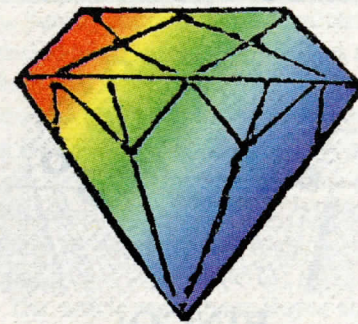


Montrose Gem

Issue # 132 • May 21, 2010
News and Entertainment Media
for Montrose and Beyond



Cristan Williams, the Director of the TG Center gives the facility its heart. Her personal story influences the work she does in the community and the services that are offered. Her dedication continues the work she started with the late Brenda Thomas and Josephine Tittsworth

The Home that the Community Built

By Deborah Moncrief Bell

Cristan Williams is a very personable young woman with a clean, fresh look, a beautiful smile and a sprinkle of freckles across the bridge of her nose and her cheeks. She is easy going with a quick laugh and you can see the passion in her eyes as she talks about the center she directs

Things were not always like this for Williams however. There was a time when she faced the deepest despair, thinking that her life had no hope. She was unemployed, homeless, using drugs and planned to commit suicide. She also was also not yet a 'she'.

I had come to interview Williams about the newly reopened TFA Transgender Center in Houston (TG Center), not realizing just how much her personal story would be the tale of a journey that had led her to a bungalow in the heart of Montrose that serves the Houston transgender population. In fact, it informs and inspires everything she does.

As she recounts her youth of growing up in the still Klan rich area of Pasadena, and life in the Alvin and Galveston area, touches of sadness flicker at times behind the smile. Williams lost a lot on her path to become herself. Married, with a child and a good job she was miserably unhappy. One source of her anguish was she was very 'manly' and could not fathom being able to transition into the woman she knew herself to be. She finally had to face facts and accept her truth. She lost her family and her job. in the process.

She had studied psychology and sociology a bit in college but had not completed a degree. She was attending nursing school at one point. She was able to get off the streets due to becoming a caretaker for her Mother who was dying from cancer.

But that despair remained and she did not know where to turn. Then one night she stumbled upon the *After Hours* program that airs on KPFT radio in the wee hours of Sunday morning. She heard trans-activist Sarah DePalma talk about being transgendered and about a group called the Texas Association for Transsexual Support (TATS).

Williams called and left a message but did not hear back from anyone. However that is when things got even darker. A few months went by and matters had deteriorated to the point she had written a suicide note and was actually in the act of preparing to take her own life.

Then the phone rang and it was a volunteer with TATS. Even though the volunteer was due to rise early for work the next day, they stayed on the phone until One O'clock in the morning. During the course of the call, Williams never mentioned that the call had actually interrupted her suicide, although she did share that information later.

Williams still has that note but it only serves as a reminder of what has been. After that call, she was on her way to recovery. That experience has lead her to a philosophy that is a good one to be embraced by everyone. She says, "When you go through something like that, it is your duty... *your job*, to reach out and be there for someone else, to help along the way".

The issue of homelessness is one of the biggest faced by the Transgendered population because the transition often results in loss of job or not being able to gain employment. The need for a Transgender Shelter was obvious and Williams did try to establish one in Galveston. However, with no idea of what she was doing and limited funds, the shelter could not be sustained.

Continued on Page 4



The Center houses the TG Archives, a collection of books, ephemera and art related to Transgenderism ~ Photo by Angela Hon

"Get Out! Of The Closet!" Is Getting Everybody Out!

Exclusive to the Montrose GEM



Natty Ice helps those struggling to get out of the closet

Talk about a panic at the disco! We've all heard those shout-outs on the dance floor: "Get it girl!" "Go on 'head!" and "Uh, uh, wait a minute!" You can now add "Natty Ice if you're nasty!" to that list.

A breakthrough send-up of reality television, *Get Out! Of The Closet!* follows host Natalie "Natty Ice" O'Sullivan as she crosses the country helping those struggling with their sexuality in a direct, no-nonsense, in-your-face fashion. She dishes out truth sticks – sticks made out of THE TRUTH – to each and every "closet case" that she meets, inspiring them to lead a brand new life full of rainbow flags and exciting opportunities. Natty emphasizes (through an intervention-style confrontation) that there's no reason to live your life full of shame, and more importantly, full of shame-rage. Each person that appears on the show is given carte blanche access to the life they could have, whether they want it or not.

Although the show is driven by the outrageous Natty Ice, narcoleptic Executive Producer Barry Gordon Lightfoot brings his own bag of crazy to this proverbial "parade". Regularly driven to drink by his unpredictable host, Mr. Lightfoot turns to his experience as a grief counselor to make it through the day.

See "Get Out" -- continued Pg.8

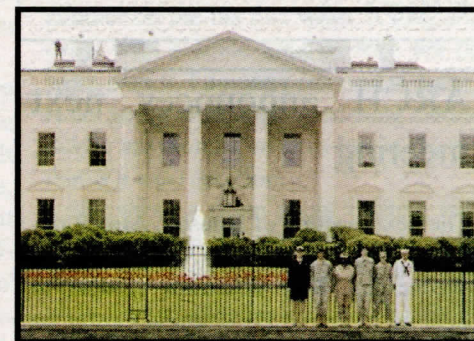


Mother of Montrose 2010
Jackie Danielle

"I love all the little children of Montrose"
More photos on Page 9



The Cast of *The Larimie Project*
See Page 2



We Remember our Service members and Veterans this Memorial Day as we continue to work to end 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell'
See Page 11



UNMASKED
a masquerade ball for all
The 18th Annual HATCH PROM
June 11 - GLBT Cultural Center,
401 Branard, First Floor
See Page 2



BINGO!

Fund-raiser for the GLBT Community Center

Mark your calendar for Saturday, June 5, and the return of Queer Bingo!

Re-branded First Saturday Queer Bingo, the regular bingo game and social event will be held by the Center on the first Saturday of the month. The new venue is the second-floor private room at the One's A Meal restaurant (815 Westheimer). The time has been moved to 4-6 p.m. to give all of the First Saturday Queer Bingo fans a chance to get their bingo on and still have time for their Saturday-night plans. Proceeds will support Center programming.

The Queer Bingo nights were extremely popular and one of the most successful fund-raisers held in the community. Theme nights, such as 'Brokeback Bingo' with western attire or 'Gay Superhero' with costumes made the evenings even more fun. Stay tuned for details.

Benefit art show and sale in June

The artist and gallerist Te-Jui Fu has announced plans to organize an art show and sale in June with proceeds benefiting the Center. The show will take place Friday, June 18, and Saturday, June 19, in Fu's gallery space in Galleria 3 adjacent to Macy's.

ARCH announces next meeting

The next meeting of Houston Area Rainbow Collective History (ARCH) will be Wednesday, May 26, from 6:30pm to 8:30pm in the GLBT Cultural Center on the first floor of the Montrose Counseling Center at 401 Branard, Houston TX 77006. As always, feel free to share this invitation with friends and others you feel may be interested in our collective work.

A more detailed agenda for this next meeting will be distributed shortly. Current items include preparations for Pride 2010, updates from members of the Houston ARCH consortium, and a report from the grant writing group.

ARCH is a consortium of organizations, institutions, and individuals collaborating to promote and enable the digital preservation and dissemination of Houston's LGBT history. Until then, feel free to browse our project wiki at:

<http://houstonarch.pbworks.com>

COMMUNITY NEWS

Make a difference in a teen's life!

The 2010 HATCH Prom

from Meleah Jones Community Projects Specialist, Montrose Counseling Center

On Friday, June 11, 2010, HATCH will hold its 18th annual prom. The HATCH prom is a safe, affirming alternative to local high school proms, which may not be welcoming environments for GLBT youth. In many ways, our GLBT communities have recently made huge strides towards acceptance and respect from mainstream society. One only has to turn on the television to see our communities' presence, and Houston is proud to boast the first openly gay/lesbian mayor of a major city in the U.S.

As far as we've come, there is still a long way to go. This became all too clear when a public school district in the Mississippi recently opted to cancel a high school prom rather than allow a female student to attend in a tuxedo with her girlfriend. Sadly, many HATCH participants report having experienced teasing, harassment, threats, intimidation, and physical violence from their peers because of their orientation and gender identity. To see the youth share some of their stories, please watch their video, Walk in My Shoes. Their experiences make the importance of GLBT-affirming activities like the HATCH Prom excruciatingly clear.

Join with HATCH as we work to empower our communities' youth to become positive contributors to society. For 23 years, HATCH has provided GLBT and Questioning youth, ages 13 - 20, with safe social environments, positive role models, and educational and community outreach opportunities. You can support these efforts by sponsoring the upcoming HATCH prom. For more information, www.montrosecounselingcenter.org. To become a sponsor, you may make an online donation with a note of "HATCH Prom Sponsorship".

If your high school prom experience was less-than-ideal, and you'd like to remake your prom memories, you are invited to attend the HATCH Prom. Adults may purchase tickets for \$25 by making an online donation with a note of "HATCH Prom Tickets."

Misfits Houston receive double international recognition

Local leather/levi social group, Misfits Houston, has been honored with two international awards for their work in the community.

On April 24, 2010, Misfits Houston received the Powerhouse Award from Cleveland Leather Awareness Weekend (CLAW) in recognition for their annual fundraiser, Misfits Ball and the impact it has had for local charities, on behalf of the leather community. CLAW is an international fundraising initiative that demonstrates the power

leather/levi organizations have on communities internationally (www.clawinfo.org). The Ball is the Misfits' flagship event that raises money for local charities and is in its twelfth year (scheduled for September 12, 2010).

On Sunday, May 2, 2010, Misfits Houston were honored by the National Leather Association-International with the President's Award for Brotherhood and Appreciation, during their Annual General Meeting in Oklahoma City, OK. "There are people and groups outside our (NLA) chapters that make sure this great leather world of ours work and function in smooth harmony," said Vince Andrews, President, NLA-I. "Many groups like the Misfits of Houston, whom I awarded, have shown great brotherhood ... we appreciate the honor they demonstrate to us."

The Misfits Houston is a social, not for profit, levi/leather club located in Houston, Texas. Established in 1992 they were established in an effort to create a leather/levi group that has fun, as well as raises funds for other charitable organizations in the community.

For more information please visit www.misfitshouston.org.

See Photo Page 10

THE LARAMIE PROJECT Opens on June 24

THE LARAMIE PROJECT - is based on interviews of the Laramie community after Matthew Shepard, a young, gay student at the University of Wyoming, was savagely beaten and left hanging on a fence to die. The interviews were conducted by the Tectonic Theater Company from NYC. When it first came out in 1998 it was the most produced play in America, both by regional theaters and at colleges and universities. It was also an international success, and made into a film, produced by HBO.

It will open on June 24th as part of Houston Pride 2010

Holocaust Museum Houston
5401 Caroline St.
Houston, Texas 77004

When: 8 Performances- June 24 & 26 (Thursday & Saturday (Pride Performances) then running July 10, 11, 15, 17, 22 and 24 (no performances on 4th of July weekend)

Curtain: Thursday evenings: 7:30PM,
Saturday evenings: 8:00PM,
Sunday Matinee: 6:00PM

Tickets: \$25, Seniors 62 & over and Students with ID \$20, Group Rates are also available.

ONLY 8 PERFORMANCES, LIMITED SEATING, RESERVE EARLY!
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Contact: Joe Watts 713-522-2204
Email: theatrenewwest@att.net
Website: theatrenewwest.com

Do you have a comment on a news item or story in the GEM or elsewhere? What do you like, not like, want more of? Have a story idea or someone you think we should interview? Let us hear from you at montrosegem@yahoo.com

Community Online

Community Center
www.hglbtcc.org

www.montrosecounselingcenter.org

www.legacycommunityhealth.org

GLBT Political Caucus
www.thecaucus.org

Out In Houston
www.outinhouston.com

www.PFLAGHouston.org

www.assisthers.org

Houston Political Organizing Network - <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HoP-ON>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/LoneStarActivists/> (LSA)

FEMINIST ONLINE NETWORK
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FEMNET>

Northwest Corner
<http://www.nwcorner.org>

www.socialnotesHouston.org

www.queermusicheritage.com

[HTTP://WWW.CENTERFORO-RAIDS.ORG](http://WWW.CENTERFORO-RAIDS.ORG)

Imperial Court of Houston
www.spacecityempire.org

Empire of the Royal Sovereign
Imperial Court of the Single Star
www.ersicss.org

TG CENTER
www.tgctr.org

Do you know of a group that should be featured here? Let us know at: montrosegem@yahoo.com

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"AFTER HOURS"

ON KPFT 90.1FM
Pacifica - community radio
HOUSTON, TX
www.kpft.org

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Editor-in-Chief

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Special Pride Month Issues

Our upcoming June 4th and June 19th issues will be specials for LGBT Pride month. We will feature all the activities we can of what is going on with the Pride Celebration and that other community activities. Remember, this is when you reach the most people with your advertising dollars. So don't delay, call today 713.523.2828 or contact via email at montrosegem@yahoo.com.

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BEELINES

by Deborah Moncrief Bell



Sometimes I wonder if we (the Queer Community) has become too mainstream. What? Isn't that what we want? To be just like everyone else, to be just another swatch in the fabric of American life? Well, yes and no.

First of all let me explain a few things to you. Some people may be offended by the words I sometimes use in talking about the people who makeup the LGBT community. Queer for example is a word that I embrace. It is simple and inclusive of the alphabet soup that includes anyone who considers themselves part of the community. Be they a gay male, a Lesbian, a cross-dresser, Bisexual, Transgendered, Ally or Questioning, be they leather/Levi, Butch/Femme, Top/Bottom, M2F or F2M or whatever identity that is the correct label for them. And they get to decide that label, so I try to be respectful of that. The power to name is a powerful thing and is part of the process of self-determination.

You may have noticed that I capitalized the word Lesbian and when I talk about Gays as a term meant to be inclusive, I will also capitalize. I was instrumental in having the word Lesbian added to Gay Pride so it became Gay and Lesbian Pride, and I voted for the Houston Gay Political Caucus to become the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus. Why? Because I believe and I think rightfully so, that when the term Gay was used, most people thought of gay men. When you say 'Lesbian' there is no doubt you are talking about a female although some women do prefer the term gay woman. My friend Bruce Reeves suggested that it was most proper to say gay and lesbian people (used as an adjective, no cap).

I like the word Dyke for myself. Contrary to what the majority of people think, dyke does not denote masculinity in anyway. It is a term for a strong, independent female, separate from role. Society tends to want us to be one thing or another and most often looks in terms of dicodomy. Like male/female, with no room for any other choice. Martine Rothblatt in her book *The Apartheid of Sex*, makes the case for there being more than just the two choices. Like sexual orientation, sex and gender have multiple possibilities. Now while I identify as a Lesbian, I certainly have a bisexual component as I think most people do (would if our society was not so difficult in wanting to pigeon-hole us into being part of a duality. I was married and have children. I find both men and women attractive. Do I want to be with a man? Can't say that I do, but if someone came along that appealed to me and who had shared values, and I loved the person, their genitalia won't matter. Right-wing gay attorney and writer Dale Carpenter insisted I could not be bisexual because he assumed that being bisexual meant being equally attracted to men and women and it does not, at least not for me. And yes, Virginia, bisexuality is a real sexual orientation.

So what was my point about becoming too mainstream? Well it all started when I noticed in the April 25th issue of *Parade* Magazine, a supplement that comes with

the Sunday paper. It had two articles that addressed queer issues. The first was an article about the very talented actor, Sean Hayes who played the flamboyant Jack McFarland on *Will & Grace*. Hayes has, after more than a decade, officially come out as a gay man. This comes as a surprise to no one. Hayes claims he was never 'in', saying, "I am who I am".

The article was about Hayes starring in the Broadway revival of *Promises, Promises* (playing a straight man) and his other projects as an actor. He earned an Emmy as playing a character who was a gay man risking being stereotyped, but his talent has shown him as capable in a variety of roles. So he played a character that was Gay. It's called acting.

But then *Parade* also reported in it's Intelligence Report the status of Gays throughout the word, providing its readership with the news that the developed world leads in gay rights.

Then *Gossip Girl*, an online blog of the Houston Chronicle reported on how Mayor Annise Parker's style changes through the years and how she has had to expand her wardrobe for the job. Speaking at a Girls, Inc. Houston luncheon where she received the Strong, Smart and Bold Award, she joked about how her wardrobe has come under such scrutiny that she has in fact hired a personal shopper. Nothing was mentioned about the Mayor being a Lesbian. This could be progress.

The mayor talked about being criticized as female politician. Hilary Clinton was slammed about her cleavage. "You know the question was it ever OK for a woman politician to show cleavage. "Well, I have no idea," the Mayor quipped.

Mayor Parker said she may have made the cover TIME magazine's recent 100 Most Influential People of the World (of whom she was one) if she had worn what Lady Gaga, another on the list had worn. A long slinky dress with a some kind of wire bra thing worn over it. I am very relieved to learn she is not going to wear her gardening clothes in public anymore. I've seen her in them and that is a wise decision.

She wrote a poem about running for office and about the criticism she often faces about her appearance (see Pg. 4). Most of us should look so good. Can you imagine such an article about Bob Lanier, Lee Brown or Bill White?

But if all these mainstream publications are going to cover Queers, where does that leave publications like this one? Well, just as with other things, no matter how accepted, how visible, how out we are, we are still a people, with a history and a culture. Do I think it is good that *Parade* Magazine is being more inclusive? That there can be an article that talks about Annise Parker without mentioning her sexual orientation? Of course I do. But that does not mean we can't have our own media as well or that there is not a need for it.

I for one don't want to assimilate. What I want is equality. I appreciate the queer sensibility, don't you? No one does funny better than we do, after all we have so much material. There is a unique perspective just as there is for people of ethnic groups and other cultures. Let's not lose that.

That's the buzz from me for now.

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136	7/16	7/12
137	7/30	7/26
138	8/13	8/9
139	8/27	8/23
140	9/10	9/6
141	9/24	9/20
142	10/8	10/4
143	10/22	10/18
144	11/5	11/1
146*	12/3	11/30
147*	12/17	12/13
148	12/31	12/27

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ADVERTISING RATES ON PAGE 6



This comfortable Montrose bungalow provides a home for social gatherings and other activities for the Transgendered community of Houston ~ Photo by Cristan Williams

Then something fortuitous happened for Williams. After her Mother's passing she happen to be checking the unclaimed property report that gets published every year and discovered that her Mother had a pension that had not been claimed, and as her heir, Williams received the money. That money provided housing and was invested in the transition process. That process involves therapy, electrolysis, hormones, and surgery (not all who identify as transgendered go through this process).

So how did the TG Center in Houston get started? One night Williams was in Montroe at the GLBT Community Center and ran into Brenda Thomas, another trans-activist. Brenda was trying to help a transgendered teen to find shelter since they were not accepted at the nearby Covenant House. Cristan thought that was ridiculous and got on the phone and tried to find housing for the teen. Much to her amazement, none was to be had. Transgendered identified individuals were not welcome at any of the homeless shelters or eligible for services from them in Houston. The reality that they often are not safe in such a facility is also an issue.

Williams started working the Houston Area Community Services (HACS) that provided resources serving the TG community and to assist those facing the plight of homelessness.

Along with Thomas and Josephine Tittsworth (now a social worker), the effort towards finding additional resources to address the needs of the community manifested itself in the idea that a center for the Transgendered community was needed. Like Williams, many of them faced issues beyond the basic needs of food, shelter and clothing, such as addiction.

This current center, at 604 Pacific St. is the fourth incarnation of such a center in Houston. Lost of funding or a property owner that decided to take the property back for other use caused the doors to be shut. There was difficulty in finding a location as well. The preferred idea was that the center would be part of the Houston GLBT Community Center but arrangements could not be made to accommodate that. Then there was the matter of finding a 'Trans-friendly' property owner that would lease to them. Then one day, driving down Pacific Street on her way to Baba Yega's, Williams saw a FOR LEASE sign in front of a house. The property owner was agreeable and the deal was made.

Moving day brought out over 50 volunteers from every facet of the community and the

move only took a few hours. Afterwards, everyone pitched in to clean up the yard and put things away. That is why Cristan refers to it as "the home that the community built."

Not to confuse anyone, because no housing is provided at the center itself but the homey atmosphere is conducive to a safe, friendly, non-institutional environment. Everyone who comes in can feel at home.

The center became a reality through HACS and through the Transgender Foundation of America (TFA) a Houston-based non-profit organization whose mission is advancing the quality of life for transgender people. The TG Center is in many ways a one stop shop for the transgendered, wherever they are in the process, including a support group for families. One has to only check the website to find an impressive list of groups and services that can accessed through the center with several support groups and access to therapist support, medical assistance as well as social services such as homelessness prevention, case management and HIV prevention services. TFA provides homeless services such as emergency shelter, clothing, transportation, food and permanent housing placement and removes barriers to mental health support through free group therapy, counseling and vetted referrals. Additionally, TFA supports community development through providing free meeting space to groups and by hosting regular events that strengthen ties within the GLBT community. Many other services are offered including comprehensive case management as well as free therapy, assistance with name changes and a staffed help-line

Probably the thing that Williams is most proud of is the archive the center houses. One can study and do research about famous and little known Transpeople throughout history. Williams proudly shows of the collection, often taking from her own merger salary to obtain additional pieces. Williams is a font of knowledge on Trans-history.

"It is important for our community to know and understand its heritage," shes states.

Williams hopes the center will develop and grow, to be able to provide an on site staff counselor and for herself to move on. Well, kind of. I asked if she planned to finish nursing school and she responded that she was more drawn to her original interest in psychology and social work. Considering what she has been able to do so far we can expect great things from this remarkable woman.

The website for the TG Center is: www.tgctr.org. The helpline phone number is 713.520.8586

Friday TG Social~Fri, June 4, 7pm

The Friday Night Transgender Social is a special, once-a-month event hosted by the Center for the Houston area transgender community, supporters, family members, friends, community providers and significant others. Each themed social consists of a dinner*, movie, games and/or presentation. Friday Socials take place on the 1st Friday night of each month from 7 to 11 PM. The dinner costs \$10 Those who are not able to afford the dinner can elect to help set up and clean up in exchange for the dinner. The Social is BYOB. Beer and wine are the only alcoholic beverages allowed at the social. Doors open at 6:30 PM.

"On the Run"

by Annise Parker (1997)

You give up: anonymity, autonomy, privacy.
To gain: authority, celebrity, a legacy?

Perfect strangers share imperfect thoughts...

"So, you're running for office?

Well, just be yourself

But...

You're too reserved, you need to loosen up!

Don't quip or speak irreverently - you'll offend someone.

Smile - you'd seem more approachable.

Don't smile so much, people won't think you're serious.

Don't cross your arms.

Don't speak with your hands.

Don't stand so stiffly.

Your handshake's much too firm.

A firm handshake signals confidence.

You stand too far away from folks.

You need to respect personal space.

You're too scripted.

You should be more spontaneous!

Think before you speak.

You should cut your hair.

Your hair's too short.

You're going gray - thought about a little color?

Highlights!

That suit's too dark, not feminine enough.

Stick with power suits.

Stick to pants.

No pants.

You wear your skirts too long.

Your skirt's too short.

Heels would make you taller.

A nun could wear those shoes.

A little makeup's all you need.

You should do your nails.

I hope your speech isn't too boring.

Oh, no. I'm not political at all.

...What was your name again?"

Take part in LGBT Online Survey and you might win!

Dear Readers,

We would like to invite you to take a new survey about your opinions and preferences, from an LGBT perspective. Paste the following into your browser:

<http://www.LGBTSurvey.com>

Everyone who completes the survey by June 30th will be entered into a drawing to win one of 20 Amazon \$25 gift credits, or the grand prize of a \$500 Visa gift card.

Participating in this study helps open minds and doors around the world, and influences positive changes for our community. You may have seen previous years' surveys quoted in the New York Times, USA Today, Wall Street Journal, etc. If you have friends who might be interested in this survey, please tell them about this.

People are dying to see this movie

The feature film debut of Joshua Grannell, ALL ABOUT EVIL stars Natasha Lyonne, Cassandra Peterson, Thomas Dekker, Mink Stole, and Noah Segan. An over-the-top black comedy set in the world of a horror movie, ALL ABOUT EVIL is a love letter to classic movie houses everywhere!

Here's the story of ALL ABOUT EVIL, a twisted black comedy set in the world of a classic old horror movie-- and a love letter to classic movie houses everywhere!

The evil begins when Deborah, a mousy librarian, inherits her father's beloved but failing old movie house, the Victoria. In order to save the family business, she discovers her inner serial killer-- and starts turning out a series of grisly short films.

Deborah quickly cultivates a rabid legion of San Franciscan gore fans who help catapult her to new-found local celebrity-- business booms so quickly, she's forced to bring on a full film crew of like-minded misfits to meet the demand!

Her adoring public, and even her biggest fan-- high school student Steven-- don't realize that the murders in the movies are all too real. But will this brooding youth catch the blame as Deborah's steady stream of 'actors' keep disappearing at an ever-quicken pace?

What grisly fate awaits those that dare enter the Victoria theatre? Find out in ALL ABOUT EVIL!

The Houston premier will be August 7th at the Landmark River Oaks.



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Two On The Aisle

by Bill O'Rourke

Being Civilized

Unhinged Productions' *Uncivil Unions* is playing through May 30 at Frenetic Theater. It's agitprop theater. It's approach is part Laramie Project, part Chorus Line and part good old rabble rousing Seventies multimedia barn storming street theater, but with its own quiet gravitas.

It's all about gay marriage and the arguments in favor of it. The company of players points out that this subject seems oddly a bit dated, even though the fight is still on. We haven't won it yet. Indeed, even preaching to the choir is acceptable. Sometimes we have to check that we are all singing the same tune. There are a lot of gay people who don't see this as their fight. The actors hope that those people will be dragged to the show by well meaning friends. So they present, very entertainingly, a whole lotta pertinent facts amidst a good show. In fact, this show is so good that I would be very pleased if the Pride Committee were to invite them to do a slightly trimmed and loudened version of it at the Festival.



The Chief's Son and the Two Spirited One
Patrick Green and Chris Rivera Steven

It's a large number of skits in a number of different styles. The next to best part of the evening is at the beginning of the second act, where they burst forth in energy (and some bull horns) and capture what it must have felt like to be at one of the Marches on Washington. The script for this segment is parts of speeches by Harvey Milk, Margaret Cho and Rev. Troy Perry, the founder of Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC) BTW, it isn't mentioned, but did you know that a lot of the credit for legal gay marriage in Canada goes to an MCC minister up there? Truth!

The absolute best part of the show is at the end of the first act. It's a fairly tenderly told love story. During the days before the Europeans came, many of the tribes had very holy and respected shamen who were physically men, but lived most of their lives as women. They married men who loved them and felt honored to be their mates. In this particular tribe, they were referred to as Two Spirits and hunted with the warriors as well as gathering with the women. A chiefs son falls in love with one, but is frightened by how much he loves him. To make their point, the cast mentions before and after the story that this kind of thing was ruined by the Europeans. I cried throughout the story and for a few minutes afterwards. I would love to see this story developed into an entire play, without that point, so our romantic feelings would be freer. It would be very uplifting.

The play also has scenes where, like The Laramie Project, the company interviewed members of our local community and used their words. These interviews are contrasted

by doing two at a time on stage. One of the interviews was with a transperson, who wanted to make sure she stayed as anonymous as the rest of the interviewees, though her story sounds very familiar. It was good to see transpeople included. However, they missed a beat when they didn't include bisexuals as well.

There are times when the actors are telling their own stories – what they did for love.

The whole company, director and actors, collaborated on the script. And there wasn't a weak link here. So, since I am running out of space, I'll salute the collectivity – Director Joe Angel Babb, Onstage Talent Patrick Green, Todd Greenfield, Karen J. Imas, Tamekia Jackson, Taavi Mark, Jay Mays, Stephanie Morris, and Chris Rivera.

www.ComeUnhinged.com for tickets

Frenetic Theater 5102 Navigation Blvd.
77001 (down the street from the original *Ninfa's*)

Openings:

Romantic Comedy, The Strand Theater,
Galveston, (just opened - closes June 5)

Designated Mourner, Catastrophic Theater,
(just opened – closes June 5)

Intelligence Slave, Alley Theater, (May 23
– June 20)

5 Things You Can Do TODAY to Help Pass ENDA

Many of you have been working for years to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (H.R. 3017). This is important legislation that will make it illegal to discriminate against our loved ones because of their sexual orientation or gender identity in employment.

Please take the time RIGHT NOW to do the following five simple things:

1. *CALL -* You can find your representative's phone number by checking out our *Action Center* <<http://capwiz.com/pflag/utr/1/ISZRMNSJMS/IQUIMNSQTR/5209364181>>. Once you have the number, call and say, "As a constituent and member of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays - PFLAG - I am calling to ask the representative to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act now." Remember to be polite, but firm.
2. *E-MAIL -* Access our e-mail action center <<http://capwiz.com/pflag/utr/1/ISZRMNSJMS/IXPLMNSQTS/5209364181>>. Simply fill out your name and address and an e-mail will automatically be sent to your representatives.
3. *SHARE -* Forward this action alert to your friends and family. The more responses congress receives the better.
4. *CHANGE -* Use social media to spread the word. Change your Facebook status to say /PASS ENDA NOW! /For those of you on Twitter, tweet about passing ENDA today.
5. *REPEAT -* Even if you have called and e-mailed before, do it again!

PFLAG joined leaders in Washington, D.C. May 18th to demand that Congress vote on ENDA immediately - help support PFLAG's efforts with your voices from the field by taking action right now.

Off The Charts

Reviewed by Jone Devlin

Greg Bounder is several months away from graduating college, and, like most kids his age, he doesn't really have any idea what he wants to do with his life. He does, however, know exactly what he DOESN'T want to do with his life; and that is go into his father's business. Unfortunately this is the very thing his parents expect of him.

But Greg also has another "problem". He has recently come into possession of a half million dollar trust fund and, while he's happy about the money, he also wants to use it to launch whatever career it is he does decide on – whatever that career might be.

One night Greg and his friends to go play pool at a local dive in Scranton. The bar is pretty much nothing special, but at one point, Greg notices that a woman sitting at the bar is Sally Testata. Sally, he explains to his friends, was a huge deal back in the day, a gay dance hall diva whose biggest hit, "Bombs Away" came out just a little too close to 9/11 for the listening audiences comfort. The resulting furor not only pulled the record off the charts, but shut Sally's blossoming career down as well.

After talking with Sally, Greg decides that staging a comeback for this old time diva is exactly what he wants to do with his life (and trust fund). At first Sally is just amused, but after seeing Greg's enthusiasm (and realizing that he's not lying about his money) she gets onboard, and Greg's adventure begins. And what an adventure it is!

It doesn't take long before Greg's wide-eyed enthusiasm is shattered. First, there's the problem of breaking into the music business itself. Greg's money (along with his gay DJ brother Marcus) is able to open some doors, but there still has to be a saleable product, marketing, promotion and the ability to deal with all the pitfalls that can happen to a newbie. Then too there's the fact that the outlay is a lot more than the inlay. In fact, it doesn't take Greg long to learn that there's a very real chance that his money will be gone way before Sally hits again – if she ever does.

Then there is his client. Sally Testata is a tough, unpredictable woman with her own agenda and lots of strong opinions about her career and how it should go. She also has plenty of unresolved issues around her former career and the music business; not to mention her chemical dependency. Trying to rein Sally in, in fact, could very well turn out to be Greg's biggest challenge of all.

Told from the perspective of college student turned music mogul wannabe Greg Bounder, "Off the Charts" is a romping, rollicking ride from start to finish. Hall, who just happens to have his own career as a singer/songwriter, gives us a practical, no holds barred, and utterly hilarious look into the music business as well as the individuals that inhabit it, warts and all.

Hall has also created some absolutely amazing characters. From Greg to Sally to the Scranton bar patrons and the members of Greg's dysfunctional family, there simply are no one dimensional people here. Meanwhile, the author's evocations of New York's gay club scene, including a wild romp on Fire Island, will have you rolling in the aisles just begging for more.

Fast-paced, action packed, and can't put it down entertaining from start to finish; Kevin Scott Hall's "Off the Charts" is the perfect way to kick off the 2010 gay pride pre-season.

Off the Charts by Kevin Scott Hall is published by iUniverse and is available wherever books are sold. Rating: 5 Out of 5 stars.

Lady Sovereign Comes Out: "You Can't Hide Away Forever"

by AKA William

A week after Chely Wright officially came out, another female musician has taken the same step. For a while now, there's been all kinds of chattin' about whether Lady Sovereign is straight, bisexual, lesbian . . . but in a new interview with DIVA magazine, the Lady confirms she is a Lesbian:

"Magazines would always ask about it but [questions about my sexuality] would get stopped by my publicists. It was my choice, too, because I was a bit worried about it but now I don't really give a shit. You can't hide away forever. It's just stupid and now I've come out I feel a lot more comfortable with myself."

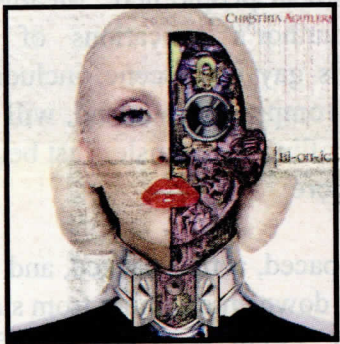


GROOVELINES

by DJ Chris Allen

Howdy disco citizens! It's time for your bi-weekly dose of Groovelines – your source for what's hot and hip in the land of electronic dance music and beyond.

Over at iTunes, and hot for digital download, is the sizzling hot new music video for Christina Aguilera's smash hit Not Myself Tonight. N.M.T. is from Christina's upcoming brand new full-length album, *Bionic*, due out June 8th. *Bionic* features songs co-written by Aguilera along with her much buzzed about collaborations including Sia, Tricky Stewart, Polow Da Don, Le Tigre, Hill & Switch, and Ladytron among others. Aguilera notes, "Working on this album with so many talented artists and producers that I admire was really an amazing experience. The artists I chose to work with added so many unique sonic layers to *Bionic*. My intention was to step into their world and what they do combined with my own vision and sound. The results were magic."



The title *Bionic* reflects Aguilera's ability to take her range to new levels and use her voice in various ways never heard before. Aguilera describes the album as a unique mix of many genres and styles of music, "I was able to explore and create a fresh, sexy feel using both electronic and organic elements with subject matter ranging from playful to introspective. I am so excited for my fans to hear the new sound. It is something I don't think anyone will expect." Once again, th'Garket is flooded with electronic dance music. Learn more about the diva Christina Aguilera, the new album and the steaming hot new video online at www.christinaaguilera.com.

A few other great new dance based top 40 music videos available for download on iTunes include *OMG* by Usher featuring will.i.am, *Eenie Meenie* from Sean Kingston & Justin Bieber, *Break Your Heart* from Taio Cruz & Ludacris, *Outta Your Mind* from Lil Jon & LMFAO, and the clip of Lady Gaga's recent performance on American Idol of her hits *Bad Romance* and *Alejandro*.

Ya gotta take a good listen to *Freak* - the latest single from Estelle. This slamming new club track, produced by David Guetta, also features Kardinal Offishall on vocals. Estelle is no stranger to our dance floors by any means. Best known for her hit *Ameri-*

can Boy, Estelle also did vocals for the David Guetta floor filler *One Love*. Debuted in 2004 with her album *The 18th Day*, this British babe has racked up a collection of esteemed awards from the likes of BET, MOBO, UMA, WMA, the BRIT Awards, and she even won a Grammy in 2009. Estelle's new single *Freak* features remixes from Riva Starr, Michael Woods, and Plastik Funk. *Freak's* catchiest hook is taken from the Soul II Soul classic *Back To Life*. But it has definitely been changed up a bit. Very fun track! Learn more about Estelle, her new single *Freak*, and more online at www.estellemusic.com.

Also diggin' the good vibes and kick ass grooves being offered up on iTunes from 5 A.M. (A Girl Like You) by Tommie Sunshine – the Bart B More Remix, *Shining Liberation* from the Kindred Spirits Ensemble – the vocal mix, Major Tome (*Coming Home*) by Shiny Toy Guns – the Adam K & Soha Club Edit, *Look Me In the Eye* Sister from Groove Armada – the Urchins Remix, the full-length *We Love Machine* – The Remixes from Way Out West featuring the tracks *Surrender*, *One Bright Night*, and *Body Motion*, *Maltido Alcohol* from Pitbull featuring Afrojack, *California Gurls* by Katy Perry featuring Snoop Dog, *My First Kiss* from 3OH!3 featuring Ke\$ha, *I Like It* by Enrique Iglesias featuring Pitbull, *Getting Over You* from David Guetta featuring Fergie and LMFAO, *Firefly* by Paul Oakenfold featuring Matt Goss – the Robert Vadney Remix, *Fantasy* from Nadia Ali – the EDX Remix, *Swoon* by The Chemical Brothers, *Xxoo* from M.I.A., *Bad Love* by Booka Shade – the Extended Vocal Club Mix, *Somewhere In Brooklyn* from Bruno Mars, *I Want A Little Doggie* by the late Lena Horne – the Sister Chiller Mix, and *Bulletproof* by La Roux – the Fred Falke Remix. Great stuff. You'll find those floor fillers and more online at iTunes.

Be sure to also check out the new Kylie track – *All The Lovers* – at www.kylie.com. This fab newbie is taken from the diva's forthcoming album *Aphrodite* – due out this summer. If the remixes are on, *All The Lovers* is sure to not only be a huge hit for Kylie, but a classic as well. LUV IT!

You can hear me play these mentioned hits and more weekly at Meteor & JR's in Houston and at Halo in Bryan/College Station. Be sure to tune into Hypersonic Radio every Saturday night at 10 pm to catch Groovelines Aloud on 101X in Austin. Stream it live from the web at hypersonicroadio.com or from your iPhone using the free 101X app. For info on all upcoming DJ C.A. events and happenings head over to djchrisallen.com. Stalk my every move at twitter.com/groovelines, MySpace.com/djchrisallen, and facebook.com/djchrisallenofficial. And finally, always feel free to e-mail me directly at djca.groovelines@yahoo.com.

Deep in the heart of Texas, that is the Groovelines for now. You know the golden rule boys and girls - play it loud and disturb the neighbors! The scene can only grow and thrive if we participate in it folks. It exists because we make it so. Be active, support your local talent. Buy, don't share.

Remember, life might not always be the party you had hoped for, but while you're here you might as well dance.

OUR ADVERTISING RATES

Color Ads:
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Half-Page \$200
Quarter Page \$150

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Marketplace Ads

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The GEM supports the community by offering a 20% discount to non-profits and to advertisers who include a fund-raising event in their advertisement.



Photos by Angela Hon

RIGHT: Dena Page models the *So You think you can drag?* HOUSTON crown at top right, Marilyn struts her stuff Le Jazz Hot, and yes that really is Whitney Houston. The "All That Drag" sneak preview show was at Michael's Outpost on May 15th. The crown will be awarded June 19th to the winner of the contest. See details below. Open to all performers and to help benefit Houston area charities. Can you drag? go to Pg. 8

Get Ready folks 'cause here we come...'

A talent competition and pageant designed with fund-raising in mind.



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think you
can drag?
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If you can't get a screening during our June 5 Fair, come to the Fair and get free
 certificates for well-woman exams at Legacy or mammograms at the Rose

Special Instructions:
 For most accurate blood tests, do not eat before blood testing
 (Diabetics: Use common sense regarding eating)

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 Thursday, May 27th at 10PM
 Thursday, June 3rd at 10PM
 Thursday, June 10th at 10PM
 Thursday, June 17th at 10PM

PRIDE IDOL FINALE
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 • Cash prize provided by Pride Idol
 • Performance at Houston Pride Festival
 • Entry in Houston Pride Parade
 • Performance w/Gay Men's Chorus at "Out in the Park" during Astros game at Minute Maid Park
 • National Anthem performance at Sam Houston Race Park
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Gay Catholics Call for 'Zero Tolerance' of Homophobia in the Catholic Church

PRNewswire/ The following is being released by the Rainbow Sash Movement:

The Rainbow Sash Movement (Gay Catholics) will enter Catholic Cathedrals nationally and internationally on Pentecost Sunday, May 23, 2010 wearing Rainbow Sashes. The purpose for our Pentecost Sunday presence is to give voice to the voiceless in our Church.

There is something bipolar about a Church that will not give members of the Rainbow Sash Movement communion because they self identify as gay publicly, while at the same time elevating men to the office of Pope, Cardinal, Archbishop, or Bishop who placed the reputation of the Catholic Church ahead of needs of innocent children who were sexually victimized by both predator priests and Bishops. The only word that comes to mind to describe such a dichotomy, in charity, is hypocrite.

Gay Catholics should not be divorced from public self-identification because of sexual orientation. Unfortunately the currency of hierarchical pronouncements is locked in male chauvinistic culture of clericalism. Such statements are based on homophobias that are so out of touch that it bars the use of condoms even to curb AIDS, and encourages Papal attacks on gay and lesbian families.

As to why we wear the Rainbow Sash; we can no longer sit idly by while homophobia takes over the heart and soul of our Church. No longer satisfied with discriminating against LGBT Catholics, the Bishops are now going after our children in Catholic schools. Discrimination against the children of gay parents because of their parents' sexual orientation is wrong, and only highlights how dysfunctional the current position of the Church has become.

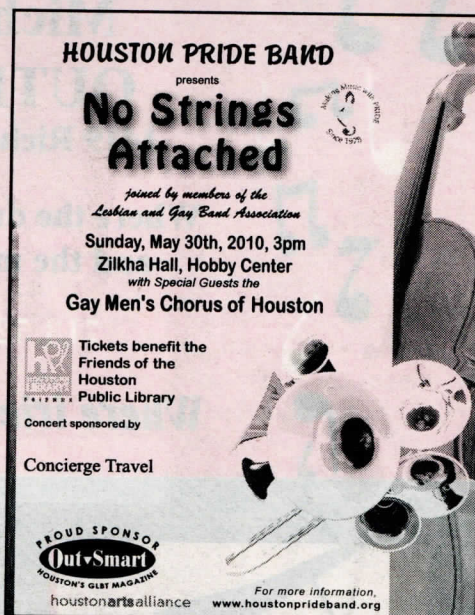
We are not "flaunting" sexuality when we wear the Rainbow Sash. Simply put, if you are not seen, it is unlikely that your voice is recognized as significant enough to be given attention; if you cannot be heard, you cannot combat the prejudice you face, and no one can hear you cry out when you are the victim of injustice, when you suffer intimidation, or worship under institutionalized homophobia.

The love it or leave it mentality is not an option for us. On the contrary the Gospel challenge of love calls us to challenge exclusion with inclusion. In doing so, we follow in the spirit of the early Christians who challenged the exclusion of the uncircumcised.

That is why we will directly challenge Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, current president of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops in Holy Name Cathedral at the 11 AM Mass on Pentecost Sunday, May 23,

2010, along with other Bishops nationally and internationally to highlight their homophobia.

Participation does not require membership in the Rainbow Sash Movement. To find out how join or support the Rainbow Sash Movement please visit our website at www.rainbowsashmovement.com, or email us at contact@rainbowsashmovement.com.



Houston Pride Band No Strings Attached

For their 2009-2010 season finale concert entitled "No Strings Attached," the Houston Pride Band returns to the Hobby Center to explore the limitless possibilities of orchestral music when transcribed for the wind band medium. The concert will include daring and demanding pieces such as "Festive Overture" by Dmitri Shostakovich and the Houston premiere of Chiapruck Mekara's "Kheak Choen Joaw Fantasy."

In addition, members of the Lesbian and Gay Band Association (LGBA) from around the country will join the Houston Pride Band en masse for this special concert and, together, they will welcome special guests the Gay Men's Chorus of Houston (GMCH) in a stirring performance of Franz Biebl's "Ave Maria."

In keeping with their rededication efforts towards helping the community, Houston Pride Band will donate ticket proceeds from this concert to the Friends of the Houston Public Library. To find out more about the Friends of the Houston Public Library, visit their website at <http://www.friendsofhpl.org/>.

The concert will be held in Zilkha Hall at the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts (Downtown Houston) on Sunday, May 30, 2010, at 3:00 PM. Tickets are available at the Hobby Center box office and online at <http://www.thehobbycenter.org/>.

The Houston Pride Band serves as a band in Houston's GLBT community and performs at various events throughout the year as well as concerts and parades. The Houston Pride Band is open to all brass, woodwind, and percussion players and welcomes musicians of all skill levels.

<http://www.houstonprideband.org/>

"Get Out" Continued from front page

The first episode's candidate Brian, was submitted by his own mother, a full time Stevie Nicks fan who helps the show abduct him from the night shift at his video store and drag him to a gay bar where he's taught the meaning of S.A.C.A.A.S.R. This imminently quotable show is definitely worth a watch, if for no other reason than to get to the bottom of this overly complex acronym.



Shot almost entirely on location in Houston, "Get Out! Of The Closet!" is the creation of local writer/director Travis Johns and the team at Zenfilm, a local production company, (<http://www.zenfilm.com>).

"We felt like reality TV as a genre has really gone as far as it can go, so the only thing left to do was to satirize it," said Johns in a recent interview with the Montrose Gem.

Johns added, "It's like, okay, here's the formula: What is the most patently absurd ordeal we could possibly put people through legally? Who are the most mentally unstable people we could find to do it? And what's the cheapest way to shoot it?"

"With 'Get Out!' we wanted to explore the insanity of all of that, and the lengths to which people will go for fame and entertainment. At the same time we wanted to remind people that Houston has a tremendous amount of local talent and resources," Johns continued.

Episode one is currently available free online at <http://www.getoutofthecloset.tv>, on Vimeo, YouTube, and is also available for free download at the iTunes store. Episode 2, "Brother & Sisters", will be released on Friday, May 28th, just in time for the Memorial Day weekend. Local viewing parties will be announced on the "Get Out! Of The Closet!" fan page on Facebook.

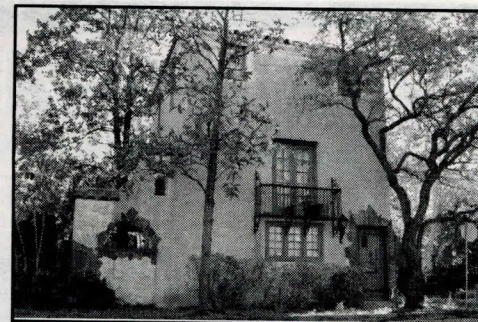


Photo & comments by Virgil C. Robinson

MONTROSE - Clark Gable rented this John F. Staub designed house while taking acting lessons in Houston before making it big in Hollywood. Staub was an architect who defined domestic architecture in the Houston and nearby area. He designed homes from the early 1920's up until the middle of the 20th Century. His style is still influencing regional historic and new building designs.. There are dozens of Staub homes in Montrose. He had a big part in the development of River Oaks. His style worked well here in Houston. He worked in brick, stucco, used arched windows as well as doors, designed in lots of overhangs. Staub blended Victorian, the Prairie Style and Spanish, Italian Mediterranean architecture that blended well with the flat plains of the Gulf Coast but a lot of his homes can be found resting on hills and gullies along the bayous too. Some of his more notable and lasting legacies are Bayou Bend and buildings on the campus and the entrance of Rice University.

So You Think You Can Drag? Houston

Saturday June 12th and June 19th at Michael's Outpost, 1419 Richmond Ave. A special opportunity to come together in community and in fun.

This talent competition and pageant is designed with fund-raising in mind, is produced by "My Party for Life". The winner of the contest can designate proceeds to the charity of their choice.

For information on this event or how you can become a contestant (open to Drag Queens and Drag Kings) go to the website and enter today. Or call 832-537-6589 www.soyouthinkyoucandraghouston.com

Reserved tables at each of the events go for \$100.00 each, so tell all your friends, call to reserve your seat now, before they're all gone.

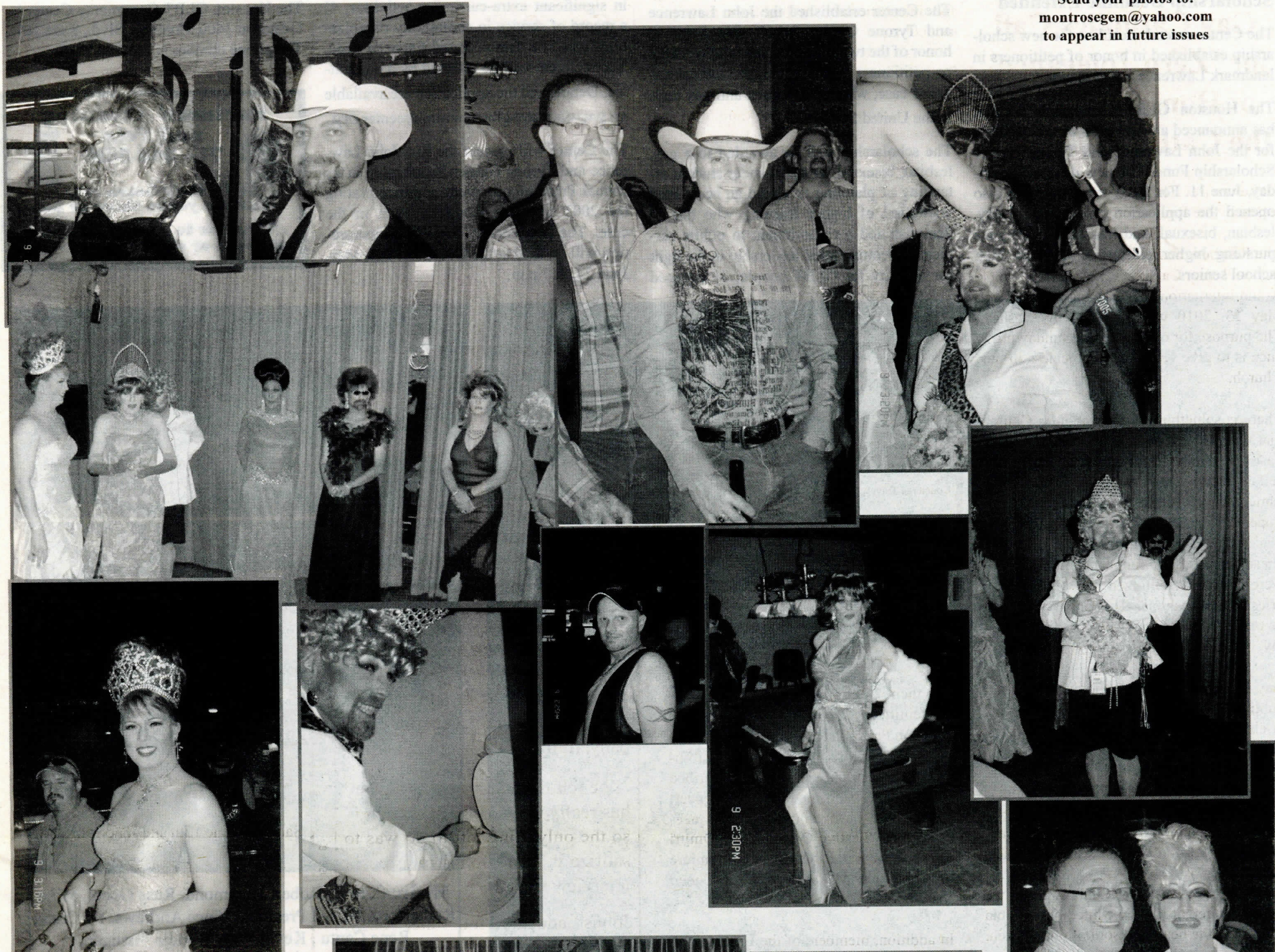
We look forward to seeing you there, Dahling!

CORRECTION

RE: Queers in the Comics, in our last issue (#131) The last sentence got cut off while realigning the layout design, It should have read:

In 2006, DC revealed in its *Manhunter* title that longtime character Obsidian was Gay. And Continued on Page 4

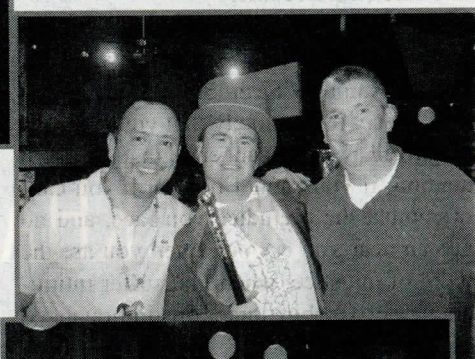
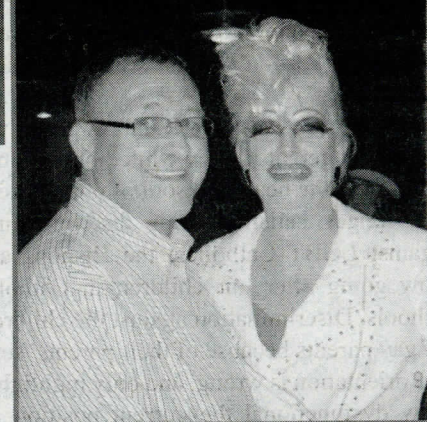
Send your photos to:
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 to appear in future issues



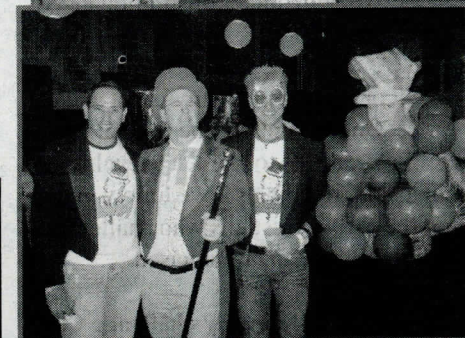
Great fun was had by all as the new Mother of Montrose (Jackie Danielle) was crowned at **Michael's Outpost** on May 9th. Produced by Don Gill and directed by Eric Stutes. The same team will present The Daddy of Montroe contest on Father's Day, June 20.

Performers included Crystal Ray Lee Love, M.J. Sommers, and Chanele Cartier. Eric Stutes and the very coy Ginger Vitis were the announcers.

Photos: by Randy Hatcher and Christopher Prado



Soiree Pelouse-Wonka was a huge success with honorary cohost, Bryan Hlavinka (along with Tammi Wallace) playing the Candyman himself hosting Oompa Loompas and other strange folks. ~ Photos from Bryan Hlavinka



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The beneficiaries of the Soiree were AssistHers, The Houston Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered Community Center and Legacy Community Health Services.

Scholarship Deadline Extended

The Center extends deadline for new scholarship established in honor of petitioners in landmark Lawrence v. Texas case

The Houston GLBT Community Center, has announced an extension of the deadline for the John Lawrence and Tyrone Garner Scholarship Fund. The new deadline is Friday, June 11. For 2010, the Center has also opened the application process to all gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students pursuing higher education, not just high school seniors.

The Center established the John Lawrence and Tyrone Garner Scholarship Fund in honor of the two Houston men who were the co-petitioners in the landmark Lawrence v. Texas case, which overturned anti-gay laws in the United States.

The scholarship will be awarded to a gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender student attending or planning to attend an accredited institution of higher learning who has 1) demonstrated a commitment to public service; 2) demonstrated leadership in the fight for equality for GLBT people; 3) engaged

in significant extra-curricular activities; 4) a record of service in community organizations and 5) a demonstrated financial need. The recipient will be selected by a committee. Details and the application are available at: www.houstonglbtcommunitycenter.org.

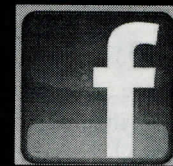
The Center will present the first John Lawrence and Tyrone Garner Scholarship at its annual Pride month event commemorating the 2003 Supreme Court decision in the case. The Lawrence v. Texas Commemoration will be held at the Center on Thursday, June 24, at 7 p.m.

The Houston GLBT Community Center is located at 3400 Montrose Blvd., Suite 207. The phone number is 713.524.3818.

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It is the GEM Community Online!



Misfits: (L to R) Robert Hammond, Russ Gobel, Mike Rutherford, NLA-I President Vince Andrews, Ed Crain, Rene Cantu, Kevin Way, Woodja Flanigan.

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DADDY OF MONTROSE 2010 CONTEST

Sunday
June 20, 2010
5:00 PM

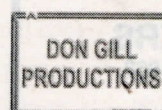


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Directed By:
Daddy Eric Stutes
DOM 2009/2010

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20 Years Of
Serving The
Houston GLBT
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Cooking Capers with Dr. Dave

My good friend, Vi, a man who grew up in Vietnam, shared with me his mom's recipe for hot and sour soup. Vi has told me numerous stories about growing up in Vietnam including how his dad would lift and run a rickshaw transporting people around town. He said he can remember that on special days, his mom would make hot and sour soup for his dad after a long day's work. His dad ate first, and when he finished, Vi, his brother and two sisters would eat. Well honey, that hot and sour soup for all those years must have done something for Vi's love life because now all the queens who know him say that Vi's favorite soup not only matches his personality, but his "manhood"—whatever that means! I hope you enjoy this soup as much as Vi and I do.

* These items are readily available in any Asian market.

HOT AND SOUR SOUP

8 cups chicken broth
3/4 pound of lean pork, sliced into small, thin strips
* 2 dried black mushrooms, soaked and shredded
3 slices of peeled fresh ginger, each about the size of a quarter
* 3 dried wood ear, soaked and shredded
1/2 square of bean curd (about 1/4th. pound) cut into 1/4th. X 1/4th. X 2 inch cubes
1/4th. cup shredded bamboo shoots
6 medium-size button mushrooms, thinly sliced
1 slice deli ham, shredded
1/2 cup white vinegar
1 teaspoon white pepper
3/4ths. teaspoon salt
* 1 teaspoon sesame oil
3/4ths. teaspoon sugar
* 1 tablespoon dark soy sauce
* 1 teaspoon chili oil
2 eggs, lightly beaten
4 tablespoons cornstarch blended in 3 tablespoons water
1 green onion, diced

Bring chicken broth to a boil in a large pot and add shredded pork, black mushrooms, ginger and wood ears. Cook for 3 minutes and discard ginger. Add remaining ingredients, except the cornstarch, eggs, and green onion. Reduce heat and simmer 2 minutes. Add cornstarch to water and whisk until smooth. Pour into the pot and cook until the soup is thickened and translucent. Remove soup from the heat and slowly stir in the beaten eggs and cook until the eggs are coagulated. Garnish with green onion.

BAKED SNAPPER

Another Vietnamese dish Vi introduced me to is baked snapper. Unlike the snapper you can order in any American restaurant, or grill or bake at home, this fish has an Indonesian twist to it. The seasonings are a wonderful pungent surprise from the typical white wine or butter sauces so often served. Again, as my Jewish grandmother would say, "Try it; you'll like it!"

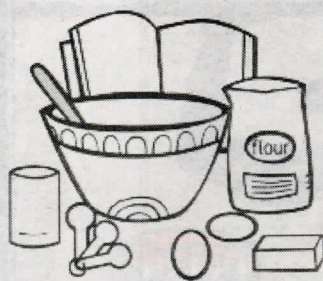


Little did she know I did that with men, but you know what, she was right! I liked it! I hope you enjoy this dish as well.

1 3 to 4 pound snapper (be sure the eyes are clear and there is no "fishy" odor)
1 medium onion, peeled and chopped
2 cloves of garlic, peeled
1 teaspoon fresh ginger, finely chopped
* 2 tablespoons tamarind liquid
* 1 tablespoon dark soy sauce
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
1 teaspoon salt
* 1 teaspoon ground tumeric
* 3 tablespoons fresh coriander leaves, finely chopped
* banana leaves (or foil) for wrapping

Wash the fish in cold water and pat dry with paper towels. Score the fish diagonally one each side. Use a blender or food processor to mix the onion, garlic, ginger, tamarind liquid, soy sauce, oil, salt, and tumeric. When blended smooth, rub the mixture into the body of the fish on both sides. Rub the remaining mixture into the body cavity for extra flavor. Lay the fish on banana leaves in a baking dish and sprinkle with coriander. Fold the leaves to cover the fish and secure them with skewers. Bake at 375 degrees for 35 to 40 minutes or until the fish flakes when tested with a fork. Reseal the fish after testing and serve closed. When opened, the fish will have a delightful fragrance.

Until the next issue, smile and enjoy life!



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Stories From The Frontlines: Former Sgt. Shonda Garrison – "I Was A Hard Charging Soldier"

by AKA William

"Stories from the Frontlines: Letters to President Barack Obama" is a media campaign launched to underscore the urgent need for congressional action and presidential leadership at this critical point in the fight to repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT).

Every weekday morning, as we approach the markup of the Defense Authorization bill in the Senate and House Armed Services Committees, AKA William and other participating blogs will post a letter from a servicemember discharged under Don't Ask Don't Tell. Today's letter comes from Former Sgt. Shonda Garrison, who writes, "There are days when it is hard for me not to walk into the nearest recruiting station and sign back up."

May 17, 2010

President Barack H. Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I am a proud Army veteran of the first Gulf War. You won't find anyone who loves this country more. I get chills and teary eyes every time I hear the Pledge of Allegiance or The Star Spangled Banner. I've been known to call a business when I see them flying a tattered flag to let them know that if that's all the pride they have in the American flag, they should just take it down. I am also a proud lesbian.

I joined the military in 1989, before "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT) was enacted and when there was an outright ban on gays and lesbians in the military. I did not realize at the time that I was a lesbian, but later, when I did come to terms with my being gay, I never tried to hide it, but I did not flaunt it either. My sexual orientation was a non-issue. I was a hard charging soldier, promoted long before my peers. I am sure there was talk behind my back about me being a lesbian, but no one ever seemed to care. I was a good friend, soldier, and leader; everyone I encountered could have cared less about what happened in my private life.

After DADT was passed, I started to hear stories about people being discharged. I struggled with this every day, always fearful that I would be next. Eventually, the stress of constant fear that I could lose my job no matter how hard I worked or how well I performed, became too much. I knew from the stories of others that even serving to the very best of my ability could cost me my job. I knew that an anonymous tip—by someone who was jealous of my success, angry with me because of a disagreement, or mad because I rebuffed a sexual advance—could trigger a demoralizing, demeaning investigation under DADT. And if I was not willing to lie, I knew an investigation could lead to my discharge.

I was lucky, though. I did not get kicked out, but that does not mean that DADT didn't affect me. The uncertainty and fear of knowing that anyone with a grudge could end my career, and the sadness in realizing that at any time my country could callously discard me for no other reason than the fact that I was gay, pressured me to give up the career I loved. I chose not to reenlist. There are days when it is hard for me not to walk into the nearest recruiting station and sign back up. I watch what is happening in Iraq and Afghanistan and it's hard for me to think about not being there with the men and women I served with in the first Gulf War. I have to remind myself why I chose not to reenlist.

Defending our country in uniform is one of the greatest privileges and responsibilities of being an American. Many people do not appreciate that; many take our freedoms for granted; and many do not choose to serve. We cannot afford to lose those who want to serve, who have the necessary skills and work ethic, and who would risk their lives for their comrades and their country.

Mr. President, in your State of the Union Address, you said that the American people are not quitters. I did not quit on my country during the first Gulf War and I would serve again if called. There are at least 66,000 gays and lesbians serving right now who do not want to quit, either. Mr. President, please don't quit on them. Please do everything in your power to end DADT this year. We are counting on you.

Respectfully,

Former Sgt. Shonda Garrison
United States Army

Now it's your turn to share. Post this letter on your Facebook profile. Check out SLDN's Facebook page. Follow SLDN on Twitter. Tweet the letters. Retweet them. And follow the news surrounding these letters on Twitter at #DADTstories.

And, by visiting www.sldn.org/letters, you'll be able to take action by sending a letter to your member of Congress who needs to lobby to support the repeal, and you can also share your own personal story of how DADT has impacted you.

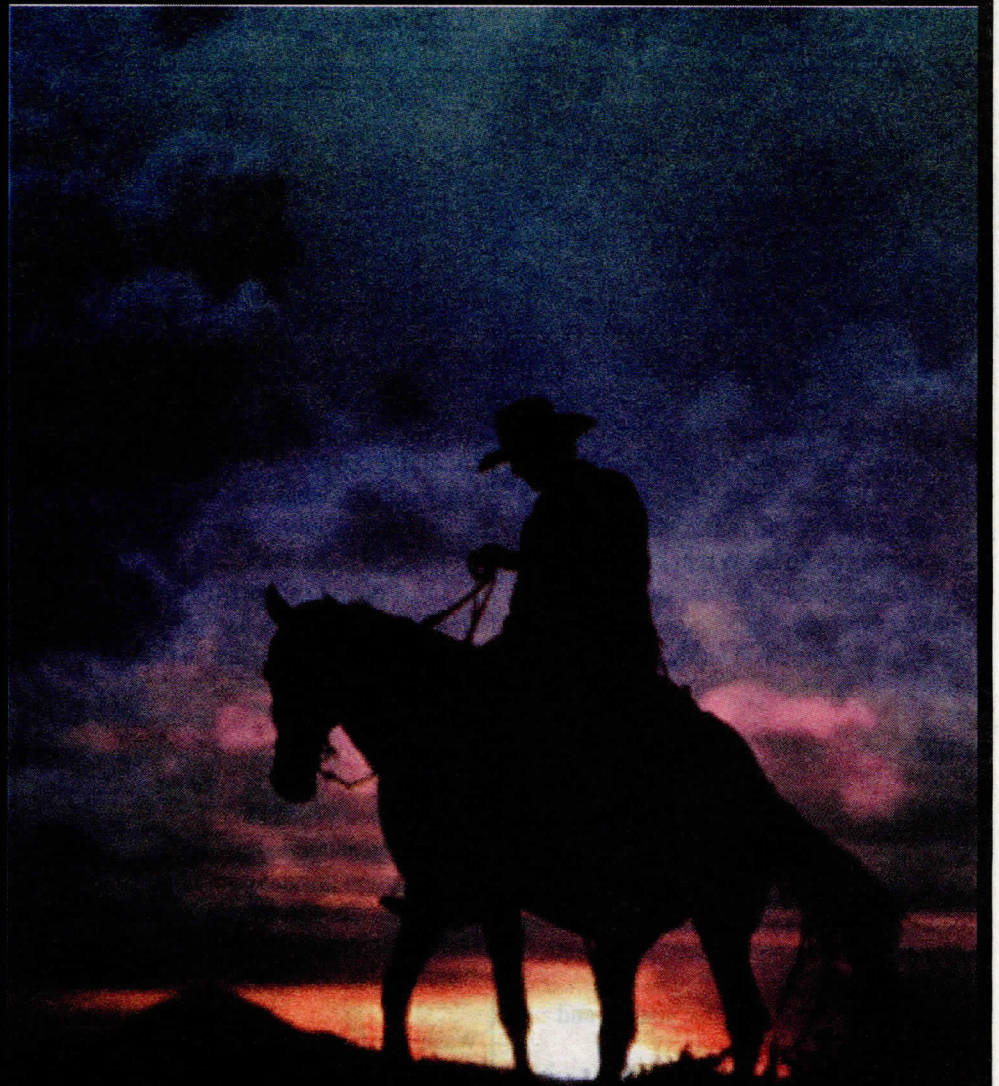


Thank you to all that serve or have served. In honor of our GLBT Servicemembers and Veterans, this Memorial Day let's commit to the end of DADT



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Mr. & Miss BRB 2010
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