perceived threats to heterosexual marriage based on GLBT myths. However, since it is already ingrained in our collective psyche that we are bad, justifying our wickedness by allowing marriage would make it worse. Systematic intolerance will not allow for a marriage not made of one man and one woman.

The Down-Low

In minority populations, fear of being identified as GLBT is even stronger. Stated one African-American lesbian, "There are no gays in our community. Being gay is a white person's disease." As a result, being discreet manifests itself in a different way, "Getting It on the Down-Low." African-American, Hispanic and Asian communities have a narrower definition of gender roles, with a patriarchal dominance. As one minority woman stated, "A woman is supposed to be there for her man to advance our community." In her community, a lesbian is not just letting down her family but her entire race. For men it's a bit different. "It's okay for me to have sex with another guy as long as I am the top," stated one Hispanic male. In some cultures, only cross-gender people are considered gay while the men who have sex with them are not.

Because gender roles are being confused with sexual orientation in these communities, being discreet is the only way they can live in both worlds.

The Perfect Gay

Another myth that causes so many problems is that of the Perfect Gay. Kerr points out that this myth perpetuates the idea that a healthy GLBT person is one who is completely comfortable with his or her orientation and out to everyone. This fuels the misconception that if you are not completely out then you are bad. GLBT leaders have called for everyone to come out so the community can be visible and politically viable. However, Kerr reminds us that even the most out person decides to whom they will express their orientation. "You don't go up to every stranger and tell them."

Instead of perfection Kerr says we should strive for "congruence"; the point where your feelings match your actions. Most counseling, he notes, is dealing with this lack of balance where people are out in one part of their life but not in others. People who fall into this mismatched state, such as a discreet person, spend enormous energy trying to keep up their cover. "The more you are out the easier it is on you," states Kerr. He also notes that for some being "discreet" is perfectly fine as long as they are in congruence. "There needs to be balance."

Balance Point

Openly GLBT people are often frustrated or even hostile toward discreet individuals. As one woman stated, "I came out. So should they! I have no patience for them." Many feel that discreet people are benefiting from the accomplishments of other GLBT people who came out while avoiding the negative consequences. Kerr cautions that what discreet people need is not shaming or pushing but rather encouragement to take the next step. Out individuals should be role models and explain the reality of being out. "In general their fears are greater than the reality of it."

In the end, though it is about each of us "coming out" toward healthy self-acceptance as a GLBT person. Observes Kerr, "I have heard hundreds of coming out stories, both good and bad, but no one has ever regretted coming out." ▼

A Day in The Life of . . .

Michelle Dean & Kelly Gilbert - Family

Please meet Michelle Dean and Kelly Gilbert, their three children, Ashley (15), Kyle (10) and Devyn (8), and their dog, Roxy, also referred to as their "smelly cat." They make up one of the most normal families in Houston.

Michelle and Kelly are both high school teachers, and while they are at work inspiring and motivating young minds, their children attend their respective Jersey Village schools, participate in extracurricular activities, laugh with their friends and consume too much sugar in candy form, but just enough to avoid stomach aches. In the evening Michelle, Kelly and the children gather around the family table to eat dinner and talk about their days, and afterwards they may watch television, surf the Internet, read books, pay bills or play with the family dog. At night the children tuck their homework away in their schoolbags, Kelly tucks Michelle into bed, and they all slumber beneath one roof to wake up the next morning refreshed to live another day.

Their story begins quite simply. "My mom found a girl named Kelly," recalls Devyn. Michelle and Kelly met each other while working at Jersey Village High School. For eight years their family has flourished as a loving one, full of understanding and openness. On March 15, 2002, Michelle and Kelly exchanged vows in Kellington, Vermont. (Kelly accidentally said the 16th of March. Well, someone has to forget the momentous dates in a marriage!) They assert that their marriage and family are normal, as do their children. Kyle has friends that do not care that his parents are gay and Devyn has friends who have heterosexual and homosexual parents. Ashley adds, "I am still a normal teenager only now with four parents instead of two. I am still accepted in school, and most of my friends know and are fine with it. I am happy that my life is the way it is and I wouldn't have it any other way."

We all know that not everyone in the world is so fortunate, as well as not so open to embrace something they do not yet understand. But what is there to understand? Michelle believes that "once you have a personal relationship with God, there's no way you can preach hate." Their involvement in and support from Community Gospel Church are an important part of their lives and their will to strive for the community.

On February 13th, Michelle and Kelly were one of about 30 couples to request a marriage license at the Harris County Clerk's office. There was no expectation to actually receive a license; there was only a purpose: to show the world that there are real people who not only desire and demand equality but who are willing to fight for it. Among the gas-masked, rabid protesters, the couples faced the government, the cameras, their families, friends and foes to simply further the fight for the right to commit to each other in the state's eyes.

Michelle and Kelly, just as you or I, want equality. They want to be recognized as the same as anyone, and they want protection for their spouse and children. They want you to know that, "in order to further our endeavors, we must encourage one another and be our own advocates, not our own enemies."

They are not different. They assert their existence in this world to be normal. They are not special, and yet they are. This family, along with many among us, continues to strive for the normal life they have already built and embrace, for the women and men before them who have done the same, and for you and I and the people that love us to encourage and support the human spirit.

-JG



PRIDE



AS BIG AS TEXAS

2004 Community Resource Guide

611 Club

After Hours www.kpft.org/afterhours.php

AIDS Foundation Houston, Inc. www.aidshelp.org

Alley Theatre www.alleytheatre.org

American Veterans for Equal Rights (AVER) www.aver.us

Art League Houston www.artleaguehouston.org

Bering Omega Community Services www.beringomega.org

BP America, Inc. Beyond Pride www.bp.com

Cabo MixMex Grill www.cabomixmex.com

Community Gospel Church www.communitygospel.org

Covenant Church www.covenanthouston.org

District D Council Office - Ada Edwards www.cityofhouston.gov

Donald R. Watkins & Young Men Saving Men www.ymsmhouston.org

Donald R. Watkins Memorial Foundation www.donaldrwatkins.org

Fitness Exchange www.fitnessexchange.cc

Front Runners home.swbell.net/marathon/houfr.htm

Gay and Lesbian Switchboard Houston www.gayswitchboardhouston.org

Gay Men's Chorus of Houston (GMCH) www.gmch.org

GoGirlsMusic.com www.gogirlsmusic.com

Gulf Coast Archive and Museum of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender History, Inc. www.gcam.org

Harris County Libertarian Party www.lptexas.org

Houston Buyers Club www.houstonbuyersclub.com

Houston GLBT Community Center www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org

Houston Gay and Lesbian Parents, Inc. www.hglp.org

Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus www.hglpc.org

Houston Humane Society www.houstonhumane.org

Houston Invitational Tournament www.houstoninvite.com

Houston Pride Band www.houstonprideband.org

Houston Voice www.houstonvoice.com

Inner Loop Alternative www.texasinvite.com

Integrity/Houston Interfaith CarePartners www.interfaithcarepartners.org

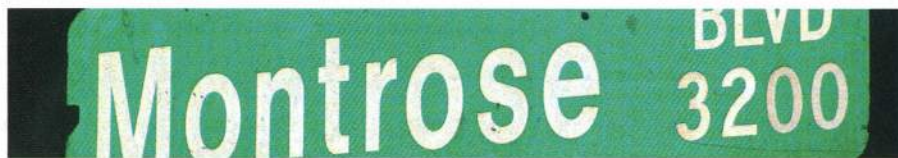
JP Morgan Chase Bank P.R.I.D.E. Team www.chase.com

Keys West www.keyswest.com

KPFT Pacifica Radio 90.1 www.kpft.org



Krewe of Olympus -TX, Inc. www.mardigrastexas.com
 Lesbians Over Age Fifty (LOAF)
 Log Cabin Republicans - Houston houston.logcabin.org
 Lone Star Volleyball Association www.lsva.org
 Maranatha Fellowship MCC www.maranathamcc.com
 Meteor www.meteorhouston.com
 Metropolitan Multi-Service Center
 Monday Night Men www.texasinvite.com
 Monday Night Women www.texasinvite.com
 Montrose Clinic www.montroseclinic.org
 National Leather Association Houston www.nlahouston.org
 O Houston Nightclub www.houstono.com
 Old Lesbians Organizing for Change (OLOC) www.oloc.org
 OutSmart www.outsmartmagazine.com
 Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays www.pflaghouston.org
 People with AIDS Coalition - Houston www.pwach.org
 Planned Parenthood of Houston and Southwest Texas www.pphouston.org
 Pride Committee of Houston www.pridehouston.org
 Prime Timers, Houston, Texas www.primetimersww.org
 Q - Patrol
 Q.Texas Magazine www.qtexasmagazine.com
 HoustonQueerVoices www.queervoices.org
 Rich's www.richs-houston.com
 Ryan White Planning Council Office of Support www.rwpc.org
 South Beach www.SouthBeachthenightclub.com
 Stonewall Law Association of Greater Houston www.slagh.org
 Texas Triangle www.txtriangle.com
 The Center for AIDS www.centerforaids.org
 The Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce www.ghglcc.org
 The Kolbe Project www.kolbeproject.org
 Theater LaB Houston www.theaterlabhouston.com



“It’s a culture thing . . .”

A look into the diversity of the GLBT community by: JOSEF MOLNAR

When Derrick Elliot came out of the closet in the 1970s, he looked forward to a world free of homophobia and racism. As a black man in Cincinnati, Ohio, he assumed the gay community would look past the prejudices they had experienced and try to correct them.

“I thought to myself, ‘Nobody in the gay community is racist,’” he says. “It never occurred to me that they might be.”

The club he wanted to attend still clung to a misogynistic and prejudiced atmosphere in which only white men could attend, and very little changed until a group of women filed a lawsuit to open the club to females. Soon, black people were able to attend, and like the straight world, the gay world began opening to minorities.

“It was like entering the promised land,” he says, “We were so happy

to go somewhere they had told us before that we couldn’t.”

The frequency and intensity of this kind of experience have fallen since then, but although the gay and lesbian community is increasingly welcoming minorities into its fold, many still find issues such as culture, religion and even native languages a barrier to that inclusion.

Abel Rodriguez, the president of Gays and Lesbians Organized by Orgullo (Pride), says that while many of the issues in the Spanish-speaking community are the same, outreach efforts still cannot tell many immigrants about health issues in the community, as well as the many gay-friendly clinics and services available to them.

“I see heavy advertising for services at other bars, but they also need to offer them in Spanish and English,” he says. “There are some gay clubs where these services are not represented because they are Spanish-only bars.”

Although white people make up a larger percentage of the community, Elliot, a Houston resident who is founding the local chapter of Men of All Colors Together, sees a lot that these minority communities have in common.

“In Houston, I see a particularly rich tapestry, but I also see minority groups set apart from each other,” Elliot says. “Our respective communities almost never interact. We have so many things in our experience that are alike, and it seems like it would make sense if we came together to complement one another.”

He wants his group to allow gay men—and despite the name, women can participate as well—to get together as friends and associates. Elliot says the traditional view of the gay community still does not always recognize alternative cultures.

“That view is changing, but for the most part we fail to see a lot of diversity in the media, magazines, publications, and in

videos,” he says. “My hope is that all of us will grow in many, many directions, and one of the means of growth would be to include anyone.”

The barriers to gays and lesbians are not just limited to the gay community. Gender roles also play a large part in some traditional cultures, where men play active roles in life and the bedroom, while women are expected to be more subservient. Gay men and women from these cultures still face these discriminations, especially in traditional close-knit families. Many gay men and women from these cultures have to give up everything to come out, losing not only their friends and families, but also

their means of emotional support.

Women such as Janice Trinidad, a Filipino graduate student in Austin and the chair of TriKone-Tejas, an intercultural

“It’s enough of a concern to be a minority, and then to be another minority makes it worse.”

minority gay group, find themselves fighting the bias that exists within families still deeply rooted in religious or traditional mores. Although she says her family has gradually adjusted to her open lifestyle, they are still concerned about the social problems and misunderstanding she faces.

“This is not exactly an ideal lifestyle for our families,” she says. “It’s enough of a concern to be a minority, and then to be another minority makes it worse.”

She says that although different cultures react differently, most generally disapprove of alternative sexual orientations and believe them to be a choice. In a close-knit environment where conformity is the norm, disapproval becomes a mandate to stay in the closet.

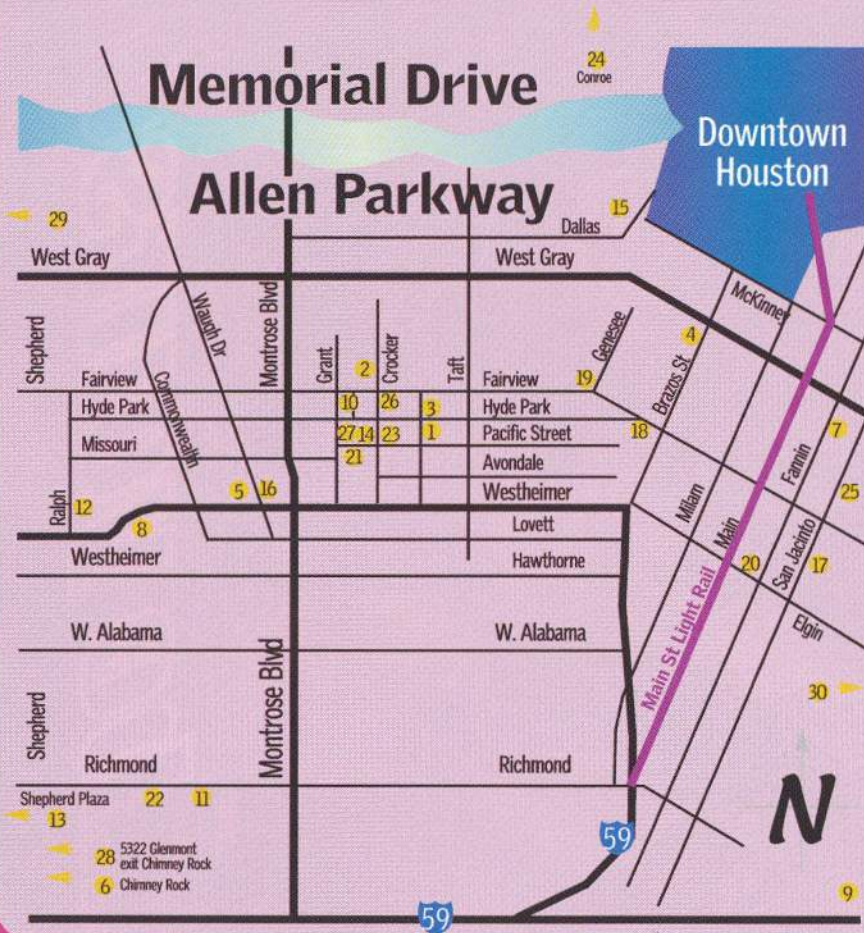
Even for people not immersed in their communities, family ties and the desire for acceptance run strongly in many gay minorities, so many groups create an atmosphere in which gays and lesbians develop ties which can appear more like families. The bonds created in groups like these help to make up for the lack of support from family and friends. Having the same language also bonds people from different countries.

“The Spanish bonds us together,” Rodriguez says, “because wherever you’re from, we all speak the same language.”

GLOBO holds an annual posada in Houston each year the day before the Pride parade to celebrate their communities in a traditional way. Its annual Christmas posadas also emulate the traditional twelve days before Christmas.

“It’s a cultural thing, and the people feel bonded to that,” Rodriguez says. “These are cultural things we need to keep and not lose.” ▼

HOUSTON BAR MAP



1. **611 Hyde Park** ♂ ♀ 🏠 🍷 611 Hyde Park • 526-7070
2. **Briar Patch** ♂ ♀ 🍷 2313 Crocker • 523-7616
3. **Bricks II** ♂ 🍷 🏠 🍷 617 Fairview • 528-8102
4. **BRB** ♂ ♀ 🍷 🍷 🍷 2400 Brazos • 528-9192
5. **Chances/GSpot** ♂ ♀ 🏠 1100 Westheimer • 523-7217 • chancesbar.com
6. **Club Inergy** ♂ ♀ 🍷 🍷 🍷 5750 Chimney Rock • 666-7310 • clubinergy.com
7. **The Club Houston** ♂ ♀ 2205 Fannin • 659-4998
8. **Rainbow Room** ♀ 🍷 🍷 🍷 1417-B Westheimer • 522-5144
9. **Club Xscape** ♂ ♀ 🍷 🍷 🍷 2612 S. Richey • 944-7663
10. **Cousins** ♂ 🍷 🍷 817 Fairview • 528-9204
11. **Decades** ♂ ♀ 🍷 🏠 1205 Richmond • 521-2224
12. **EJ's** ♂ 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 2517 Ralph • 527-9071
13. **Guava Lamp** ♂ ♀ 🍷 🍷 2159 Portsmouth • 524-3359
14. **JR's** ♂ ♀ 🍷 🍷 🍷 808 Pacific • 521-2519
15. **Keys West** 817 Dallas • 571-7870
16. **Mary's** ♂ ♀ 🍷 🍷 🍷 1022 Westheimer • 527-9669
17. **Meatrack** ♂ 2915 San Jacinto • 528-2028 • meatrack.org
18. **Mela's** ♀ 🍷 🍷 302 Tuam • 523-0747
19. **Meteor** ♂ ♀ 🍷 2306 Genesee • 521-0123 • meteorhouston.com
20. **Midtowne Spa** ♂ ♀ 🍷 3100 Fannin • 522-2379 • midtowne-spa.com
21. **Montrose Mining Co** ♂ 🍷 🍷 🍷 805 Pacific • 529-7488
22. **Michael's Outpost** ♂ ♀ 🍷 🍷 🍷 1419 Richmond • 520-8446
23. **O** ♂ 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 710 Pacific • 523-0213
24. **Ranch Hill Saloon** ♂ ♀ 🍷 🍷 211 Airport Rd., Conroe • 936-441-6426
25. **Rich's** ♂ ♀ 🍷 🍷 🍷 2401 San Jacinto • 759-9606 • richs-houston.com
26. **Ripcord** ♂ 🍷 🍷 🍷 715 Fairview • 521-2792 • theripcord.com
27. **South Beach** ♂ ♀ 🍷 🍷 🍷 810 Pacific • 529-SOBE • southbeachthenight-club.com
28. **Toyz** ♀ 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 5322 Glenmont • 668-4892
29. **Viviana's** ♂ ♀ 🍷 🍷 🍷 5219 Washington • 862-0203

Codes

- ♂ men
- ♀ women
- 🍷 Latino/a
- 🍷 drag shows
- 🍷 leather/levi
- 🍷 Western
- 🍷 dancing
- 🍷 live entertainment
- 🍷 video
- 🍷 dancers
- 🍷 neighborhood

HOUSTONPRIDE.ORG

Happy Pride!



“On an occasion of this kind it becomes more than a moral duty to speak one’s mind. It becomes a pleasure.”

-Oscar Wilde