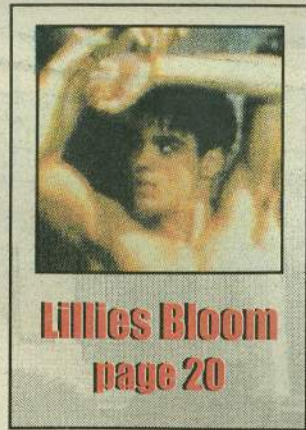




HOUSTON

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Lilles Bloom
page 20

MARCH 20, 1998 • www.houstonvoice.com • ISSUE 908

Gonzalez named co-chair of national AIDS Action board

First Texan to lead national AIDS group

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Houston businessman and AIDS fund-raiser John M. Gonzalez has been named co-chair of the national AIDS Action

Daniel T. Bross, a Washington, D.C. consultant.

"We stand at the most pivotal moment since the first years of the epidemic," Gonzalez said. "New hope has given way to complacency and a false sense that AIDS is over. I look forward to helping lead the fight so that we can one day legitimately say 'AIDS is over.' I am proud that the people of Houston will finally have a voice in the leadership of the national AIDS advocacy community."

Gonzalez, an insurance consultant with Settlement Associates & Insurance Services, Inc., also is a principal of Benefit Consultants & Actuaries.

In Houston, he chairs the Bering Community Service Foundation, which provides



Judge hears arguments in anti-gay challenge to mayor's authority

Decision expected next week

by TERRY MURPHY

HOUSTON—A decision is expected next week in a lawsuit challenging Houston Mayor Lee Brown's authority to issue an executive order protecting gay city workers.

In a hearing Tuesday before State District Court Judge Patrick W. Mizell, attorneys for religious right Republican activist Richard Hotze and Republican City Councilmember Rob Todd argued that the executive order exceeded the mayor's powers. City attorneys responded that the suit is politically motivated and baseless. Judge Mizell said he would issue a ruling next week.

If he rules in favor of the plaintiffs, Brown's executive order would be suspended as the city attorneys defend the executive order in a trial; a process that could drag out for two or

three years.

Legal advocates for gay civil rights expressed confidence that the case was baseless, yet also voiced concerns that Judge Mizell might be swayed by the Hotze family's substantial political power.

In this month's Republican primary election, the Conservative Republicans of Harris County, an ultra-conservative church-based political organization controlled by Richard Hotze and his brother, Dr. Steven Hotze, sent three respected incumbent Republican judges to defeat in favor of challengers it had endorsed. Following the decisive success of many of the Hotzes' candidates, the *Houston Chronicle* dubbed the Hotze organization a "kingmaker."

See JUDGE/ page 16

Murderer of gay man and straight



John M. Gonzalez

In Houston, he chairs the Bering Community Service Foundation, which provides

psychic, social, and direct financial aid to more than 10,000 HIV-positive people. He also has held leadership roles in several other Texas environmental and human rights organizations.

In his capacity as AIDS Action Foundation board co-chair, he will travel to Washington, D.C. six times a year for Foundation busi-

ness.

ness. Foundation's board of directors. He is the first Houstonian, and the first Texan, to chair the board of a national AIDS organization.

Gonzalez, who serves as the board chair for Houston's Bering Community Service Foundation, has been a member of the AIDS Action Foundation board for two years, one as treasurer. He was elected to a one-year term and will co-chair with

The AIDS Action Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that raises money to fund efforts to influence public policy to prevent new HIV infections, provide care for PWAs, defend the civil rights of PWAs and search for a cure.

It works in partnership with the AIDS Action Council, which lobbies aggressively on behalf of its member AIDS service organizations.

process that could drag out for two or

See JUDGE/ page 16

Murderer of gay man and straight roommate gets death penalty

After 10 years, high-tech evidence leads to conviction.

by TERRY MURPHY

HOUSTON—A full decade after a trick-gone-bad murdered two Houston Grand opera singers, a jury has sent the murderer to death row.

After 12 hours of deliberation, on Tues., March 17, a Houston jury sentenced Derrick Leon Jackson, 29, to death for the bludgeoning murder of Forrest G. Henderson, a gay man who had picked up Jackson in Montrose on the night of the murder, and Richard Alan Wrotenbery, a straight friend of Henderson's who was temporarily staying at his apartment.

According to friends of Henderson,

the gruesome double murder shocked both the gay community and the Houston fine arts community when it occurred in September 1988.

"It was horrible," said Richard Bado, chorus master for the Houston Grand Opera then and now, who knew both men. "It was such a violent crime and they were both really nice, fun-loving guys."

Henderson and other members of the chorus had returned to Houston a few weeks before the murders, having presented an HGO production of

See MURDER/ page 5

3-20-98

Chastity speaks about being media spokesperson burned by the media

by LAURA BROWN

Special to the Houston Voice

As the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation prepares to give "Ellen" star Ellen DeGeneres a major award, it has spent two weeks furiously issuing press releases refuting a *Variety* article in which its own celebrity spokesperson was quoted as saying the show was "too gay."

Throughout this messy ordeal of undoing an anti-gay media spin job, Chastity Bono has spoken only through prepared quotes in GLAAD press releases. In an interview with a *Houston Voice* reporter this week, the celebrity daughter and lesbian media personality reveals what it's like to hold a losing hand in a high-stakes game of journalistic "gotcha."

"It was an interview for the *San Jose Mercury News*, and he asked me to speculate on various reasons the ratings could be going down, and I mentioned several reasons, and the next thing I know there's an article in *Variety* that basically makes it look like I called up *Variety* and got them to do a story about me criticizing 'Ellen,'" Bono told *Houston Voice*.

"For clarity's sake, *Variety* did not interview Chastity," GLAAD Executive Director Joan Garry said. "I find it completely and utterly ludicrous, and what you have to do in my mind is look at all of GLAAD's work on 'Ellen' and Chastity's central role in that. It is completely ironic that this would

paint her as anything other than completely supportive of the show."

GLAAD's support for "Ellen" began before its star and lead character came out, when Bono said the organization urged viewers to send baking mixes and recipes to ABC to protest how it "waffled" on the issue. That support has continued through GLAAD's "Come Out With Ellen" house parties, "Ellen Watch" web-page and current "Save Ellen" campaign.

"This really points to exactly the type of work GLAAD does," Garry said. "The media can shape what people think, and here the media is shaping what Chastity thinks about 'Ellen,' and she is devastated."

In press releases on March 9 and March 10, GLAAD said Lovell took Bono's remarks "out of context," and Garry criticized *Variety* for "failing to mention" that "Ms. Bono and GLAAD strongly believe that the program contains themes that transcend issues of sexual orientation, and are entertaining and appealing to audiences gay and straight alike."

Bono said the article unfairly portrayed her as a critic of the show. "I think what was taken out of context was, here I was trying to do an interview about why GLAAD feels that 'Ellen'



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GLAAD's Chastity Bono

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LOCAL

Houston HRC dinner sweeps national awards

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Houston Winter Gala, a local fund-raiser for the national Human Rights Campaign, won six achievement awards at the annual HRC Leadership Conference last weekend.

The event, which was held Feb. 14 at the Wyndham Warwick Hotel, drew 400 guests and raised more than \$80,000 for HRC.

Representing Houston's Winter Gala organizing committee in Washington were Federal Club Co-Chairs Dr. Rod Frazier and S. Hall, 1999 Winter Gala Co-Chair George Hawkins and Underwriting Co-Chair John Waizel.

Houston AIDS Walk names beneficiaries

AIDS Foundation Houston, producers of the Southwestern Bell Houston AIDS Walk, have announced the 17

AIDS service organizations that will share the net proceeds of the annual metro-wide fund-raiser, scheduled for May 17.

About 3,000 walkers participated last year, raising approximately \$200,000 and 1998 Walk organizers are hoping for a dramatic increase this year.

Harold T. Shultz III, Walk chairman, pointed out that many smaller cities raise far more than Houston through their AIDS Walks. Atlanta, for example, had 15,000 walkers last year who raised \$1.46 million, he said. "We need the entire Houston community to stand behind this effort and make a difference," he said.

The organizations are: AIDS Alliance of the Bay Area, Inc. (AABA), AIDS Coalition of Coastal Texas, Inc.; AIDS Foundation Houston; The Association for the Advancement of Mexican Americans (AAMA); The B.L.O.C.K. (Building Lives Offering Community Knowledge); Body Positive Houston Wellness Center; Casa, A Special Hospital; Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection (MCCR); Milam House; Montrose Clinic; Mother's Voices of Texas Gulf Coast Chapter; New Hope Counseling Center, Inc.; Omega House; People With AIDS Coalition—Houston; The Southeast Texas Legal Clinic; Steven's House and The Assistance Fund.

OBITUARY

Stephen Umoff, quiet community leader

An overflow crowd attended a March 14 memorial service for Steve Umoff, one of the Houston community's hardest-working leaders, who died Monday, March 9, after a short illness.

Umoff, 51, has been described as one of the gay community's least-visible leaders. "He never took credit, but he was



LOBO Grand Opening: Larry Lingle (left), owner of LOBO Bookstore, and City Councilwoman Annise Parker cut the ribbon at the grand opening of LOBO Cafe last week. LOBO is also celebrating its 25th Anniversary this year. The event drew a standing room only crowd.

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Charter Member



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one of the gay community's most visible leaders. "He never took credit, but he was always in the background seeing that the right thing got done," said fellow social worker Harry Livesay.



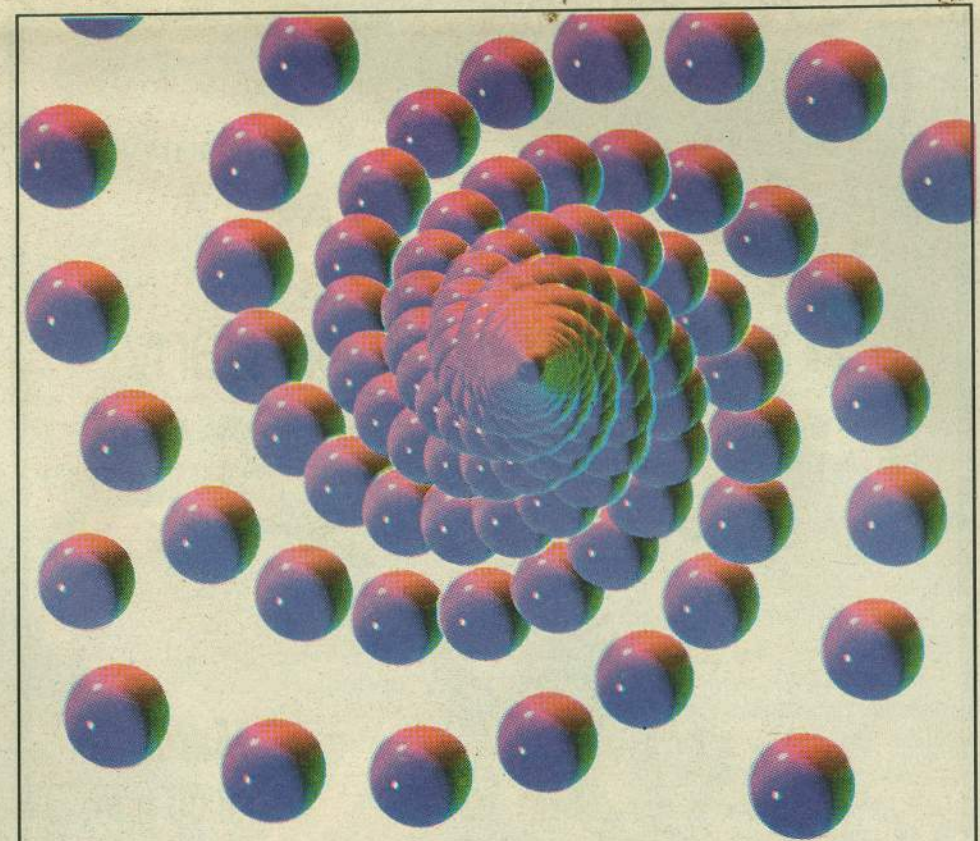
Umoff was president of University of Houston's Student Association in 1970. He was, said long-time friend, state Rep. Debra Danburg, "a fraternity type back then, and was even engaged to the president of the Panhellenic." The engagement ended, Stephen discovered he was gay, and soon put his contacts and organizational talents to work in the newly emerging gay community in Houston.

He worked with Montrose Counseling Center, E.P.A.H., Montrose Clinic, Montrose Activity Center, G.P.C. (now G.L.P.C.) Montrose Clinic and H.A.T.C.H. in their infancy. He was often joined in this volunteer activity by the late Glen Rizek, his companion of 22 years. E.P.A.H. named Stephen its Outstanding Member and gave him its Lifetime Achievement Award. He was honored with the Stella Scott Community Service Award by Montrose Counseling Center.

He earned a master's degree in Social Work from University of Houston in 1980 and was named its Outstanding Social Work Graduate. He had worked for Judge Hannah Chow for the past 12 years. At the memorial service, Chow recalled Steve's efficiency, loyalty, independence and the beautifully decorated and lettered name tags he made for her fundraisers.

Stephen is survived by his father and step-mother, four brothers and sisters and their spouses, and numerous nieces and nephews.

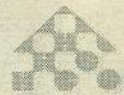
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Supporters of Montrose Counseling Center gathering in the kitchen during a recent gala celebrating the organization's 20th Anniversary. The event raised much needed money for the Center, which has been a staple for gay and lesbians seeking counseling on many fronts.

Greg Louganis visits Houston March 26

Olympic gold medal diver Greg Louganis will visit Houston March 26 promoting a new video documentary of his life as an openly gay, HIV-positive, former champion athlete. Louganis will appear at 7 p.m. March 26 at Crossroads Market Bookstore &

Cafe, 1111 Westheimer.

His new video, "Looking to the Light," presents an intimate behind-the-scenes look at the personal life of the diving legend. For the first time on home video, viewers will get a visual diary of Louganis' life since his best-selling book, "Breaking The Surface," was turned into a television movie for the USA Network.

MURDER/ from page 1

in China" at a festival in Scotland. Henderson, who was known to be gay, apparently picked up Jackson in Montrose on a Saturday night and brought him back to his Summit-area apartment, according to prosecutors.

Once inside the apartment, Jackson attacked Henderson beat him to death with a pipe and then cut his throat with a knife. prosecutors charged.

after the fact he was caught," said Bob Manchester, organist at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, where Henderson served as choir director for two years. "Forrest was extremely gifted at working with choirs, a superb rehearsal technician...He was very sociable and I guess one would call him gregarious, but he was also one who could be deep in thought and could concentrate intensely on the music. He was very

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Once inside the apartment Jackson attacked Henderson beat him to death with a pipe and then cut his throat with a knife, prosecutors charged.

Wrotenbery, a friend of Henderson's who was married but separated from his wife, had been staying in Henderson's apartment. He was sleeping at the time Henderson and Jackson came to the apartment that night, according to police.

Police said they believe Wrotenbery was awakened by noise during the murder of Henderson and that Jackson then killed the accidental witness.

The motive, according to prosecutor Bill Hawkins, was robbery. He said that after the murders Jackson ransacked the apartment, took both men's wallets and fled in Henderson's car.

In the sentencing hearing earlier this week, Jackson' defense attorney implied that Henderson's homosexuality prompted the brutal crime. Arguing that Jackson, formerly of Missouri City, had no record until he was 20 and displayed good conduct while in prison the last six years, attorney Alvin Nunnery told the jury, "We don't know what happened in that apartment that made [Jackson] go off like he did."

Having been jailed since 1992 on a string of armed robberies, Jackson was linked to the murders by high-tech computer analysis of DNA and fingerprint evidence left at the scene. Such analysis only became possible in recent years, according to Hawkins. "It's unusual for a capital murder to remain unsolved for so long," said Hawkins. "They call it digital justice."

Ten years ago, on the morning after the two bodies were found, Jackson narrowly escaped capture by Houston police. A police patrol radar unit clocked Henderson's car going 90 m.p.h. on the Gulf Freeway. Jackson, who prosecutor's say was driving the car that day, crashed the car during the police chase and escaped on foot.

"It's incredible that so many years

was also one who could be deep in thought and could concentrate intensely on the music. He was very serious when it came to rehearsal time or performance time. He took his role as choir director very seriously."

Like most members of the Houston Grand Opera, Henderson held outside employment. Besides his post as choir director for Bering Church, he had worked in the admissions office of Prairie View A&M, at local music shops and for a collection agency.

Wrotenbery was a school teacher in Deer Park.

Henderson, who was originally from Washington, D.C., and Wrotenbery were expected for a Houston Grand Opera rehearsal of a production of "Carmen" the day after the murder, said chorus master Bado. "I remember calling and leaving a message on the answering machine, wondering where they were. On Monday, I got a call here at the Opera from the police, because when they went into the apartment [and discovered the murders], my message was on the machine.

"That Monday night we had a chorus rehearsal and everyone was in a major state of shock...it was heart-wrenching. Right now, there are probably only a handful of people in the Chorus who were in the Chorus back then, but everyone knows about it and has talked about it...the odd thing is we are rehearsing 'Carmen,' which was the show we were doing at the time [of the murders]."

Doug Threeton, chairman of the chorus and a member for 35 years, also knew both victims. He was called to testify in Jackson's trial last week, specifically to identify both men from photographs taken at the scene of the crime. "It was awful what they showed me," he said. "I was just told I had to appear and they shoved these photos in my hands."

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Lesbian mom loses child in Alabama Supreme Court

by DAVID GOLDMAN

In a 5-2 decision, the Alabama Supreme Court has ruled that the Court of Civil Appeals was wrong when it removed child visitation restrictions from a lesbian mother. The high court sided with a circuit judge who had previously awarded custody of two children to their father, identified only as D.W.W., and stipulated that they could visit their mother, R.W., only at her parents' home and only in their presence.

Chief Justice Perry Hooper Sr. and Justice Mark Kennedy clashed over the outcome, with Kennedy charging in a lengthy dissent that the decision, written by Hooper, "mischaracterized much of the evidence." Kennedy described the children's father as violent, abusive and a frequent DUI offender.

Laura Alfano, an attorney for the mother, told Southern Voice that the father received another DUI with the children in the car while the case was pending.

Jay Stover, an attorney for the father, disputed this and countered that his client has sought treatment for his alcohol problems while the mother has not, "though she had the same problems." Stover also said testimony was presented indicating that the mother had broken into the marital home with an ax, and that her lesbian partner had threatened to deprive the children of visits with their father.

"Case law in Alabama is clear: that if co-habitation harms the children in a manner that causes psychiatric counseling or that is not in their best interest, the trial court can restrict the kids from seeing the live-in partner," Stover said. He added that a judge can enforce

The Log Cabin Republicans of Austin have their monthly dinner-meeting on Thursday, March 26, at Tres Amigos Restaurant at 38th St. & Medical. Speaker at 7 p.m. and dinner at 8 p.m.

Cornerstone Activities this week include free HIV testing Wed., March 25, 4-7 p.m. Cornerstone's Poetry Reading Series features Sharon Bridgeforth Wed., March 25, 7-9 p.m.

Lesbian Moms Support Group meets at Cornerstone Community Center Thu., March 26, from 6-9 p.m. M2

Due to the overwhelming success of Cornerstone's Anniversary Skirt, Club Skirt is being moved to Fiesta Gardens permanently. It's bigger, better and more fun than ever before. Upcoming dates include March 26, April 16, May 31 and June 12. Mark your calendars, and check out the website for times and directions.

Sun Dragon Women's Martial Arts is offering workshops in Men's Self-Defense and in Women's Self Defense. The workshop is aimed to decrease vulnerability to gay bashing and other violence against gays and lesbians. Includes simple verbal and physical strategies for coping with emergencies. For schedule and registration call 416-9735.

OBITUARIES

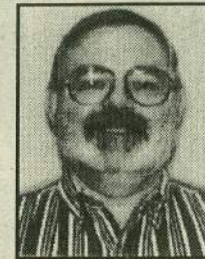
Bill Pearse, Basic Brothers employee

William C. "Bill" Pearse, former vice president and general manager of Basic Brothers Clothing Store in Houston, died March 12 at Omega House after a long illness.

A native of Auburn, Indiana, Pearse, 52, retired from his post with the popular Montrose clothing store in 1996. He is survived by his life mate, Scott Metzger; his mother, Margaret Ornelas, and stepfather, Fred Ornelas, of Henderson, Nev.; and special Houston friends, David Garza, Tom Vinton and Richard Wiederholt.

Ken Claude, current general manager of Basic Brothers, said: "Bill wanted to add this to his obituary, 'Anyone who reads this is entitled to a 15 percent, one-time discount at Basic Brothers!' He was a dedicated Basic Brothers employee to the end. I, for one, will miss him and his incredible creative endeavors."

Lyle Eugene Barrett, area Bear leader



Memorial services will be held March 22 for Lyle Eugene Barrett a well-known member of the Houston Bear community, who died Tues., March 3.

A gentle, loving spirit whose creative energy will be missed by friends and family, Barrett was involved with community organizations and was on the Houston Area Bears Triad. Most recently an employee of Continental Airlines, he had mastered many careers, working as display director at Marshall Fields, Christmas Store designer, head of corporate purchasing for Gordon's Jewelers and was creator of a rubber stamp company.

Barrett is survived by his mother, Vera Barrett, and his two partners, James Ozga and Bill Wooton. Services are scheduled at 2 p.m. Sun., March 22 at Grace Lutheran Church, 2515 Waugh Dr.



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co-habitation harms the children in a manner that causes psychiatric counseling or that is not in their best interest, the trial court can restrict the kids from seeing the live-in partner," Stover said. He added that a judge can enforce such restrictions regardless of the parent's sexual orientation. "The emphasis on homosexuality is misplaced in this scenario," he said.

But homosexuality seems to have weighed heavily in the majority's opinion.

"Both women are active in the homosexual community," wrote Chief Justice Hooper. "They frequent gay bars and have discussed taking the children to a homosexual church. Although they do not engage in intimate sexual contact in front of the children, they openly display affection in the children's presence. Already, the children appear to have been detrimentally affected by their mother's relationship and by their contacts with her sexual partner. Evidence was presented indicating that after moving in with [their mother] and [her partner], the children began using inappropriate and vulgar language and required psychological counseling."

Though she declined to comment on the particulars of the Alabama case, Atlanta domestic relations attorney Joyce Colmar scoffed at the idea that, absent an obvious danger, such restrictive visitation arrangements can be best for children. She said such restrictions tend to be used against gays more in the South than elsewhere in the nation, and more in rural towns than in metropolitan areas.

At this point, the case could only be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, said Alfano, attorney for the lesbian mom.

AUSTIN AREA UPDATE

DJ Mark Tarbox from LA will be in Austin for 'Circuit Night' on March 28th starting at 11 p.m. at The Forum, 408 Congress. Info at: <http://www.partyaustin.com/cn.htm>



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Publishers

EDITORIAL

Chastity Bono was right the first time about 'Ellen'

by CHRIS CRAIN

The spectacular media circus that has surrounded the coming out of Ellen DeGeneres and Ellen Morgan now has a third ring in operation.



This one features lesbian celeb Chastity Bono, who works as entertainment media director for the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD). It seems Bono granted an interview with the *San Jose Mercury News*, and gave her pitch on why ABC shouldn't cancel "Ellen," which has suffered from lagging ratings in the season after The Coming Out Episode. *Variety* magazine picked up the story, zeroed in on a few comments Bono made about how the "Ellen" show is, in her view, too "gay specific" for some viewers, and created a nice little controversy just weeks before GLAAD is to present DeGeneres with its Stephen F. Kolzak Award for her "outstanding contribution in combatting homophobia."

This issue of whether Ellen is "too

gay" is only the latest example of how the very public coming out of the actress/ comedienne has mirrored the very private coming out most of us endured.

Remember Ellen's initial interviews with *Time* magazine and Diane Sawyer? She winced at the word "lesbian" (she preferred "gay woman") and voiced her discomfort at being anyone's activist. She "just happened to be gay."

We've all been there, Ellen.

Then, in a blazing media triumph, the character Ellen Morgan came out, and the ratings were through the roof, along with most of our spirits. Her character's highs and lows in those first two coming-out episodes touched many of us, and America was riveted by just how genuine the portrayal was.

Flush with success, Ellen came out with a vengeance. Leaving behind her initial reticence over being labelled a "lesbian," Ellen found herself a girlfriend and declared her undying, everlasting love by the third date.

We've all been there, Ellen.

When "Ellen" the show emerged again last fall, the situation comedy had found its situation—being gay—and never thought twice about venturing outside its comfortable gay TV ghetto.

At times, it has seemed like every conversation, every joke, every plot has revolved entirely around Ellen's sexual orientation. Like many of us, Ellen became submerged in the gay subculture, single-minded and narrowly focused.

And like many fairweather straight friends, Ellen's backers at ABC soon tired of Ellen's new-found emphasis on being gay, to the exclusion of everything else in her life. Fearing peer pressure from the political right and worrying too much about turning off close-minded viewers, the network cronies have all but abandoned Ellen to her new lifestyle.

It's too bad that ABC didn't stick around for the next stage of Ellen's coming out. Over the next months and years, she will begin the challenging but rewarding process of finding a proper place in her life and her self for her sexual orientation.

Maybe her new relationship will survive this maturation and maybe it won't. But Ellen will survive, professionally and personally—content that her courage has inspired millions, and her story has educated many millions more.

Chastity was right the first time about Ellen. She may be too gay, but she's definitely one of us.

LETTERS

A son's reflections on his parents' love and life

Marshall Rainwater
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Chris Crain
Rick Ellsasser

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LETTERS

A son's reflections on his parents' love and life

Regarding your Valentine article "Lesbian couple celebrates 27 years of oneness" (*Houston Voice*, Feb. 13): I am their son and this is my response to your article.

I applaud Jeanette for her answers about relationships, both gay and straight. I was proud of her statements; but making 27 years was even tougher than they give mention to.

The difficulties don't discriminate against gender or color, against the gay or the straight. While the gay community has its own set of problems with discrimination and acceptance that any gay person must face, there are also the problems of handling the blows that ordinary life can deal our way: death of a family member, taking in a father or a grandparent due to ailing health, rebellion from children; balancing a budget to pay the bills and support a family. All of these and many more can compound many tribulations upon a couple.

My parents, Dot and Jeanette, have faced all these and more. Yet, their love and dedication held them together. They have always given more out than they ever received. If you measure their success by the standards we rate and judge others, then they don't show hardly any success. They have most often put others' needs, including mine, before their own. Once I was in need of money and I recall Jeanette borrowed it from a co-worker to help me.

Materially, they don't score high, but heavenly rewards are being added to their accounts everyday.

As a teenager I was rebellious. I felt cheated by not having my natural father and mother together raising me. I have loved Jeanette all my life. She has always shown me love and given me gifts to spoil me. As an adult, I can look back and examine my teenage life. I realize that even if my

natural mother and father had been together, I would have had another issue focusing my rebellion. It wasn't that I was being raised by a gay couple; it was me just being the difficult teenager that most of us once were.

Today, I am a parent and a grandparent. Now over and over, as things happen with my role as a parent, I have to stop and phone my mother and Jeanette and apologize for some new insight on something I did against them as a kid.

Dot and Jeanette have taken in an ailing father and grandmother and nursed them until they each passed. They have been care givers, by choice maybe, but also by demand.

There were no other options. They were forced to take the blows pushed upon them. Later, they had a close friend dying of AIDS. They moved into his home and tended to his deteriorating condition.

Mother and Jeanette, already dealing with aging effects upon their own bodies, again put themselves last. Many times while lifting Shawn into

the bathtub or to the toilet, Dot strained her back and would be down and hurting for days—several times completely bedridden for days at a time. This couple have been volunteers with local fund-raiser efforts for AIDS, children's hospitals and many more.

As Dot and Jeanette continue to age and suffer the pains of poor health, someone new will come along and become active in fund-raising events. Dot and Jeanette will slow down from their participation and eventually be only a memory to a few.

History will not record any great accomplishments they made. Folks won't remember exactly how many years they were together. Life will seem to just pass them by.

One thing is certain, though, they both have made a lasting and positive impression on me. I am proud to say I am their son.

Thank you Houston Voice for your recognition of my parents.

Bill Thompson
Memphis, Tenn.

Where's the GLAMA?

As a gay music lover, a big event for me last week was listening (via the internet) to the GLAMA awards (Gay & Lesbian American Music Awards) show on Mon., March 9. Maybe the date didn't match your news deadline, but I was surprised to see no coverage of the event.

My personal highlights were hearing a very candid, open and funny k.d.lang and a humble RuPaul.

An e-mail friend of mine who was there, Jay McLaren of Amsterdam, described RuPaul's acceptance speech (for the OutMusic award) this way:

"Rupaul's reception was especially noteworthy. An immediate and lengthy standing ovation, then another. Appearing out of drag, the shy, tender person that lurks behind the violently-coloured frocks, was so nervous after Larry Flick's tribute and the warm reception of a very mixed audience that he stumbled through his acceptance speech, winning new admirers with each hesitation."

Your readers can get more info at the GLAMA website www.glama.com.

JD Doyle
Houston

AS I SEE IT

With my ear to the ground

by KAREN SHOFFNER



Karen Shoffner writes for various gay and lesbian publications. She lives in Northampton, Mass.

Millennium March: Houston Caucus urges local action first

I have just started a new relationship, but you would never have known it, dear reader, if you hadn't heard it from me. Unless, of course, I happened to be the star of my own sitcom or a movie actress. For if I were in either of those situations (or dating someone in either of those situations), you would hear a great deal about my personal life.

Ever since Ellen DeGeneres and her TV alter ego came out last year, her life, particularly her personal life, has been an open book. Of course, by appearing on "Oprah" with her inamorata Anne Heche and consenting to a prime time TV interview, the case could be made that DeGeneres invited the close scrutiny provided by tabloids and other media outlets. Witness the tale told of Heche's philandering in a recent issue of the *Globe*, a weekly tabloid.

According to "sources" and "pals," Heche has been making time with Vince Vaughn, her co-star in the movie "Force Majeure." While making the movie, sources say, the chemistry between Heche and Vaughn was "electric." DeGeneres is angry and upset and determined to win Heche back, according to the *Globe*. But a "pal," unnamed of course, says she doesn't stand a chance against a man. (I'm not so sure about that. DeGeneres may be more like a man than previously thought. More on that later.)

Let's accept for a moment that the story is true. We can pity DeGeneres and vilify Heche if we want. Indeed, DeGeneres' gay pals reportedly believe that Heche only used the TV star to get

on Hollywood's A-List. Another DeGeneres pal said that Ellen's friends never believed Heche to be a lesbian through-and-through. Her alleged fling with Vaughn is proof that "she's really straight."

Imagine how embarrassing this must be for DeGeneres, and perhaps for Heche as well. When us little people have difficulties in relationships, we cry on a friend's shoulder. We can be fairly certain that our agonies won't end up as fodder for supermarket tabloids.

But believe it or not, this is progress. Not too long ago, it was only high-profile heterosexuals done wrong by waywards mates who were deemed ripe for public humiliation.

We've come a long way, baby.

DeGeneres could have avoided this humiliation if she knew then what we know now about lesbians, straight women and the inner ear. University of Texas-Austin researchers recently said they have found that the inner ears of lesbians function more like those of straight and gay men than straight women. Some say this supports the theory that lesbianism is biologically based.

Whatever.

I say someone should take advantage of this research for the good of lesbians everywhere and invent a small device that would help the wary lesbian ascertain early on whether the potential object of her affection is a lesbian or not. On their first date, between the *pate de foie gras* and the soup, DeGeneres could have slipped the device into Heche's ear in an unguard-

ed moment and known in an instant which team Heche was really on.

Any discomfort the unsuspecting Heche might have felt when the detection device was inserted into her ear would have been momentary compared to the lasting humiliation DeGeneres may now feel.

If the *Globe* story is indeed true, of course.

This inner ear thing has my girlfriend concerned and irked. Irked because she hates the idea that people think that lesbians just want to be men. Concerned because she wonders if now the race for a "cure" for lesbianism will step into high gear.

In giddier, more sardonic moments, I imagine that if the difference between the inner ears of lesbians and straight women can be detected during infancy, and it can be apparently, baby dykes will be made to wear corrective ears in an attempt to correct their lesbianism in the same way that some children had to wear corrective shoes to correct foot problems.

My younger brother had to wear a bar shoe at night because he was pigeon-toed. A bar shoe is exactly that — a pair of shoes pointing outward and attached to a bar. He hated it. He's less pigeon-toed now.

Incidentally, he's gay.

I wonder, with all this research into the origins of homosexuality, if that's what lesbianism will be reduced to—a condition in need of correction. For me, and many other women, it is simply a way of being.

Houston has taken a critical step forward in our struggle for equality for Gay women and men. We have become the largest city in the country to elect an openly Gay candidate to citywide office. The next step is to continue to develop and expand upon the coalitions and partnerships that must exist if our progress is to continue. We must

our goal of equality.

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force brought forward its proposal for a 50-state march in 1999 for discussion at a National Policy Roundtable held in Washington last September. Task Force Executive Director Kerry Lobel, amidst the Millennium March controversy, said "I feel no one group

Washington won't help educate swing voters in Maine, Illinois or Missouri."

Eleven state legislatures, and maybe as many as 22, are considering bills to ban legal recognition of same-sex marriage. Only 10 of 50 states have civil rights laws protecting gay people. Our energy should be focused on organizing and educating at the state

March: Houston Caucus urges local action first

by CLARENCE BAGBY



the largest city in the country to elect an openly Gay candidate to citywide office. The next step is to continue to develop and expand upon the coalitions and partnerships that must exist if our progress is to continue. We must also work for the same at the state and national level.

We must all come to the understanding that we are basically on the same side and that we must work with each other, not against each other, if we are to be successful.

We must recognize that equality is not a partisan issue. There are Democrats, Republicans and others who support equality for Gay people and there are Democrats, Republicans and others who oppose it.

We must recognize that equality is not a religious issue. There are Christians, Jews, Hindus and others who support equality for Gay people and there are Christians, Jews, Hindus and others who oppose it. Gay people of faith are often ostracized by the Gay political establishment.

America's African-American community built coalitions with numerous segments of society, as well as within the Black community itself, in their struggle for civil rights legislation. Without the development of such partnerships, the civil rights legislation of the 1960s would never have been passed.

By the same token, the Gay community must build coalitions and develop partnerships in order to achieve our goal of equal treatment under the law.

We all read with dismay recently about the chaos that ensued after the Human Rights Campaign and the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches announced plans last month for a Millennium March on Washington in the year 2000 and the subsequent agreement to 'pause' march planning.

The word 'coalesce' immediately comes to mind; we must come together as a community if we are to attain

as many as 22, are considering bills to a 50-state march in 1999 for discussion at a National Policy Roundtable held in Washington last September. Task Force Executive Director Kerry Lobel, amidst the Millennium March controversy, said, "I feel no one group has the unilateral right to call a national march on Washington without an open, substantive process of discussion."

To her credit, HRC Executive Director Elizabeth Birch said on Feb. 12, after HRC and UFMCC agreed to put the march on 'pause', that "We decided a much larger group of Gay people will come together to talk about both a national march and a 50-state march."

In light of the defeat in Maine, it is painfully clear that more must be done to bolster our statewide and local Gay political organizations. (Maine legislators passed a bill last spring that added sexual orientation to the protected classifications in Maine's 25-year-old human rights act.)

We most certainly must continue to direct financial resources to groups in Washington. We must, however, be sure that we leave more than just some table scraps for our state and local organizations.

In her speech at the recent HRC 1998 Houston Winter Gala, HRC National Field Director Donna Red Wing cited the importance of supporting national organizations like HRC, while at the same time supporting statewide groups like the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas and local groups like the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus.

"If we are going to elect fair-minded people to public office at all levels of government, we have got to have strong state and local organizations that can provide clout, organization and votes," said Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund Executive Director Brian Bond. "The 1999 state-driven march idea will support our effort in the most productive manner. A march in

ban legal recognition of same-sex marriage. Only 10 of 50 states have civil rights laws protecting gay people. Our energy should be focused on organizing and educating at the state and local level. Clearly, more and more of the battles are at the state and local level, not in Washington.

Organizations at every level represent integral components of the overall movement. There are non-profit advocacy groups at the local, state and federal level. The Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus is Houston's non-partisan Gay civil rights organization. The state counterpart to the Caucus is LGRL and the national counterparts are the Task Force and HRC.

In addition to its social welfare activities, the Caucus lobbies local, state and federal officials in its efforts to educate the public about Gay equality issues. The Task Force has developed the foremost Gay think tank in the world, the NGLTF Policy Institute, which operates as a non-profit charity.

The Policy Institute created and hosts the National Policy Roundtable. The Caucus also owns a political action committee, just like HRC and LGRL, that endorses candidates based upon their level of support for equal rights for Gay Americans and provides campaign support.

Our efforts must match the tremendous organizational efforts of anti-gay groups like the Christian Coalition. They won in Maine and will try to take that same strategy out to the rest of the country. The religious extremists are already working to repeal Mayor Lee Brown's Executive Order banning city employment and hiring discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

Support your local, state and national Gay political groups. Your resources and your energy are needed at every level!

Clarence Bagby is president of Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus.

BONO/from page 1

is such an important show, why we want to save it, all those wonderful things about the show, but out of this whole interview, what was used was only a very small portion where I hypothesized about what some of the problems may have been affecting the ratings," Bono explained in an interview.

"It's a case of me kind of letting my guard down and talking freely about what potential problems might be, and it's not even necessarily my opinion, it's just one of many theories that has been floating around the media for a long time," she said. "But as soon as I said that some material could be too gay-centered for a certain audience, [the reporter] immediately

latched on to that, and that was it for him.

"I heard the light bulb go on in his head, that 'I can get a controversy out of this, because here's the big activist saying Ellen is too gay,' but that's not what I was saying."

Bono said she also discussed other issues that might be affecting the show's ratings, including the "hoopla" surrounding ABC putting parental discretion warnings on the show and a lack of commitment to directing advertising dollars to "Ellen."

"If you look at promos for that night's line-up, it's 'On 'Dharma and Greg,' Dharma and Greg do blah, blah, blah, while 'Drew Carey' finds himself in da, da, da, and an all new 'Ellen,' and that has been pretty consistent," Bono said. "And I also think

probably 'Drew Carey' is probably not the right lead-in for 'Ellen' because it is a very different type of comedy that has a very different audience."

Bono, who visits the "Ellen" set at least once per month and has consulted on scripts, said she immediately contacted the show to explain the *Variety* story, while Garry said she has fielded questions from ABC and other gay and lesbian organizations.

"I called everybody, and they know I've been too supportive of the show to come out and condemn it," Bono said. "I think the consensus was they knew I was taken out of context, but it was really kind of a drag what happened and they felt bad for me."

"From the moment the story appeared, I faxed a letter to ABC to reiterate our position on the show,"

Garry said. "ABC has made no public comment, and leaders of other gay and lesbian organizations have contacted me and expressed their support, and understanding that remarks can be taken out of context. ...

"I think people at 'Ellen' are in the tenuous position now of working like

"It's a case of me kind of letting my guard down and talking freely about what potential problems might be"

hell to try and get the show renewed, and clearly this article didn't make them happy, but they know this is neither Chastity nor GLAAD's position."

Bono said ABC will not announce the fate of "Ellen" until it releases its new programming line-up in May, but Ellen Degeneres has repeatedly stated in public that she thinks the show will be canceled, and the sitcom is reportedly being shopped to other networks.

Even if the show is canceled, "for the gay community, it's been a great

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be canceled, and the sitcom is reportedly being shopped to other networks.

Even if the show is canceled, "for the gay community, it's been a great validating experience ... [and instead of a defeat] I think I'll look at it as just the first one," Bono said. "It will be the first of many [shows with gay leads], and sometimes it doesn't go perfectly the first time out, but that doesn't diminish the fact that it's happened and opened the door for other shows."

JUDGE/from page 1

The judge hearing this case, Judge Mizell, is a Republican serving his first term in office. He would stand for reelection in 2000.

"Any Republican judge in Harris County...would have legitimate cause for concern," said Francisco Sanchez, Jr., an openly gay state Democratic Executive Committee member. "My concern is not with the legal merits of the executive order. At issue will be a test of politics versus policy...A political machine, Steve Hotze, opposes the policy and has great influence over our local judiciary. In the end, it will have to be like flossing his teeth with rusted barbed wire for Judge Mizell to make a concrete legal argument to suspend the order until the lawsuit is resolved."

"The question is, will Judge Mizell be able to overlook the political consequences a ruling in favor of the mayor may have given that Hotze is such an influence in the Republican Party," said Andres Pereira, an attorney representing the Texas Human Rights Foundation, a statewide legal advocate for the lesbian and gay community. "My guess is that it will take a lot of courage on his part to do so, and I look forward to seeing his opinion next week."

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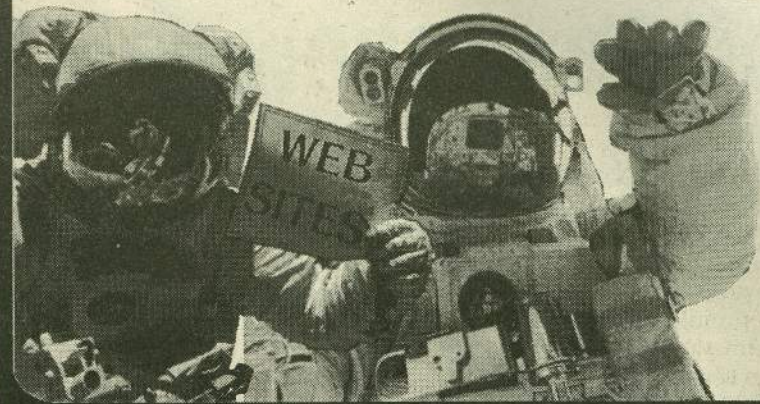
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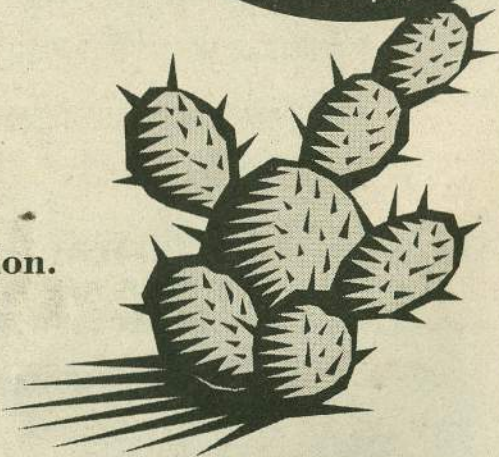
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Important Stuff

Night in Black Leather '98! WOW! For details, please turn to page 38!

On Sunday, March 22, The Texas Cowghurls will be performing at Nighthawks starting at 8:30 pm. "The Brides of March" benefits the Steven's House.

The 5th annual S&M Ball will be on March 28 at Club Chicago. This legendary party is sponsored by Dare-Ware and Houston People Exchanging Power. For ticket info, call 713-953-9393.



Stacy Holiday (2nd), Lindsey Love (Winner) Layla La Rue (1st) Miss Gay Houston at Rich's.

Viviana's Nite Club opens their doors this Friday, March 20. This soon to be hot night spot is offering up a huge buffet tonight as well as a really, really, really cheap beer bust! Viviana's is located at 5219 Washington (near TC Jester). For more info, call 713-862-0203.

JR's is having a super foolish April Fool's Day contest starting at 11 pm.

Metroplex has a all male revue on Tuesday nights, Check it out!

Robert DeCola has had to withdraw from the Mr. Prime Choice contest, his scheduled fundraiser at Mary's on Sunday, March 22 goes on a planned at 5 pm. A bunch of former Mr. Prime Choice sash wearers will be guest bartending starting at 2 pm.



Brain & Ray are in love.

Mary's, Glen K. (in Dallas), Charles formerly of Bachus II, Lloyd (formerly of PS), Val of Gentry, and Kimberly Short.

Rodent Droppings

I wanted to bring Rascal to Night in Black Leather, but I could not keep her little leather biker jacket on for more than 1 minute at a time!

My usual disclaimer is in force! Lies, gossip, and trash! If you want real news, please turn to page one and start reading there!

Billie Duncan (former HV Editor): And I quote: "No biting on stage!"

Jon and Raul: Seen any dark bathrooms lately?

Michael Jones (RSICSS): Now why would you drop such lovely hip pads in the toilet?



to work?" And would you love me more if I tipped better?

Tequila Rose (aka JT formerly of PS, now is Utah, and the biggest, sneakiest, secret keeping, dress wearing man I know): BITCH! BITCH! BITCH! Sneaking in to town, hiding back stage for 2 hours (and I almost went back there before the show) sending me a drink "from an old friend", and making me fall off a barstool when I heard your name called over the microphone! I'm glad I don't have a heart condition! It was great to see you.



Val & Vanna at Gentry.

Larry Arbo (Dallas handsome leatherman and fundrasier): I so enjoyed our Sunday night together! Let's get together again and do the "OJ" glove test!

Mario (BRB): Why does Jeff call you "Dumplin' Buns?" It there something Vera should know?

Vera (BRB): We understand the earth cooled and you were hatched!

Jim Roberts (Nighthawks): So, how do you inspect the first Mr. Nighthawks? A little Touchy Feeler inspection is what I heard?

Lulu (E/J's): Did you really eat the whole thing?

Ben (BRB): Why does JD always strip search your tricks at the top of the stairs... before they go into your apartment?

Kathy (Chances): Why do you like Cafe Noche so much?

Val (Gentry): Who have you been peeing on lately?

pm. A bunch of former Mr. Prime Choice sash wearers will be guest bartending starting at 2 pm.



Pooh Bear helps The BRB celebrate 20 years.

Club Triangle, the after hours hang out will be serving breakfast starting at 2 am. And remember, Club Triangle is BYOB.

The 8 week long talent search at E/J's starts all over again! Congrats to Shelby Ross on raking in \$500.

Belated Congrats to Dirk, the first Mr. Nighthawks!

Sunday, March 22 @ 9 pm, Mr. and Miss TGRA '99 candidates Jody Travis and Devon DeVasquez host "Reach Out... and Touch Someone," a benefit show for the Montrose Clinic Lesbian Outreach Program. See you at Chances!

The Mr. Texas Drummer Contest is on April 19 at Pacific Street!

The 1998 Slut Ball is at Brick's II on March 27 starting at 8 pm. This benefit show features Thumper Knight Leigh (her last Houston performance for a while 'cuz she is moving to Cal.) and guests. The attire is "Pigs in Wigs!" See you there!

Gentry welcomes back Barry (aka Vanna White Lee Love) Larson back to her station behind the bar. Vanna is there Monday thru Friday 2 to 8 pm.

Milestones

Hugs to Terry Flood (611 Hyde Park Pub) on the loss of your father.

Get well hugs to Lee of the BRB.

Happy birthdays to Rabbit of Rich's, Wilma of



At Darlene's retirement party.

Devon DeVasquez (Miss TGRA Candidate '99): Oh, like you have never seen my tits before?

Crystal Rae Lee Love (RSICSS): I have a message for you from Buddy Thompson and Maverick: "Remember, it is an Emperor Thing!"

Greg T (Pacific Street Softball Team): Work it out, bitch!

Jackie (the flower lady): Where are you? You fans miss you!

Black Velvett (DQ Deluxe): What goes tap, tap, tap, knock, knock, knock, BANG, BANG, BANG! You looking for a three-way?



Dennis celebrates the 611's anniversary.

Robert (Brick's II): Some one from the BRB sends you a message: "Thanks for your help last Saturday. I know you and I had the only shot we had that day."

Twister (BRB): Do they really have signs on the restroom walls at the warehouse saying "Employees must wash their hands before returning

tricks at the top of the stairs... before they go into your apartment?

Kathy (Chances): Why do you like Cafe Noche so much?

Val (Gentry): Who have you been peeing on lately?

Norm (Closet Ball Queen): Is it true that you once spent the night in jail with a preacher?

Marlene (Chances/New Barn): And I almost quote: "I don't F*** men, even if they do wear a dress!"

Don (Mr. Wonderful) Gill: I am so honored that you chose little ol' me to receive your highest award for Night in Black Leather. Thank you, Thank you, Thank you! And next time you tell me I need a haircut, I'll listen!

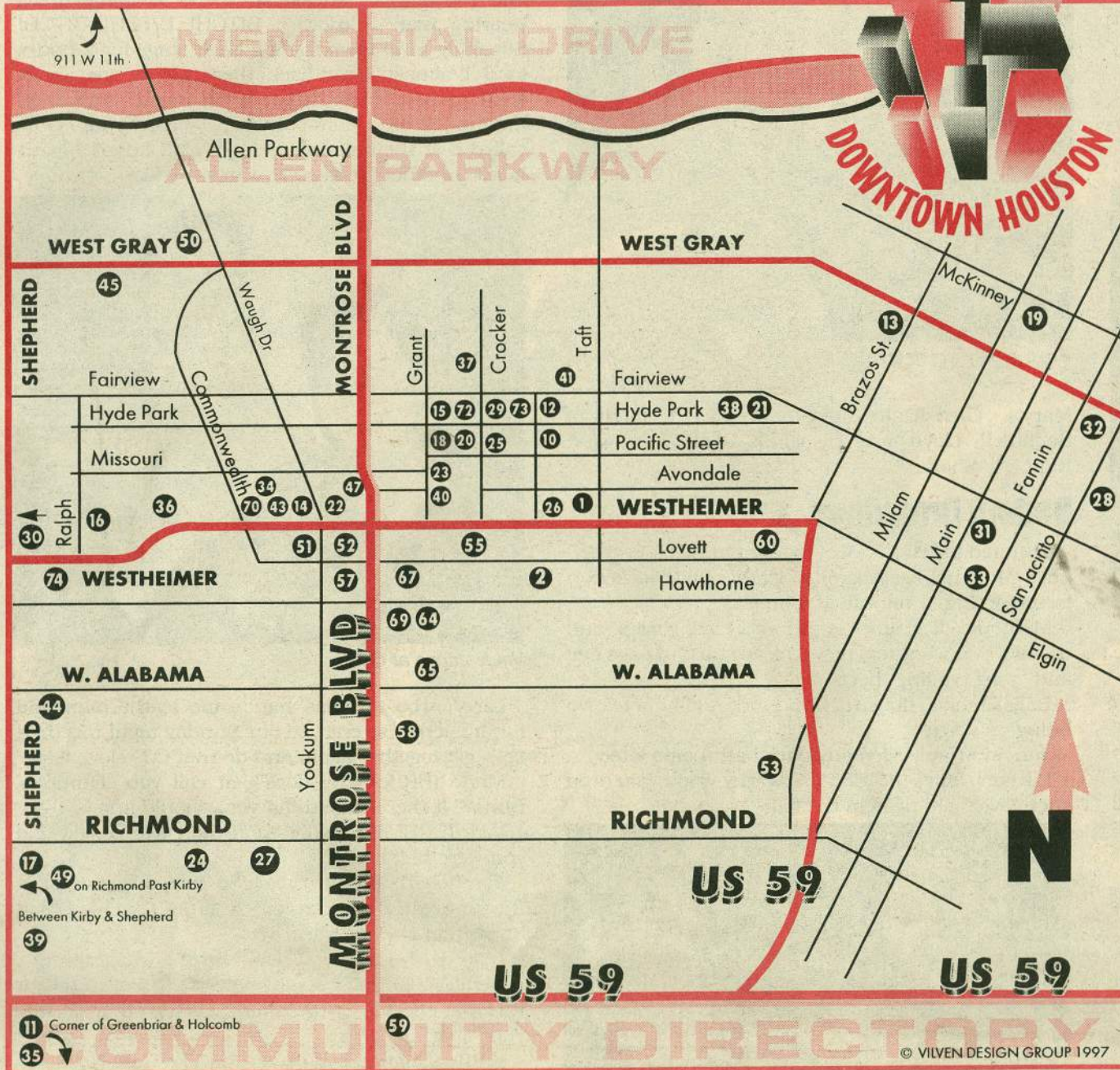
Keep sending in those "Pet of the Week" entries!



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Have a great week!

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- 41 Barnaby's Cafe 604 Fairview 713/522-0106
- 43 Charlie's Coffee Shop 1100 Westheimer 713/522-3332
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- 45 Mesa Grill 1971 W. Gray 713/520-8900
- 47 Riva's Italian Restaurant 1117 Missouri St. 713/529-3450

BUSINESSES & SERVICES

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- 51 Crossroads Market 1111 Westheimer 713/942-0147
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- 65 House of Coleman 901 W Alabama 713/523-2521
- 67 Walgreens 3317 Montrose 713/520-8000
- 69 STAT Script Pharmacy 3407 Montrose (A5) 713/522-7373

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Night In Black Leather





The wild crowd that turned out at Nighthawk's for last weekend's much-anticipated Night in Black Leather not only had a great time (see above), they managed to generate a whopping \$10,724 to benefit Steven's House.

The event, which was dedicated to the memory of Mike Geinzer, was kicked off Friday night with a deliciously large buffet, followed by a high-energy show by Carmen del Rio. Saturday's festivities included a full evening of titillating and often hilarious entertainment.

Steven's House Executive Director Jim Griffith said, "The Steven's House family is most appreciative of the generosity of all the supporters, entertainers and of the coordination and direction of Don Gill in providing Houston with the fourth annual Night in Black Leather. Thank you one and all."

(1) NIBL Organizer Don Gill, Jeff Alder, Regina Dane, and Lary Arbo; (2) Ken Claude finds Mickey in a very odd place; (3) Tequila Rose came all the way from Utah to perform; (4) The Houston Area Bears sing "The Leather Rose of Texas"; (5) JD from Dallas chomps on the Big Banana; (6) Miss Camp America camps it up!; (7) Empress XIV Jennifer Ellsworth rocks the house; (8) The Dallas Court provided truly tacky talent; (9) *Houston Voice's* own Carolyn Roberts receives the Producers Award; (10) Popcorn will never be the same; (11) The fabulous Carmen Del Rio and her boys; (12) Oh, my night in Black Leather! *Photos by Dalton DeHart*