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THURSDAY JUNE 16, 2011 29-95.COM

# PRIDE



PRIDE HOUSTON TAKES IT TO A NEW LEVEL WITH A WEEK'S WORTH OF ACTIVITIES — SINGING COMPETITIONS, FASHION AND COMEDY SHOWS TO THE ANNUAL PARADE — AND EVERYONE IS INVITED

JONATHAN ANSTICO  
ROXXI JAMES  
KIMBERLEY  
GUSON  
MAYBA  
DOCKE

# Getting to know the Pride SuperSTAR finalists

By JOEY GUERRA

**P**RIDE SUPERSTAR has whittled the field from a dozen singers to five hopefuls, competing at 10 tonight at Meteor Lounge. (One more will be eliminated.) The fifth annual singing contest crowns its champ June 23, just in time for a spotlight performance at the Pride festival. The winner also gets to record at Grammy-winning Urbana Recording Studio (home of La Mafia), a weeklong cruise, cash and more.

Judges this season have included Grammy nominee Tamar Davis and A&R heavyweight Jake McKim (who has worked with Beyoncé and agreed to take a meeting with the winner). The finale will be judged by Nina Lombardo, a 2010 contender who has amassed a solid local following; and songwriter Shane Stevens, who has penned big hits for Lady Antebellum and Kellie Picker. Here's a look at the diverse voices still in the running:

**L. WAYNE ASHLEY 29**



**What makes you a Pride SuperSTAR?**

My love for music, people and the advancement of

equality for all Houstonians. **First music you purchased:** Michael Jackson's *Thriller*. It was a replacement cassette because my dad's LP was worn out.

**When I sing, people say I remind them of:** Luther Vandross

**Who would you say is your musical idol?**

Anita Baker. A lifelong career of amazing music and hard work.

**Proudest musical moment to date?**

Performing with my college jazz band at a crawfish festival. Everyone was drunk and loved it!



**LAUREN MILLER 23**

**What makes you a**

**Something people may not know about you?**

I used to be in a burlesque troupe, and it was the most fun I've ever had.

**ASHLEY HENNESSY 23**

**What makes you a Pride SuperSTAR?**



In the past year, I've really come into my own as an artist, trying new things and singing more publicly

with my band.

**First concert you ever attended:**

Spice Girls. Oh yes, that just happened.

**When I sing, people say I remind them of:** Pink, Kelly Clarkson.

**In the past, I've auditioned for:** *The Glee Project*, *American Idol* and various local karaoke contests.

**Who are your influences?** Pat Benatar, Alanis Morissette, Adele, Regina Spektor and Michael Jackson.

**MORENA ROAS 31**

**What makes you a Pride**



**SuperSTAR?** I am an explosion of Pride, from gender to sex to the color of my skin to the way I walk and

speak.

**First music you purchased:** Sir Mix-A-Lot, but my mom hid it from me. Or so she thought.

**When I sing, people say I remind them of:** I've gotten Tracy Chapman and Lauryn Hill.

**Who are your influences?**

There are so many. Selena, Lauryn Hill, Amy Grant, La India, Jerry Rivera, Jay Perez, Stevie Wonder, Crystal Lewis.

**Proudest musical moment to date?**

Last year, I was featured on a DJ's UK chart hit at No. 16. But I have to say this contest is pretty darn high!

**WENDY TAYLOR 28**

**What makes you a Pride SuperSTAR?**



My drive and passion to put out the best music and most entertaining performance that I can. And my will to always grow and get better.

**First music you purchased:**

I remember the first album I stole from my dad. Aerosmith's *Greatest Hits*.

**In the past, I've auditioned for:**

I was on *American Idol* this year and made it to Hollywood Week. It was a great experience. Wonderful talent, new friends — and getting to sing a song with Steven Tyler didn't suck.


**Proudest musical moment to date?**

Producing my first song and pre-selling 5,000 copies.


**Something people may not know about you?**

I did both dance and mixed martial arts for 15 years.

[joey@29-95.com](mailto:joey@29-95.com)




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## From Appalachia to Nepal: A Musical Odyssey

American bluegrass performers Tina Linhardt and Danny Knicely join Nepalese folk musicians Manoj Mahat and Raj Kapoor Ranapaheli for an evening of world music



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Jones Hall,  
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Performing with my college jazz band at a crawfish festival. Everyone was drunk and loved it!



**LAUREN MILLER 23**

**What makes you a Pride SuperSTAR?**

I have a fierce attitude with a good heart, combined with a love for singing and performing.

**First music you purchased:** Mariah Carey's *Daydream*.

**First concert you ever attended:** My first real concert, other than RodeoHouston, was \*NSync. And I cried.

**Who are your influences?** Melissa Etheridge, Adele, Amy Winehouse — just musically, Sara Bareilles, Etta James.

**Something people may not know about you?**

I used to be in a burlesque troupe, and it was the most fun I've ever had.

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pridehouston

## A reason to celebrate

Pride Houston festival continues its remarkable growth

By JOEY GUERRA

FOR the past 33 years, Houston's Pride celebration has been a one-day event. The festival and nighttime parade packed into one hot, high-energy day. But for most of the city's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community, embracing who you are is a year-round event.

Prepare yourself, then, for a week of Pride.

"In order to boost tourism and, in turn, revenue, we created seven days of Pride events," says Frankie Quijano, president of Pride Houston.

And you don't have to be a member of the LGBT community to enjoy everything. That's the best part.



MAYOR ANNISE PARKER

Mayor Annise Parker will help get the party started during Saturday's opening ceremonies at Jones Plaza downtown. The following seven days will feature music, comedy, happy hours, fashion and more than a few rainbow flags. (See the accompanying guide.)

Last month, President Barack Obama officially declared June to be Pride month, and a recent Gallup poll showed that 53 percent of Americans believe same-sex marriage should be legal. That's a 9 percent jump from last year and an all-time high.

"We wanted to take this opportunity to utilize all of our resources this year to make it the biggest and best celebration to date," says

Chris Atwood, Pride Houston's marketing director.

"We're publishing a new

MATT ALBER



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GET THE STAR TREATMENT!

Here's your chance to win  
a pair of tickets to Opening  
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THE STAR, JOHN O'HURLEY!

You remember him as J. Peterman  
in "Seinfeld" and in the first season  
of "Dancing with the Stars."  
Now see him in the razzle dazzle  
musical with all that jazz!



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CHICAGO  
THE MUSICAL

NATIONAL TOUR  
JUNE 21-26

BROWN THEATER

SOCIETY FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Bringing the World's Best to Houston

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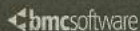
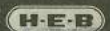
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"We're publishing a new

VICKIE SHAW



MALLORIE



NINA LOMBARDO



Pride magazine (OutInform) and putting on the biggest festival to date.”

Things have indeed been cranked to a new level. The festival will showcase more than 100 vendor booths, a Family Fun Zone and feature performances by the 2011 Pride SuperSTAR singers, pop starlets Jessica Ferguson and Roxxi Jane, community favorites Nina Lombardo and Freddy Cauley, Osirus and San Antonio singer Mallorie.

The parade is expected to hit the 125 cap for floats. It will start at 8:15 p.m. June 25, 30 minutes earlier than past years. Grand marshals include Bryan Hlavinka, co-host of the Queer Voices radio show on KPFT (90.1 FM); and Tammy Wallace, a prominent local activist. This year’s celebrity grand marshal is Jonathan Lovitz, an actor, singer, activist and star of Logo’s *Setup Squad*. He’ll also host Rokk the Runway, a sexy fashion show at South Beach featuring *American Idol*’s Kimberley Locke.

Think of it as Pride — amplified. And, ahem, protect yourself.

It’s Houston in June, so the weather shouldn’t be that much of a surprise,” Quijano

## PRIDE GUIDE

THE big Pride Houston parade and festival are scheduled June 25. But the celebrations are already under way. A rundown of official events:

### PRIDE SUPERSTAR

The annual singing contest draws a big crowd and even bigger voices. The final four are revealed on a night featuring songs of legends and icons, including Aretha Franklin, Stevie Wonder, Janis Joplin, Cher and Madonna. 10 tonight at Meteor, 2306 Genesee. Free

### PRIDE HOUSTON OPENING CEREMONIES

Mayor Annise Parker officiates. Musical performances, activities and lots of sunblock. 5 p.m. Saturday at Jones Plaza, 600 Louisiana. Free.

### ANYTHING GOES, FEATURING THE GAY MEN’S CHORUS OF HOUSTON

Comedy, cabaret and likely a few costumes, all under the hand of artistic director Linus Lerner. Pride SuperSTAR will also hold a special elimination round during the show, narrowing the finalists from four to three with the

ensemble Chanticleer. His video for *End of the World* has racked up almost 500,000 views on YouTube. 10 p.m. Saturday at the Hard Rock Cafe, 502 Texas. \$20 and \$50; brownpapertickets.com.

### DIVAS OF DIVERSITY

National comedy tour kickoff and Pride Houston fundraiser. With funny females Jessica Kirson, Dana Goldberg, Mona Cooper, Samantha DeRose and Vickie Shaw. 7:30 p.m. Sunday at the Houston Club, 811 Rusk. \$45-\$125; divasofdiversity.com.

### DINE WITH PRIDE

Have a meal at the Chelsea Grill, and 33 percent of your bill goes to Pride Houston. 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Wednesday at Chelsea Grill, 4621 Montrose.

### PRIDE SUPERSTAR FINALE

The top three battle it out for the crown after eight weeks of intense eliminations. The winner gets time at Grammy-winning Urbana Recording Studio (home of *La Mafia*), a cruise, cash and prime performance opportunities. Special guest judge Shane Stevens, who has written songs for Lady Antebellum (*American Hoey*), Kellie Pickler (*Making Me Fall In Love Again*), Jordin Sparks, Steel Magnolia, Jo De Messina, Gloriana and Sara Evans. 10 p.m. June 23 at Meteor, 2306 Genesee. Free.

### ROKK THE RUNWAY

*American Idol* finalist and dance diva Kimberley Locke headlines this high-energy event, which also features a fashion show from Male UWear. Hosted by Jonathan Lovitz of Logo’s *Setup Squad*. 8 p.m. June 24 at South Beach, 810 Pacific. Free before 11 p.m.

### PRIDE HOUSTON FESTIVAL AND PARADE

The 33rd annual celebration features vendor booths, live performances, DJs, food and, of course, the country’s largest nighttime parade. Festival, 1-7 p.m. June 25, features performances by Jessica Ferguson, Roxxi Jane, Freddy Cauley, Nina Lombardo, Pride SuperSTAR 2009 AJ Cabrera, Ben Montes, Osirus featuring Raquel Refuerzo, Mallorie and the Pride SuperSTAR 2011 finalists. The festival is on Westheimer, from Commonwealth to Yoakum. The parade, 8:15-11 p.m., runs along Westheimer between Dunlavy and Crocker streets. Free.

joey@29-95.com



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Think of it as Pride — amplified. And, ahem, protect yourself.

It's Houston in June, so the weather shouldn't be that much of a surprise," Quijano says. "We're lucky in that we get to host a nighttime parade. It allows for a more comfortable environment for guests, parade entrants and volunteers.

"But our heat can be a scorcher, so use sunblock! And hydrate."

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Seattle-based singer/songwriter and a former member of Grammy-winning chamber

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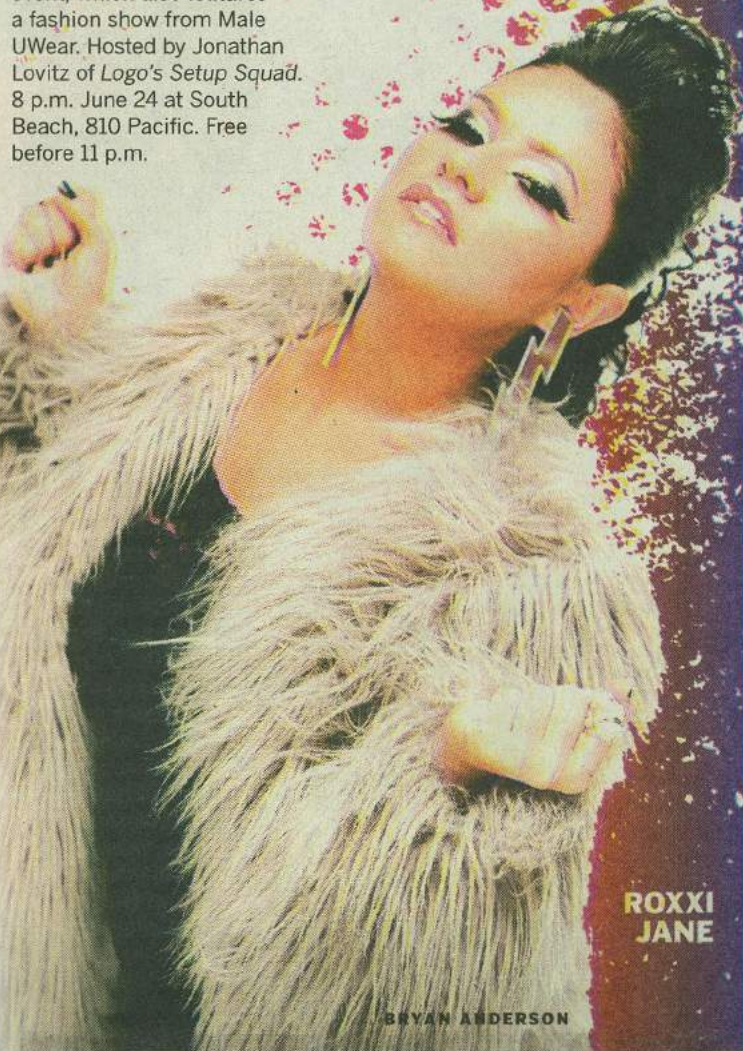
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JESSICA FERGUSON

MICHAEL WYCOFF



ROXXI JANE

BRYAN ANDERSON

# Taking a stand for Pride

Jonathan Lovitz's career as an actor, activist and a 'wingman' is taking off

By JOEY GUERRA

Jonathan Lovitz is in the midst of an "epic" Pride tour.

The New York-based actor and entertainer, currently a "wingman" on Logo's *Setup Squad*, is the celebrity grand marshal for this month's Pride Houston Parade. And the party is just starting. Lovitz is also scheduled to celebrate in Orlando, Fla.; Washington, D.C.; Chicago; Boston; and Providence, R.I.

"It's incredible," he says. "I can't believe that this is my job." *Setup Squad* follows Lovitz and a team of experts as they help the unlucky find love. No haircuts or new wardrobe needed. The show instead focuses on personality makeovers, teaching clients how to break the ice in social settings and ultimately be themselves. It launched in April and has made Lovitz, in his words, a bit of a "gaylebrity."

Prior to *Setup Squad*, Lovitz made national headlines when he was excused from jury duty in New York after saying that he couldn't "be an impartial judge of a citizen when I am considered a second class one in the eyes of this justice system."

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"It's been a life-changing year for me," he says.

"And it feels like the momentum is still going forward, which is very exciting."

MARK BRADLEY MILLER

**Q** How important have the Pride dates been to you and your career?

**A** A lot of these Pride events told me when they're trying to find someone to be a celebrity grand marshal or a spokesperson, they always find either some type of out entertainer — Andy Cohen, Cheyenne Jackson — or they go after a Judy Shepherd or a member of the Milk family, something like that. But between everything I went through with the jury duty situation and the TV show, they kind of get two for one. It's an honor for me. I'm happier that I get to do more of the advocacy stuff.

**Q** Has anything surprised you about being on *Setup Squad*?

**A** I think it's just the sheer scope of how many people know who you are and know your work after television. Within a day of the show coming out, you start getting hundreds of people adding you on Facebook and that sort of thing. The immediacy of it all is so fascinating. You become a part of people's lives. So many people define themselves by what they watch. It's really amazing to know you've become integrated in their lives.

**Q** Was there any reluctance about doing a reality show of sorts?

**A** Years ago, I was one of those bright-eyed, musical theater college students that said, "I'm going to live and die onstage." I was nervous about doing television of any kind. But my personal attitude and life statement is, "Say yes." You can always get out of it if you hate it. You can't remake an opportunity. I put my hands up in the air and got on the rollercoaster, and it ended up being the most incredible thing that ever happened to me.

**Q** Did you anticipate such a big reaction from your jury duty stand?

**A** They make you sit through that (introduction) video, which is as jingoistic as it gets. "You should be so proud to be serving your country today"

**Q** Do people now consider you a love guru?

**A** Just this weekend, I was taking photos with someone at an event, and they said, "Hey, do you have a second? My friend just can't get a boyfriend." I appreciate that. Prior to becoming the professional wingman with this company, I felt like I was doing it for my friends pro-bono all the time. It's nice to see the mission of the show is being accomplished, which is showing that gay/straight, male/female, black/white — when you boil us all down to finding the one, all of our issues are the same.

**Q** Do you apply anything you've learned to your own love life?

**A** Oh my gosh, every day. In my own relationship with my partner, I catch myself making some of the mistakes that I've seen in some of our hapless daters. It's nice to have a little bit of a reminder, even when watching the episodes, going, "Oh, right. Remember how I wasn't going to be? Quick to judge? Let's not do that with my own boyfriend."

**Q** What's the worst pickup line you've heard?

**A** I always love, "Nice outfit. Can I talk you out of it?" I think they're being cute and witty and just a little bit ironic, but there's no such thing as a noncreepy pickup line.

**Q** Give us your best quick piece of dating advice.

**A** What the Genie says to Aladdin on Jasmine's balcony: Be yourself.

People are trying so hard to be anyone but who they really are just to impress.

Flash-forward to three years from now, when you're at the altar. Are they marrying the person that you really are or the person you've been feeding them?

jonathan lovitz  
pride tour

Grand Marshal 2011 Pride

*Rokk the Runway*

appears with Kimberley Locke

when 8pm June 24th

where South Beach, 810 Pacific  
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*Pride SuperSTAR finale*



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**A** Years ago, I was one of those bright-eyed, musical theater college students that said, "I'm going to live and die onstage." I was nervous about doing television of any kind. But my personal attitude and life statement is, "Say yes." You can always get out of it if you hate it. You can't remake an opportunity. I put my hands up in the air and got on the rollercoaster, and it ended up being the most incredible thing that ever happened to me.

**Q Did you anticipate such a big reaction from your jury duty stand?**

**A** They make you sit through that (introduction) video, which is as jingoistic as it gets. "You should be so proud to be serving your country today" — as if you were in the military. When it came time to be interviewed by the judge and the two lawyers about my ability to be impartial in the case, I said, "Here's how I feel." The rest literally became history. I was shaking because I've never really made a stand for anything like that in my life. I was just going to jury duty.

when you boil us all down to finding the one, all of our issues are the same.

**Q Do you apply anything you've learned to your own love life?**

**A** Oh my gosh, every day. In my own relationship with my partner, I catch myself making some of the mistakes that I've seen in some of our hapless daters. It's nice to have a little bit of a reminder, even when watching the episodes, going, "Oh, right. Remember how I wasn't going to be? Quick to judge? Let's not do that with my own boyfriend."

**Q What's the worst pickup line you've heard?**

**A** I always love, "Nice outfit. Can I talk you out of it?" I think they're being cute and witty and just a little bit ironic, but there's no such thing as a noncreepy pickup line.

**Q Give us your best quick piece of dating advice.**

**A** What the Genie says to Aladdin on Jasmine's balcony: Be yourself. People are trying so hard to be anyone but who they really are just to impress.

Flash-forward to three years from now, when you're at the altar. Are they marrying the person that you really are or the person you've been feeding them? Longevity is based on understanding who you're really with. And then bullet point two is: Turn off the damn phone. There's no such thing as a text message more important than the date you're on.

[joey@29-95.com](mailto:joey@29-95.com)

» **jonathan lovitz**  
pride tour  
Grand Marshal 2011 Pride

**Rokk the Runway**  
appears with Kimberley Locke  
**when** 8pm June 24th  
**where** South Beach, 810 Pacific  
**free** before 11 p.m.

**Pride SuperSTAR finale**  
**when** 10 p.m. June 23  
**where** Meteor, 2306 Genesee  
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pridehouston

# Seven times the Pride

By JOEY GUERRA

**K**IMBERLEY LOCKE is no stranger to transformation.

She went from unassuming law student to confident belter on *American Idol*, finishing third behind Clay Aiken and Ruben Studdard in 2003. She battled the bulge (and the insufferable Dustin Diamond) on *Celebrity Fit Club*, eventually dropping 40 pounds.

"I think that I'm always growing, and I want to continue to grow as an artist, as a person, as a human being," Locke says. "I feel like once we stop growing, we're done. I look at my life, and I look at where I've come from. I always want to be the best person that I can possibly be."

Next year, Locke will morph into a talk-show host on the new "lifestyle transformation" show *The Revolution*, alongside fatherly fashion figure Tim Gunn and trainer Harley Pasternak. The show kicks off in January on ABC.

"After *Idol*, I put myself on a 10-year goal," she says. "My short-term goal was to get my record deal. My long-term goal was I wanted to host my own talk show. And here I am eight and a half, nine years later, and I'm getting the opportunity to do that."

Musically, Locke has also — to quote one of her hits — gone through a change, babe. After perfecting the art of cover tunes on *Idol*, she released her first album, *One Love*, in 2004 and became a star in 2004 and

"It just kind of gives me an opportunity to be myself in every way — musically, personally. It's a very supportive audience and a very sincere audience.

"And nobody parties like the gays. Let's just be honest about that."

Locke might be premiering spankin' new music when she hits Houston. She launched her own I Am Entertainment company this year and let fans vote on her upcoming single. She posted snippets of three high-energy dance anthems on her Facebook fan page and revealed the winner — *Finally Free* — Tuesday. (That was my pick, too.)

"I just knew that I wanted to be more in control of whatever it was I was going to do" Locke says. "Fans love to be involved, (especially) now with social networking and social media. They don't want you making any decisions without them. I wanted the honest, brutal, hardcore feedback."

And though it's been almost a decade since she first encountered Simon Cowell and crew, Locke still credits the world's biggest talent show with helping set her on the path she's since paved.

"I learned so much from being on *American Idol*," she says. "Let me tell you something; all those producers and executive producers, they are fascinating to watch. It's a whole different world. What



KIMBERLEY LOCKE

"You wanna tell me how that happened?" Locke says with a laugh. "It is surprising, but I wouldn't change a thing. I grew up singing R&B and blues and jazz. We didn't even have a dance radio station in Nashville, where I'm from. I would have never thought to go in genre, but look what I would have missed out on had I not done it."

The club success has further endeared Locke to gay fans, many of whom rallied behind her during *Idol*. (Spot-on renditions of *Over the Rainbow* and *It's Raining Men* didn't hurt, either.) It's made her an in-demand presence at Pride events

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Most recently, Locke has blossomed into a dance-floor diva. She's scored a string of club hits since 2007, including *Change*, *Band of Gold*, *Fall* and last year's *Strobe-light*, released in a partnership with Randy Jackson.



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The club success has further endeared Locke to gay fans, many of whom rallied behind her during *Idol*. (Spot-on renditions of *Over the Rainbow* and *It's Raining Men* didn't hurt, either.) It's made her an in-demand presence at Pride events across the country, including the Rokk the Runway extravaganza, June 24 at South Beach nightclub. (This will be Locke's first local appearance since the 2003 *Idol* tour.)

"I enjoy doing Pride (events), because I know they're going to be fun. They're just easy. It's my audience, they love me. It's always a great place to showcase new music," Locke says.

"And nobody parties like the gays. Let's just be honest about that."

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"I learned so much from being on *American Idol*," she says. "Let me tell you something; all those producers and executive producers, they are fascinating to watch. It's a whole different world. We're there just singing songs. They're putting the show together and making sure that works and happens. They have a creative brain that's different from my creative brain."

"They taught me so much about how to carry myself and what to say, what not to say. That stuff is invaluable."

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## Pride and place

GLBT pride isn't just for Montrose anymore. It's for all of us.

**T**ONIGHT, as the Houston Pride Parade caps off this week's celebration of all things gay, lesbian, bi and transgender, you'll hear a lot of nostalgic talk from old-timers. The world and Montrose, they'll say wonderingly, have changed.

When the parade started in the '70s, the term wasn't "pride" but "gay pride"; we hadn't yet learned the inclusive but clunky acronym GLBT. Gay pride was rowdy, radical and shamelessly sexy. Leather daddies ruled.

The feeling was: What do we have to lose? In the '70s, coming out the closet almost always alienated you from your family; it meant you couldn't hold most jobs or live in most neighborhoods. Montrose was a gritty, giddy haven.

In the '80s, AIDS changed everything. The liberation movement took on life-or-death urgency and acquired a moral center. Groups organized to care for the dying; protesters demanded research to stop the plague. From the pride-parade floats, bar-pageant winners tossed handfuls of condoms.

In the late '80s, Montrose hit its peak as a gay ghetto: It was the place to live if you were anything other than straight.

There were gay and lesbian bookstores, clothes stores and radio shows; lawyers, accountants and Realtors specialized in serving "the community."

Since then, "the community" has gotten almost everything it once dared to dream. AIDS is a chronic disease, not a death sentence; overt discrimination is the exception, not the rule. Annise Parker isn't just a Montrose neighborhood activist; she's mayor of the whole city.

These days, Pride is polite, earnest and (largely) wholesome. Tonight's parade will include corporate groups and churches, parents supporting out-of-the-closet teens, preschoolers holding hands with both mommies. Leather daddies were then; regular daddies are now.

Now that it's safe to fly a rainbow flag almost anywhere, Montrose isn't the end-all and be-all of GLBT life it once was. This year many pride-themed events took place downtown, in places as mainstream as Discovery Green and Hard Rock Cafe, and even the old-line Houston Club.

The parade, though, remains in Montrose. It'd be welcome elsewhere, of course. But "the community" is proud of its old community — the place where its history was made.

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