

Volume 1 ▼ Issue 7 August 15 - September 14, 1994 Complimentary Copy

Out ▼ Smart

HOUSTON'S GAY & LESBIAN MONTHLY MAGAZINE



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OutSmart

Houston's Gay & Lesbian Monthly Magazine

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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

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The International Gay & Lesbian News Service

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Photo of Pickle Family Circus

Design by
Chris Huffman Graphics
802-2241



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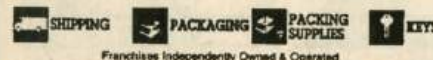
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O U T ▼ S M A R T

LETTERS

THE GIFT OF HIV

I'm writing to thank you for publishing, and Patrick Vachon for writing the article "The Gifts of HIV/AIDS." Reading it was a gift to me and couldn't have come at a more appropriate time in my life.

You see, a few days before I picked up the July issue of OutSmart, my lover of two years told he had just tested positive for HIV. I was devastated. All I could think of was that my life had suddenly been irreversibly changed for the worst, not by my choice and certainly without my approval.

Having been a volunteer in AIDS community for several years, I already knew the "process" I would have to go through. At first it was denial - I told him the test must have been wrong. This was quickly followed by cycles of anger and depression. But most of all, the days following the shock were filled with grief. I was truly living minute by minute trying to process every emotion and every thought, often ending up crying and wishing it were all a dream.

However, I was uplifted and inspired after reading "The Gifts of HIV/AIDS." Mr. Vachon made me realize that, despite the sudden change in the way I think about my life, there is so much more to live for. I envisioned a better relationship for me and my lover—goals will be more challenging, arguments less severe and most of all our love will be more fulfilling. I also quickly adapted the "don't sweat the small stuff" attitude that Mr. Vachon mentioned, and I now find myself becoming unnerved when other people worry over trivial matters.

Sure, there are still moments when each of us gets upset or depressed, but overall I've been proud of him and myself at the strength we've had. I'm now awaiting my test results and I have decided that, if I test positive, I will reread the article and hope that it invokes the same inspirational strength it did the first time I read it.

Thanks for opening my eyes helping me accept the gifts!

Ron Ladrice

AIDS CURE ACT

13 years into the plague, AIDS research has hit a dead end. Despite billions of research dollars, none of the current anti-viral options work. Not AZT. Not combination therapies. Nothing. There are still no effective treatments for most of the opportunistic infections that kill most people with AIDS. And after 13 years we have only the vaguest notion of how the

disease works. Why?

- Innovative approaches are discouraged by the research establishment, which grants funding to scientists who pursue mainstream theories.

- Profit—not science—dictates the research agenda, due to the excessive influence of the pharmaceutical industry.

- Vital questions about the nature of the disease itself remain unanswered, as research focuses on the frantic search for marketable drugs.

- Researchers are isolated by competitiveness and secrecy. In a system that blocks the free-flow of information and slows progress by years.

With these and other problems it is increasingly unlikely that a cure for AIDS will come from the National Institutes of Health.

President Clinton promised a "Manhattan Project for AIDS" in his campaign platform. We are now almost two years in to his term of office and Clinton has failed to deliver. He may "feel our pain" but he's not doing anything to end the AIDS crisis.

The AIDS Cure Act, introduced in Congress as HR 4370, will create an all-out effort to find a cure, a Project that will:

- Bring together the best minds from a wide range of disciplines in and environment that encourages innovative thinking.

- Pursue basic research and study both traditional and alternative treatments to find a cure, defined as "Any and all approaches that ensure a well-functioning immune system and normal life span."

- Study people with AIDS, not just a virus in a test tube.

- Require Project researchers to drop all conflicts of interest with drug companies.

- Have the power of "eminent domain" to ensure that no therapy is shelved due to corporate interests.

Write and call your Congressional representatives and urge them to support the AIDS Cure Act (HR 4370).

Join Gay and Lesbian Americans, ACT UP/Gulf Coast and other AIDS activists in fighting for this important piece of legislation. For more information call 866-4007.

Michael Crawford
Gay and Lesbian Americans

OutSmart welcomes your letters. Please include your name and address and a telephone number for confirmation. Letters may be edited for length.

Send to: OutSmart Magazine 3406 Audubon Place, Houston, TX 77006-4412. Fax letters to: 713-522-3275.

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CALENDAR

If you are part of a group or have a function that you would like listed in our calendar, please send announcement by the 1st of the month to: CALENDAR EDITOR, OutSmart Magazine, 3406 Audubon, Houston, TX 77006. Inclusion in the calendar is based upon general interest to our readers, space availability and the whims of the editorial staff.

COMMUNITY EVENTS
AND MEETINGS

AUGUST

16 **EROTIC CHOICES IN SAFER SEX WORKSHOP** explores the options of safer sex and sensuality through discussion and games, 7-9 pm, AIDS Foundation Houston, 3203 Wesleyan, 623-6796.

PRIDE COMMITTEE OF HOUSTON, general meeting, 7 pm, Metropolitan Multi-Service Center, 1475 West Gray, 529-6979.

17 **MEN'S NETWORK** for gay and bisexual men, 7-9 pm, Montrose Counseling Center, 701 Richmond, 529-0037.

18 **HOUSTON GAY & LESBIAN PARENTS** Support Group, Montrose Library, 7-9 pm, 980-7955.

MONTROSE ICE PICKS for lesbian/gay ice skaters, 8-10 pm, Sharpstown Ice Center, 7300 Bellerive Road, admission is \$4.75 plus \$2 for skates, wear yellow clothing or your favorite gay/lesbian T-shirt.

20 **HEALING CLINIC** for PWAs, people diagnosed as HIV positive, their families and their partners, offered by the Sat Nam Rasayan Healers, 10 am-12 noon, 1123 Jackson Boulevard, 668-2977.

HOUSTON CHAIN GANG CYCLING CLUB, University Tour, 8 am, grab your bicycle and pedal through the city's universities, meet in front of Heaven, Pacific at Grant, 802-2602.

21 **HOUSTON CHAIN GANG CYCLING CLUB**, Fruit Loop Ride, 7 am, grab your bicycle and pedal around the Fruit Loop, meet at Memorial Park, 863-1860.

22 **THE AGORA** monthly meeting, 7:30 pm, AIDS Foundation Houston, 3202 Wesleyan, 729-4267.

LOG CABIN REPUBLICANS of Houston general meeting, call 681-2607 for meeting time and place.

Miss Camp America Pageant:
Camping It Up For 26 Years

Miss Camp America's "Top Nine" stars of this year's pageant

On Saturday September 17 at Music Hall, the Miss Camp America Foundation will present its 26th annual pageant with the theme "One For The Road." The grant recipients of this year's pageant proceeds are The Colt 45 Troublefund, Houston Names Project, PWA Coalition of Houston, The Assistance Fund and The Pet Patrol.

The yearly spoof of the Miss America Pageant showcases the pageant's "Top Nine" in talent presentations and modeling swimwear and evening gowns. In between the competition for the crown, cast members perform in production numbers that usually feature more sequins, feathers, rhinestones and glitter than most Las Vegas shows.

Despite the glitz of the present pageants, Miss Camp America had humble beginnings. In 1969 at a Houston apartment, eleven people gathered to watch the Miss America Pageant on television. Ten of those attending took turns drawing one of the state names representing the top ten finalists in the pageant that year. Before the evening was over, one of them became "Miss Camp America" by virtue of that state winning the title. In the following years, this simple beginning led to the extended guest list of 50 state representatives and more.

Over the years, this purely social group has been transformed into a non-profit, tax-exempt organization and a major fund-raising force in the Houston AIDS community, raising over \$35,000 last year alone. In addition to having five different yearly AIDS charities to receive the proceeds of the organization's pageant, the members participate in the Care Bear Project, which includes visits to people with AIDS in local hospitals.

Tickets for this year's pageant are available by calling 227-ARTS or at Foley's Sears, Fiesta, Jones Hall, Sound Warehouse or The Wortham Center. Tickets are \$25, \$40 and \$50.

23 **AIDS EQUITY LEAGUE**, 12 noon, Charlie's Restaurant, 1100 Westheimer, 871-0092.

EROTIC CHOICES IN SAFER SEX WORKSHOP explores the options of safer sex and sensuality through discussion and games, 7-9 pm, AIDS Foundation Houston, 3203 Wesleyan, 623-6796.

24 **NUTRITION WORKSHOP** for people with HIV disease, 6-8 pm, Medical Center Clinic, 1115 S. Braeswood, Suite 210. Sponsored by the Early Intervention Program, 796-81223.

WOMEN'S NETWORK for lesbian and bisexual women, 7-9 pm, Montrose Counseling Center, 701 Richmond, 529-0037.

25 **FREE PRESENTATIONS ON HIV/AIDS** for anyone who wants factually based information on HIV infection, transmission and prevention (30 minute video will be included), 6:30-7:30 pm, Greater Houston Area Red Cross, 2700 Southwest Freeway at Kirby, 526-8300.

NANCY FORD, musical comedy at Ms. B's (at the Ranch), 9200 Buffalo Speedway. Also Open Mic—sing a song, recite poetry, tell a joke, spill a secret. 8:30-midnight. 666-3464.

SAFERSEX FOR LESBIANS, seminar sponsored by AIDS Foundation Houston and presented by Nancy Ford, 9:30 pm, Plaza 9200, 9200 Buffalo Speedway, 666-3464.

26 **A VISION OF WHOLENESS: OVERCOMING SEXISM**, a live panel presentation via national satellite TV from the General Convention of the Episcopal Church, 4-7 pm, Christ Church Cathedral, The Great Hall, 1117 Texas Avenue at San Jacinto.

28 **DOG DIP AND FOOD DRIVE** sponsored by The Pet Patrol, 10 am-1 pm, parking lot of Basic Brothers, 1232 Westheimer.

SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE A NUT, a benefit for the Montrose Counseling Center presented by the Royal, Sovereign and Imperial Court of the Single Star of Houston, 7:30-9:30 pm, Brazos River Bottom, 2400 Brazos.

HOUSTON CHAIN GANG CYCLING CLUB, Cherryhurst Park, 5:30 pm, grab your bicycle and pedal through the Cherryhurst Park neighborhood, please RSVP for this ride with Peter at 524-5499.

29 **TRAVEL IN PRIDE** kick-off party, 611 Club, 611 Hyde Park, 6 pm. Includes door prizes and a raffle plus free hors d'oeuvres.

LAMBDA ROLLERSKATING, 8-10 pm, Dairy Ashford Roller Rink, 1820 S. Dairy Ashford at I-10. Admission is \$5. 933-5818.

31 **HOUSTON CHAIN GANG CYCLING CLUB**, Heights Tour, 6:15 pm, grab

your bicycle and pedal through the historic Heights, meet at 1860 White Oak Drive, 863-1860.

31-5 **DEAF GLOW CONFERENCE** sponsored by the Astro Rainbow Alliance of the Deaf, workshops, receptions and social activities, Wyndham Warwick Hotel. Call Brian at 802-1544 TTY via Relay Texas (800) 735-2988.

SEPTEMBER

1 **MARK ALLEN BRANSON'S "THE TRUNK,"** a one-man show portraying various deaf characters through dramatic, semi-comedic and comedic sketches illustrating the joys, hardships and observations of life as a deaf person, 7:30 pm, Heinen Theatre, Houston Community College, 1400 Holman. Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$15 at the door. Call Scot at 528-3678 days/621-1103 evenings through Texas Relay 1-800-735-2988. (Performed in American Sign Language and voice-interpreted for the hearing audience).

5 **LAMBDA ROLLERSKATING**, 8-10 pm, Dairy Ashford Roller Rink, 1820 S. Dairy Ashford at I-10. Admission is \$5. 933-5818.

6 **PRIDE COMMITTEE OF HOUSTON**, executive committee meeting, 7 pm, Metropolitan Multi-Service Center, 1475 West Gray, 529-6979.

7 **MEN'S NETWORK** for gay and bisexual men, 7-9 pm, Montrose Counseling Center, 701 Richmond, 529-0037.

HOUSTON GAY & LESBIAN POLITICAL CAUCUS, general meeting, 7:30 pm, call 521-1000 for location and information.

8 **GAY MEN'S CHORUS**, rehearsals for the 1994-95 season begin, 7-10 pm, Grace Lutheran Church, 2515 Waugh. Singing membership is open to men who can carry a tune. Weekly rehearsals are held every Thursday from 7-9 pm. Call 521-SING (7464) for more information.

NANCY FORD, musical comedy at Ms. B's (at the Ranch), 9200 Buffalo Speedway. Also Open Mic—sing a song, recite poetry, tell a joke, spill a secret. 8:30-midnight. 666-3464.

9 **ASTRO RAINBOW ALLIANCE FOR THE DEAF**, general meeting, 7:30 pm, call 1-800-735-2988 for location and information.

10 **MARILYN MAYE**, live in concert, benefitting AIDS Coalition of Coastal Texas, Galveston 1894 Opera House, tickets are \$25 and \$35. Call (713) 480-1894, 1-800-821-1894.

11 **P-FLAG** general meeting, 2 pm, St. Francis Episcopal Church, 345 Piney Point Road. P-FLAG Houston Helpline: 867-9020.

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13 **AIDS EQUITY LEAGUE.** 12 noon, Charlie's Restaurant, 1100 Westheimer, 871-0092.

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SNEAK PEEK

SEPTEMBER 17
MISS CAMP AMERICA PAGEANT. "One for the Road," Music Hall, for tickets call 227-ARTS or obtain them at Foley's, Sears, Fiesta, Jones Hall, Sound Warehouse or The Worham Center.

NOVEMBER 5
HOUSTON BLACK TIE DINNER, benefitting the Human Rights Campaign Fund and various local charities, 7:30 pm, Westin Galleria Hotel. Tickets now on sale—523-9611.

ONGOING

ACT-UP GULF COAST, 2nd and 4th Thursdays, 7:00 pm, 3400 Montrose, Suite 520, 523-9199.

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

AIDS FOUNDATION HOUSTON, free

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

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

CARING STEPS is offered to parents, family, friends, and loved ones of someone who is HIV positive. Call 520-2085 for scheduling.

CROSSROADS is a support group for gays and lesbians who are currently in full-time church work, have been in the past or are pursuing their calling. It is not exclusively for pastors, but is open to chaplains, administrators, musicians or music, youth and educational directors. Meets one Saturday per month for brunch in someone's home. Call 802-1056 for meeting date, time and place.

DAS KAFFEEHAUS is a new entertainment spot for young people to meet for fun, conversation, dancing and artistic expression such as musical performances, dance programs, comedy monologues, poetry readings, etc. Saturdays 7 pm-1 am, basement of Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, \$1 cover charge includes coffee and tea.

DELTA LAMBDA PHI: a progressive social fraternity at the University of Houston. Founded by gay men for all men. For more information on how to become a member call 529-3211.

DIGNITY HOUSTON is dedicated to the welfare of gay and lesbian Catholics and their friends. They meet every Saturday at 7:30 pm, 1307 Yale, Suite H, (713) 880-2872.

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

8660.

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

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

FAMILY AND FRIENDS SUPPORT GROUP for partners, family, friends and caregivers of persons with HIV disease, facilitated by Jim Anderson, LMSW and Harry Livesay, MSW(c), New Counseling Center, 3415 Graustark, 529-1913.

FRONTRUNNERS encourages beginning, recreational and competitive running. Weekly runs are Sundays at 9 am and Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6:30 pm at The Tennis Center in Memorial Park. 522-8021.

GAY VETERANS OF HOUSTON is committed to ending discrimination against gays, lesbians and bisexuals in the military services. Meets the second Tuesday of the month, 6 pm, Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Room 4A-322, 2002 Holcombe Blvd. For more information contact P.O. Box 66135, Houston, TX 77266-6135 or call 869-0982, 857-0674 or 649-8808.

THE HOMELESS PET PLACEMENT LEAGUE is a nonprofit animal welfare organization that rescues and rehabilitates stray and abandoned cats and dogs. To inquire about volunteering, foster care, or adopting call 862-PETS.

HOUSTON AREA TEEN COALITION OF HOMOSEXUALS (HATCH) is open to gays and lesbians age 15-21, meets Fridays at 7:15 pm and Sundays at 6:30 pm, call 942-9810 for location and information.

KOLBE PROJECT: HIV/AIDS Positive sup-

port group-Tuesdays, 10 am; Lesbian & Gay Issues support group-Wednesdays, 6:15 pm; HIV Negative support group-Thursdays, 8 pm; Female impersonators/transsexuals-Mondays, 7 pm. For more information contact 522-8182.

THE MOVIE CLUB: meets every Saturday night to view a recently released film and dine at a nearby restaurant prior to the movie. Call 952-4048 for more information and meeting time and place.

NEXT STEP: a free confidential program of information and medical testing for persons who are HIV positive. Call 520-2000 for schedule and to register.

PROTECT (People Respecting Ourselves Through Establishing Community & Trust) is an HIV-negative support group providing a safe place to share experiences, strengths and hopes in an effort to remain HIV negative. Tuesdays, 7-8:30 pm, Bering Church Office, 1440 Harold. For more information, call Marty Yaklin, 520-7870, or David White, 752-2604.

Q-PATROL is an organization dedicated to the prevention of hate crimes against lesbians and gay men. We patrol the bar areas in Montrose and are always on the lookout for volunteers. If you have at least one Friday or Saturday night per month you can donate to the protection of gay men and lesbians, please call 871-8519.

RADIO AND TELEVISION

AFTER HOURS: (Radio) Saturdays, Midnight to 3 am. Featuring the QMZ (Queer Music Zone) with Jimmy Caper. KPFT 90.1 FM.

LESBIAN & GAY VOICES: (Radio) Fridays, 6-8 pm. Features news, music, interviews, reviews and commentary. KPFT 90.1 FM.

GAY 90s: (TV) presented by Monticello Entertainment. This **NEW** cable show has a newsmagazine format offering a variety of topics from local news to restaurant reviews to some humorous looks at ourselves. Showtimes are

listed in local television guides under Public Access Cable (PAC) channels. For more information call Alan Bourgeois at 949-3119.

OUT! IN HOUSTON: (TV) presented by The Agora on Public Access Cable. Showtimes are listed in local television guides under Public Access Cable (PAC) channels. For more information call The Agora at 949-3119.

AIDS TALK HOUSTON: (TV) Public Access Cable. Showtimes are listed in local television guides under Public Access Cable (PAC) channels.

LIFE... TODAY: (TV) Public Access Cable. Showtimes are listed in local television guides under Public Access Cable (PAC) channels.

MONTROSE CLINIC: (TV) Public Access Cable. Showtimes are listed in local television guides under Public Access Cable (PAC) channels.

FEM TV: Public Access Cable. Showtimes are listed in local television guides under Public Access Cable (PAC) channels.

THEATER

ACTORS THEATRE OF HOUSTON 2506 South Blvd. 529-6606. Through August 13: *The Wizard of Oz*. Aug. 18-Sep. 4: *Duet For One*.

ACTORS WORKSHOP 1009 Chartres. 236-1844. Through August 7: *Breaking Legs*.

A.D. PLAYERS, Grace Theater, 2710 West Alabama, 526-2721. Through Aug. 21: *Smoke On The Mountain*.

ALLEY THEATRE 615 Texas Ave. 228-8421. Aug. 5-14. *The Foreigner*.

COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE THEATRE Town and Country Village, 12802 Queensbury. 467-4497. Through August 6: *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

CURTAINS 3722 Washington Ave. 862-4548. Through August 5: *Fantasies, Fallacies, and Fish*. Fridays only, 8 pm.

ENSEMBLE THEATRE, 3535 Main, 520-0055. Through Aug. 21: *One Mo' Time*.

EXPRESS THEATRE Children's Museum of Houston, 1500 Binz. 759-1314. August 6-7: *Children's Theatre Festival On the Hill*, Miller Outdoor Theatre.

HOUSTON SKYLINE THEATRE 1617 Fannin. 759-0701. Through August 6: *Comedy of Errors*. A "young and restless" multi-media version presented by The Gypsy Theatre Company.

INSIDE/OUT PRODUCTIONS, Kuumba House, 3412 LaBranch at Holman. 864-5986. Through Aug. 13: *Oh, Hell!* (Two one-act comedies), *Bobby Gould In Hell* and *The Devil and Billy Markham*.

MAIN STREET THEATRE 2540 Times Blvd. 524-6706. Aug. 4-Sep. 4: *Red Scare On Main Street*.

THEATRE LaB Houston, 1706 Alamo. 868-7516. Aug. 16-Sep. 15: *Something You Need To Know Before The End of The World*.

THEATRE SOUTHWEST 3750 Gessner Dr. 661-9505. Through August 13: *Woman In Mind*.

THEATRE SUBURBIA 1410 W. 43rd. 668-3525. Through August 27: *Caught In The Villain's Web*.

THEATRE UNDER THE STARS Miller Outdoor Theatre, Hermann Park. 622-TUTS. Jennifer Hollday in *Dreamgirls*.



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THE GAY RIGHT (PART 1 OF 3): FEAR, LOATHING, AND THE POWER OF DIVERSITY

The gay left has just discovered the gay right, and the resulting tumult of discomfort reverberates in gay life across the country. It seems almost as if some cancer, this "new" gay right, has metastasized and must be cut out lest it harm the gay body politic. The reaction of many gay leaders to the emergence of gay moderates and conservatives from the closet has been a mixture of misunderstanding ("They're intolerant"), condescension ("They don't understand social change"), anger ("They're traitors"), bemusement ("They're oxymorons"), and pity or contempt ("They're self-hating"). To them, the gay right is an ugly excrescence on the traditional gay civil rights movement. Please, they are saying, just go away. Gay moderates and (especially) conservatives have long lived in a double closet. Our gay friends shunned conservatives; our conservative friends shunned gays. We were anathema to both sides because we upset settled expectations about what it means to be gay. We found the pro-gay left and the anti-gay right in a curious alliance to shut us up.

Like a colossus, left-wing activism has occupied the field of gay politics since Stonewall. The left has dominated the columns of gay newspapers and magazines, controlled the content of gay radio shows and public-access television programs, monopolized the leadership of our political organizations, and in general represented us to the rest of the world. To be gay was to be left-wing. Of course, this stereotype of gay politics has always been a lie, like the lie that we are all pedophiles or that we are all lonely or that we all have great taste in interior design. It's easy to see why America believed the lie. For far too long, the only people who were willing to advocate gay civil rights were self-styled progressives.

The rest of us preferred to hide, afraid of what coming out would cost us. That's how one segment of our community, the left, came to represent the whole.

But there have always been moderates and conservatives in our midst. The difference now is that we are coming out of the closet in large numbers, thanks in part to the advances in legal equality won almost entirely by the gay left over the past quarter-century. In a sense, the gay left has helped to create a beast it can no longer control, a burgeoning movement of disparate elements and ideas. The "out" gay population today is more diverse, ideologically and otherwise, than ever before. It better reflects all of gay America. That trend will accelerate.

With that trend, the demise of the gay left's exclusive franchise over our public image is inevi-



BY DALE CARPENTER

table. We will truly deserve the rainbow flag, not a monochrome pennant, as a symbol. None of this means that the left will cease to be our loudest and most influential political voice. But our "voice" will now be more a chorus than a solo. The political left, which has been preaching the value of diversity for some time, should welcome this development. The ideological diversity that will result from the rise of gay conservatism is good for the whole movement. It is good "externally" because it erodes the uninformed straight American's facile notion that gays are one-dimensional. Too, gay conservatives subvert prejudice in the very place it is breeding most hotly today: on the political right, and especially in the Republican Party. No matter how committed to the cause, the gay left just can't do that.

Our greater diversity is also beneficial "internally" because gay political dialogue will at last ring with a real clash of ideas and priorities. One test of the value of an idea is its power to get itself accepted in the marketplace of ideas. The emergence of gay moderates and conservatives makes our "market" a more competitive one. Our decisions will be better because they will be more fully informed. Further, we will finally be able to tap a huge reservoir of energy, ideas and talent among gay conservatives and moderates. The movement will need those assets if it is truly to reach every corner of the nation. The old "progressive coalition," by itself, will not get us to the next plateau.

Of course, not everybody is welcome in the gay civil rights movement, just because their presence makes us more diverse. Jerry Falwell and Patrick Buchanan (and Louis Farrakhan, for that matter) can take their marbles and go home. The

price of admission to the gay civil rights movement should be that you are passionately committed to legal and social equality for gays. But the price should not be that you oppose the death penalty, or that you support higher taxes to pay for more social programs, or that you would love to see the Sandinistas run Nicaragua again, or that you subscribe to any other leftist cause that one of our political leaders appends to a brochure. The corollary is that supporting an equal role for gays in our society does not, in itself, place one anywhere along the political spectrum.

Most of all, gay moderates and conservatives can no longer be dismissed as "oxymorons," or that old favorite, "self-hating." We are too numerous, too self-confident, too committed to gay legal and social equality, to be sent away summarily with a waive of the hand. I suppose there are some self-hating gay conservatives, just as there are some self-hating gay liberals. But beware talk like that: it smacks of "false consciousness," the old Marxist concept, and can be just as poisonous. It is arrogance defined to equate an idea you think flawed with some deep-seated flaw (like "self-hatred") in the person arguing for that idea. Gay conservatives and moderates have not fought out of one closet only to be shoved into another by a new breed of intolerance masquerading as a defense of the traditional gay civil rights movement.

The gay left must come to a painful realization: Liberalism is not another, as yet latent, component of the gay chromosome. You may be born with a sexual orientation; but the lessons of life and friends and education give you this or that political orientation. Like straight Americans, we each learn those lessons differently, depending on the significance we extract from our experiences and the importance we place on the many contending and complex values that comprise a person's view of the world. That we should all arrive at the same place is not likely or even desirable; that we should respect each other as we work together for real freedom is essential. Just as we moderate and conservative gays demand civility and respect from our compatriots, we must be mindful of our own responsibilities in this movement for equality. It is to that topic that this page will turn next month.

Dale Carpenter is a lawyer in Houston and serves on the Board of Directors of the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus. The opinions expressed in this column are not necessarily endorsed by the HGLPC or any of its members.

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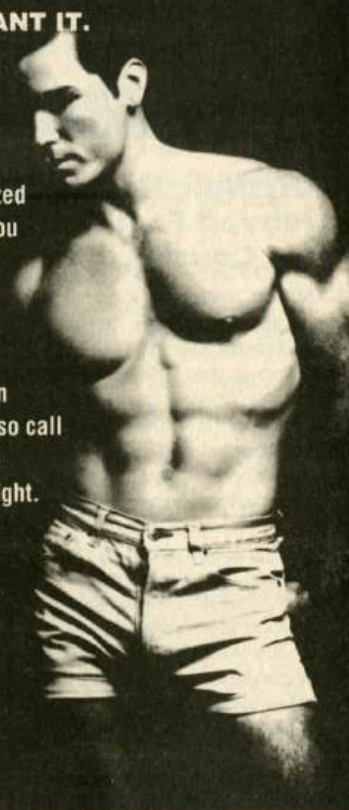
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OUT In Our WORLD

Olympic Volleyball Moved From Cobb County, Ga.

ATLANTA (GayNet) — Gay and civil rights activists applauded the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) for its decision to move the 1996 Olympic volleyball competition from suburban Cobb County, Ga., because of a resolution adopted by county commissioners there last year condemning the "gay lifestyle." Following months of closed-door negotiations between Olympic Games officials and Cobb County commissioners, along with intense pressure by gay and civil rights groups to move the games if the county did not rescind its 1993 anti-gay resolution, ACOG announced Friday, July 29 that it would relocate the volleyball competition to a stadium at the University of Georgia in Athens, about 60 miles east of Atlanta. "We're delighted and saddened," said Carl Lange, executive director of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation in Atlanta. "We're thrilled that ACOG has done what is right yet saddened that this situation was not resolved by rescinding the resolution. We have demonstrated that individuals who attack the equal rights of gays and lesbians will not go unchallenged."

Cadbury & Schweppes Boycott Grows

SYDNEY (GayNet) — In July, the UN Human Rights Commission's 90-day deadline passed without a response to the commission's find-

ing that sodomy laws in the Australian state of Tasmania violate international human rights conventions. Australian and Tasmanian gay rights activists have organized a boycott of Tasmanian products, most of which—like wines, cheese and seafood—are consumed locally. But two products the activists are particularly targeting have international distribution: Cadbury chocolates and candies and the Schweppes bottling company, makers of a number of tonic waters and soft drinks.

Anti-Bias Bill Hearings Begin in Senate

WASHINGTON (GayNet) — The Senate Labor & Human Resources Committee began hearings on the proposed Employment Non-Discrimination Act that would prohibit bias in the workplace because of sexual orientation—the first time the upper house of Congress has considered such a job discrimination measure. The bill was introduced in June by Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), who is also chairman of the Senate committee. If enacted, the legislation would add sexual orientation to the classes protected under federal law from employment bias, along with race, sex, religion, age, national origin and disability.

Taking AIDS to Center Field

SAN FRANCISCO (GayNet) — The San Francisco Giants shot down the Colorado Rockies 9-4 in their match-up Sunday, July 31, but the

real winner at Candlestick Park here was the fight against the AIDS epidemic when the Giants became the first professional sports team to mount a benefit game to battle the epidemic. Some 50,007 fans turned out to watch the game and to witness history as pro sports moved from official silence about the disease that has killed more than 220,000 people during the past 13 years into center field. In the process, the benefit game may have raised \$100,000 or more in what has become known as the "Until There's a Cure Day." During a moving ceremony, 700 AIDS volunteers decked in red t-shirts and baseball caps moved to center field to form a giant red ribbon, the symbol of the fight against AIDS. From a podium, Giant's pitcher Rod Beck, shortstop Royce Clayton, actor Danny Glover, and singer Bobby McFerrin read out the names of scores of people who have died of AIDS, while volunteers gracefully unfolded sections of the massive Names Quilt. The Giants are donating \$1 from each ticket sold for the game to the Until There's a Cure Foundation. The BASS ticket agency also donated 50 cents from all ticket sales for the game to the foundation. With additional funds from sales of AIDS memorial bracelets and other mementos, the total proceeds from the benefit were expected to surpass \$100,000 for the day. Half the money raised will go to vaccine research, while the other half will be given to local agencies.

Senate Cuts Federal Funds to Schools Teaching Acceptance

WASHINGTON (GayNet) — After an exhibition of what backers called "disgusting" materials, the U.S. Senate late on Aug. 1 overwhelmingly approved by a 62-36 vote an amendment to cut off all federal funds to school districts in the country that teach acceptance of homosexuality "as a positive life style alternative." The move—an amendment to the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary School Act offered by Sen. Robert Smith (R-N.H.) and Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.)—is a much more strident version of a companion amendment sponsored by Congressman Mel Hancock (R-MO.) and approved by the House of Representatives earlier this year. The two-paragraph Smith-Helms amendment would cut federal funds for school districts in the U.S. with programs "that have either the purpose or effect of encouraging or supporting homosexuality as a positive life style alternative" or use materials for gay-affirming organizations. An attempt to weaken the impact of the Smith-Helms amendment, offered by Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA), was approved by a 99-0 vote, but the Kennedy amendment would cut federal funds to school districts that directly encouraged sexual activity of any kind—heterosexual or homosexual. Local school districts in the U.S. get about 10 to 15 percent of their total budgets from federal educational funds.

Texas Man With AIDS Files Fair Housing Complaint

HOUSTON (GayNet) — A 33-year-old Houston man with AIDS filed a federal fair housing complaint against Community Management Co. and its owner, G.W. Ralston, after he was asked not to use the swimming pool at Southwinds Apartments where he lived. "The problem was that you had sores on your body that were bothersome to people, that scared them in their stupidity," Ralston told David Morales, who had been living in the complex only a few weeks. In a secretly recorded conversation, Ralston conceded that Morales' use of a pool didn't pose any actual health risks, but recognized that financial problems could emerge if the complex lost tenants because of complaints about the sores on Morales' body. "This is purely a business decision," said Ralston, who said that his company frequently rents apartments to people with AIDS.

Clinton Names Interim AIDS Policy Coordinator

WASHINGTON (GayNet) — President Clinton has named Patricia Fleming, an AIDS policy specialist and assistant to Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala, to take the post as the administration's AIDS policy coordinator temporarily. The appointment of

Fleming fills a troublesome post in the administration that became vacant when Kristine Gebbie, informally known as Clinton's "AIDS czar," resigned after months of widespread criticism for failing to make the epidemic a high-priority issue in the administration or the country. Fleming said she would hold the post for just two months while the White House searches for a permanent replacement for Gebbie. "I took the job because I really care deeply about AIDS," she said at a news conference. "If called upon, it's my responsibility to do what I can to fight this epidemic."

Some HIV-Infected Hemophiliacs Free of AIDS for 25 Years

LONDON (GayNet) — A significant minority of HIV-infected hemophiliac men may survive for as long as a quarter of a century before developing AIDS, say British researchers. A team of scientists at the Royal Free Hospital and School of Medicine in London based its conclusion on an ongoing study of 111 patients who have been monitored since contracting the virus, over a 6-year period starting in 1979. By 1993, all 111 of the men had developed the disease. Based on the rate of change in white blood cells, the researchers devised a mathematical model predicting that one quarter of the men would live 20 years, and 18% would live 25 years, before develop-

continued on next page

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Gaynet Briefs *continued from previous page*

ing full-blown AIDS. It is unclear whether traits particular to hemophilic men increased their chances for disease-free survival, or if the findings of the British study apply to infected women or intravenous drug users as well.

N.C. School Board Defies Helms

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. (GayNet) — Only days after the U.S. Senate approved an amendment offered by Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) prohib-

iting school districts that offer gay-positive materials or counseling from receiving federal education funds, a school board in his own back yard defiantly adopted a policy doing exactly that. The Chapel Hill school trustees unanimously gave the thumbs up to a policy that would create "safe schools" where everyone is respected regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, political persuasion or religious affiliation. Chapel Hill trustee Mary Bushnell said of the new policy, "This plan grew out of a need to have students be more respectful and have a greater understanding of each other regardless of their diversity. Here we have to do what is right and hope the Congress of the United States will do the same."

HBO Begins Work on Hollywood's 'Closet'

HOLLYWOOD (GayNet) — HBO has started work on *The Celluloid Closet*, a feature-length television documentary of Vito Russo's book on Hollywood's portrayal of gays and lesbians in motion pictures. The documentary is expected to premiere late next year and will be produced and directed by Oscar-winning Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman (*Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt*). According to HBO, the major Hollywood studios are all cooperating in the production of the documentary by providing clips from the more than 100 films represented in *The Celluloid Closet*. Proceeds from the non-profit project will benefit the motion picture industry's HIV/AIDS awareness organization Hollywood Supports.

Far Right Launches Long Distance Phone Service

PHILADELPHIA (GayNet) — Some 1,200 religious right groups have joined to promote LifeLine, the country's first long distance service "built on biblical values and centered around the lord Jesus Christ." LifeLine will donate 10% of its billings to far-right groups battling abortion rights, gay rights, and pornography. By the way, under strict biblical principles, people who don't pay their bills (including presumably their phone bills) can be stoned to death.

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O U T ▼ B R I E F S

ASTRO RAINBOW ALLIANCE OF THE DEAF SPONSORS CONFERENCE

A biennial, week-long conference of deaf and hearing-impaired gay men and lesbians from the western United States will be held in Houston the first week of September. Deaf GLOW (Gays and Lesbians of the West) 1994 is sponsored by the Astro Rainbow Alliance of the Deaf and will have the theme "Come Explore the City of Hot Opportunities."

Beginning August 31 and ending September 5, the conference will provide a full schedule of educational workshops, meetings and social activities designed to inform participants of available opportunities for personal and career growth. In addition to the regular business of the conference, out-of-town guests will have a chance to experience what the Houston/Galveston area has to offer through trips to Six Flags Astroworld, Space Center Houston and the beach at Galveston.

Included in the conference activities will be Womyn's Night (September 2 from 7 pm to midnight) and the conference banquet (September 3 from 6:30-9:30 pm). All conference activities will take place at the Wyndham Warwick Hotel, 5701 Main Street. For general information, contact Brian at (713) 802-1544 TTY via Texas Relay (800) 735-2988.

LOCAL GROUP HOME FOR PEOPLE WITH AIDS SEEKS RESIDENTS

Special Needs Alliance, a nonprofit organization established to provide affordable housing to people with AIDS, plans to open its first group home located in the Montrose area and is presently seeking PWAs to be the first residents.

The facility will house approximately 5 residents, with individual bedrooms, two and one-half baths and common living, dining and kitchen areas. Three to four more homes with similar semi-independent living arrangements in the same neighborhood are scheduled to open by the end of this year. Eventually, Special Needs Alliance plans to provide permanent, long-term housing to 40-50 clients within 11 buildings in what they term as the Fairgrounds Project.

If you are interested or would like more information, please contact T. E. Kolbold, Executive Director, at 2308 Mason Street, Houston, Texas 77006, (713) 524-7824.

SUPPORT LOCAL AIDS ORGANIZATIONS WHEN YOU TRAVEL IN PRIDE

Travel in Style, a full-service travel agency located in the Galleria area, now makes it possible for a portion of your expenses used in making travel arrangements to be donated to three local non-profit AIDS charities. "Travel in Pride," as the program is called, will benefit Body Positive/Houston, Bering Community Service Foundation and Southeast Texas Legal Clinic.

The program is simple. When calling Travel in Style for your travel reservations, mention "Travel in Pride" and a full 30 percent of the sales commission from the reservation will be divided among the three organizations.

A kick-off party for "Travel in Pride" will be held August 29, 6 pm, at the 611 Club, 611 Hyde Park. The party will include door prizes, such as T-shirts, hats and CDs, as well as a raffle, free hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar.

LOCAL ACTIVIST WINS RECOGNITION AS NATIONAL AIDS CAREGIVER

Tori Williams, Regional Director of Design Industry Foundation for AIDS (DIFFA)-Houston, has been selected as a recipient of the inaugural National AIDS Caregiver Recognition Award, administered by Mary Fisher's Family AIDS Network, Inc. Williams was nominated for the honor by Houston Clinical Research Network (HCRN), a Houston-based, nonprofit research organization.

Williams has been an AIDS specialist for the United Way of Texas Gulf Coast since 1987 and was also volunteer coordinator and special projects administrator

for the Foundation for Interfaith Research and Ministry (FIRM). Furthermore, Williams founded the Pet Patrol, a non-profit organization dedicated to caring for the pets of persons with HIV/AIDS.

The National Outstanding Caregiver Awards are designed to offer gratitude and respite to the recipients and to heighten awareness of the critical and often heroic role played by caregivers in the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The Family AIDS Network exists to fight HIV/AIDS by transforming concern and awareness into effective action and compassionate commitment.

TWO LESBIAN AND GAY HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS JOIN TO FORM NEW ASSOCIATION

The National Lesbian and Gay Health Foundation and the National Alliance of Lesbian and Gay Health Clinics have announced plans to merge and form a new health-care association called the National Lesbian and Gay Health Association (NLGHA).

Headquartered in Washington, D.C., NLGHA will provide health education and policy leadership, with a particular focus on national health-care policy and funding issues, resource development for lesbian and gay health, and technical assistance to emerging lesbian and gay health centers.

NLGHA will also be dedicated to participating in the advancement of national health-care reform on behalf of the lesbian and gay community, responding to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and increasing the availability of lesbian health services.

DIZINGER FOUNDATION PROPOSES LOCAL AIDS MEMORIAL

The Dizinger Foundation has recently proposed a Houston AIDS Memorial for the over 6,000 people who have died from AIDS in the Houston area and the many more who will continue to die in the future. The proposed memorial would consist of natural, rough-hewn stones, each bearing the name of a person who has died of AIDS set in a dignified, landscaped park conducive to meditation and reflection.

The memorial would create a powerful emotional bond between the public and those who have died of AIDS. The simple and self-evident nature of the memorial (i.e., names carved on individual stones) would embody compassion, solidarity and personal and collective remembrances.

For more information, or if you would like to commission a stone for a friend, partner or family member, contact the Dizinger Foundation at 522-8660.

COMMUNITY FORUM TO BE HELD ON HIV/AIDS HOUSING NEEDS

The River Oaks Health Association (ROHA), a nonprofit organization currently providing social, mental and physical health programs to HIV/AIDS patients, will host a community forum on HIV/AIDS housing needs and solutions. The goals of ROHA include both an interim emergency shelter for displaced PWAs and a long-term housing program with subsidized rents and utilities.

"With more than 30,000 known cases of HIV/AIDS in the Houston area, the existing programs through AIDS Foundation Houston and The Community Endowment Foundation are overwhelmed," says Matt Locklin, Executive Director of the PWA housing program. "A disabled person living on Social Security income receives around \$440 to \$790 a month in benefits—it is hardly enough to pay rent and utilities at fair market rate and have enough for food, clothing and medicines as well."

The community forum will be held at 12 noon, Saturday, August 20, at 1414 W. Clay. Individuals willing to lease or donate real estate for the project, HIV/AIDS community leaders with experience in housing advocacy, and HIV+ persons likely to use these services are encouraged to attend. For more information, call 902-2231.

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Oh, la la! The Board of Directors of The Assistance Fund, a nonprofit organization formed to pay insurance premiums for AIDS patients until they qualify for Medicare, has announced its annual grand fundraising event. *Le Cirque Fantastique* features the world renowned Pickle Family Circus in four performances at Wortham Center, September 26, 27 & 28, 1994.

The Pickle Family Circus is the first professional troupe in the Western Hemisphere to introduce the "new circus" renaissance. Rather than three rings of extravaganza, the Pickles have concentrated on the art of the circus. By integrating acrobatics, aerial work, balancing, juggling and wire walking with originally composed music, dance and themes or stories, the Pickles push the circus into a more theatrical format. Founded in 1974, PFC is known for its innovation, intimacy with the audience, "Olympian" clowning, effervescent ensemble work and a beloved four-piece jazz band.

High-profile Houstonians agreeing to serve as Celebrity Ring Masters for the performances include Nellie Connelly, Barney and Ellen Kogen, Faye and Louisa Sarofim and Martha Turner and KHM-FM's Susan Lennon and Larry Moon.

The PFC performs September 26-28, Monday-Wednesday at 7:30 p.m., with a matinee performance Tuesday morning at 10 a.m. Ticket prices are \$17.50/\$15 for adults and \$12.50/\$10 for children 12 and under. Group sales are available for parties of 12 or more. Tickets are available at Randall's Advantix locations or by calling 1-800-766-6048.

LE CIRQUE FANTASTIQUE SPONSORS GALA

On Sunday, September 25, 6:30-8:30 p.m., a Sponsor's Gala will take place at Honorary Chairman Jackson Hicks' restaurant JAGS. Under the direction

The Assistance Fund sponsors Fundraiser with The Pickle Family Circus



of Event Directors Richard Flowers and Sandy Cazemier, the evening will feature performances by the Pickle Family Circus, live music for dancing, several Celebrity Ringmasters, a live auction and raffle, as well as food and drink provided by Jackson & Company. Gala tickets are \$75. For ticket information call 529-4788.

THE ASSISTANCE FUND

The Assistance Fund is a nonprofit organization which was established in 1988 to assist people with AIDS (PWA) in continuing their hospital insurance premiums and the cost of emergency prescriptions until they qualify for coverage under Medicare. However, as the AIDS epidemic continues to rise, the

financial demands on The Assistance Fund becomes even greater. The Assistance Fund Board estimates that there will be a 20 percent increase in demand for services this year, with some insurance premiums increasing as much as 200 percent.

The cost of caring for persons with AIDS creates an extreme financial burden for the patients, their families and their employers. Often patients lose their jobs and are left without any financial means to maintain their medical needs.

One of the only organizations of its kind in the United States, The Assistance Fund, to date, has been strictly a volunteer organization, with more than 97 percent of all funds going to the direct benefit of clients in Houston. ▼

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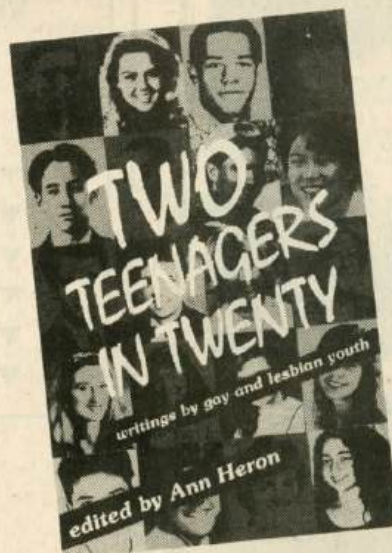
BOOK REVIEWS BY ERIC L. ROLAND

Two Teenagers in Twenty: Writings by Gay and Lesbian Youth

edited by Ann Heron
Alyson Publications, 1994, 187 pp, \$17.95

Their voices can be heard by simply opening the book. Some are crying out for help, some are overwhelmed with fear and anxiety, yet most are filled with pride, happy to have come to terms with their sexual identity at an early age.

These are the voices of 43 young adults who have written their personal accounts about being gay, lesbian or bisexual for the book *Two Teenagers in Twenty* edited by Ann Heron. In 1982, Heron compiled the predecessor to this book, *One Teenager in Ten*, which was the first



book ever to allow dozens of teenagers to describe what it is like to be gay or lesbian in a society that wants to ignore or condemn them. This edition documents the voices of a new generation, combining essays from the original with 19 new stories.

All of the stories, to say the least, are compelling. Many of the adolescents describe traumatic circumstances upon coming out to

family or friends. Seventeen-year-old Jim tells of being committed to a mental institution by his parents. After being released and moving in with his lover, his Catholic parents, with the help of private detectives, had he and his lover arrested claiming they were running a drug and pornography operation. After the charges were dropped, Jim's mother wrote to him saying, "They [gays] are programming you for suicide. . . . God help you because you cannot help yourself."

Sixteen-year-old Michael tried to commit suicide and subsequently spent four months in a mental hospital. Upon release he joined a support group for young gays and now offers this advice to other gay teens: "Being gay is not the end of the world. Be strong. I don't want anyone to end up dead like I almost did. Thank God I didn't."

Unfortunately, 16-year-old Elizabeth was not as lucky. In one of the more poignant moments in the book, Heron includes an editor's note following Elizabeth's story—a true cry for help—stating that the young lesbian, after a failed attempt at suicide, a six-month stay at a mental hospital and a schizophrenia diagnosis, overdosed on her own prescription medication.

Despite the despair described in these few stories, the majority are uplifting, intelligent mini-autobiographies. These kids are proud of who they are and completely understand how much they've accomplished at such an early age.

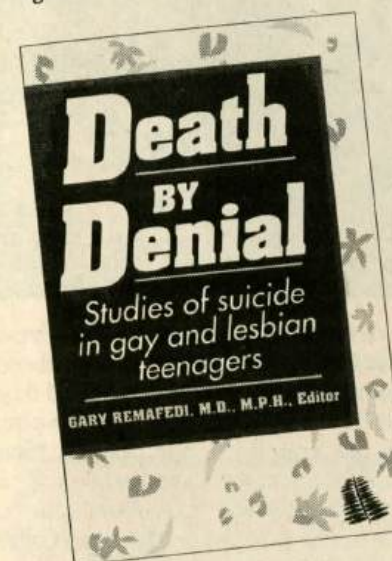
Wanting to feel "one hundred percent comfortable and content" with his homosexuality before he came out to anyone, 20-year-old Gary "researched" through reading books and pamphlets and by talking to other gays and lesbians. He sums up his coming-out experience by saying: "There have been difficulties, and it was definitely a risk, but the resulting rewards and freedom made it worth all the planning and waiting. Now my life is in the world, and only my clothes are in the closet."

The authors of these stories come from all parts of the U.S.—from San Diego to Seattle, from Gillett, Arkansas to Moorhead, Mississippi, and from Minnesota to Rhode Island. They range in age from 24 years old down through the teens with the youngest author being 12-year-old Nicole, whose 17-year-old brother Gary's story precedes hers. She writes: "I know you people think I'm young, but I know how I feel. I never liked any boys. But I've liked a lot of girls."

Heron says that, unfortunately, the sense of isolation and despair in the new stories is stronger than those she received a decade ago

for *One Teenager in Ten*. She urges everyone to reach out to the gay and lesbian youth of this country. "You're not recruiting. You're not even advocating. You're simply saving lives." Along with everyone's help and this book, coming out may be made a whole lot easier for the next generation.

"Each coming-out story is unique," writes 24-year-old Rick. He is right. Each of our own coming-out stories vary as much as those contained in this book. But Rick goes on to say that coming out is a long process: "... the story has not ended, because I am continually coming out. I will always need to reaffirm the goodness of my gayness and share that pearl with people I care about. I am coming out." Again, he is right.



Death by Denial: Studies of suicide in gay and lesbian teenagers

edited by Gary Remafedi, M.D., M.P.H.
Alyson Publications, 1994, 205 pp, \$9.95

For more sociologically scientific research on the subject of suicide among gay and lesbian teenagers, *Death by Denial* will answer any question. Containing some of the top studies and their findings conducted on the subject of lesbian/gay teenage suicide, the book includes many shockingly sad statistics.

"In the U. S. alone, suicide is the third leading killer of youth, accounting for 14 percent of all deaths in the teen age-range," Remafedi writes in his introduction. "For uncertain reasons, teenage suicide rates have risen by more than 200 percent since 1960, as compared to a 17 percent increase in the general population."

Furthermore, teenagers struggling with issues of sexual orientation were three times more likely than their peers to commit suicide,

according to a 1989 federal study. When this study, whose full findings are unveiled in this book, was completed, it was swept aside by the Bush administration. Yet the seriousness of this issue has not faded.

Not only do the eight essays explore and document the difficulties faced by teenagers who are coming out, but they also propose important recommendations to ease that process, making life for this special population easier and hopefully diminishing the chances of suicide. Especially important is the last chapter, "Making Schools Safe for Gay and Lesbian Youth." This is the study by The Massachusetts Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth that made it possible for Massachusetts to become the nation's first state to legally protect gay and lesbian youth from discrimination.

Remafedi, who is executive director of the Youth and AIDS Projects at the University of Minnesota, definitely believes "that the existing evidence points to an inordinate risk of suicide facing homosexual and bisexual youth." He encourages research funds to study the subject and strives to alert human services professionals and students to expand their understanding of this critical problem. "To ignore the problem now is a missed opportunity to save thousands of young lives, tantamount to sanctioning death by denial." ▼

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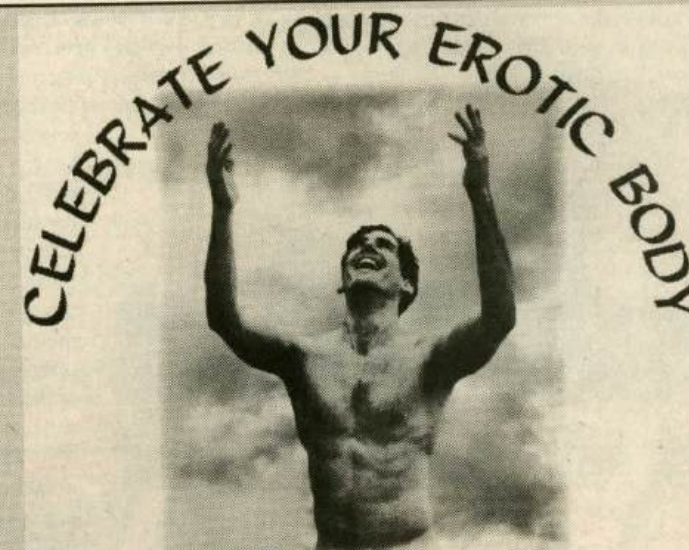
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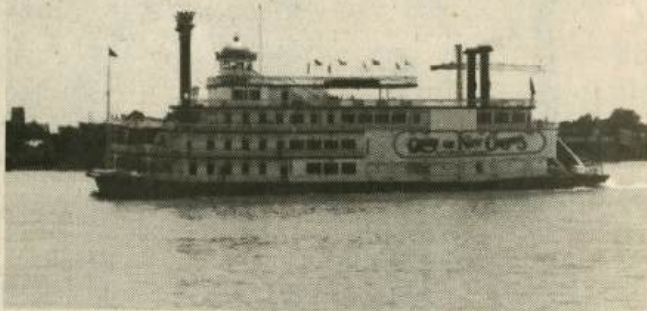
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NEW ORLEANS:

A Gay View of The Vieux Carre

BY EARLE E. DUTTON

New Orleans, home of the saints, Dixie beer and that spicy Cajun food everyone talks about, is probably best known for a small section of the city called the French Quarter. Known as the Vieux Carre to locals, the French Quarter is a tourist's dream. Actually contained within a couple of square blocks, this small neighborhood with its French-inspired culture, is much like a European city in the heart of the southern U.S. You don't need a passport to visit this city, and its location makes it conveniently within driving distance of Houston for weekends or more extended trips. Anything in the French Quarter or adjoining Faubourg Marigny is within walking distance of most hotels or guest houses in the area. You can also take a walk up to Canal St. and catch the streetcar to visit uptown and St. Charles Avenue.



The French Quarter is packed with restaurants, art galleries, museums, gift shops, bars and many other sights, sounds and smells. It is probably the largest area in the South that is almost 100% gay or gay-friendly. There is a hazy line of demarcation between gay and straight bars and businesses, but visit places like Pat O'Briens, one of the most famous bars in the Quarter, and you'll see just as many gays and lesbians as straight patrons.

The city of New Orleans has some of the most exotic and spicy foods in the country, with new restaurants and chefs arriving daily. In the French Quarter, you can find just about any type of food you could desire. There are enough restaurants and cafes in the area to eat a different one at every meal for several days and never eat at the same place twice. It doesn't matter if you like beignets (French donuts) or squirrel gumbo, there is a place for you at the table. Fresh seafood, being caught and delivered on a daily basis, is served in most eating establishments, and, although Tabasco is one of the common spices found in the food and on the table, not everything on the menu will set your mouth aflame.

Walking through the neighborhood, you will notice an abundance of small boutiques with anything from antiques to leather whips. Antiques can be found in practically every other store, from the most exquisite and exclusive shops to the bazaar at the French Market, as well as uptown on Magazine Street. Since pricing is very competitive, try bargaining a bit; but if they are stubborn, you can probably find it someplace. The availability of handmade goods in the area is astounding in itself. There are leather workers, seamstresses, candle makers, iron

workers, painters, and many other fine artists. Since Mardi Gras is one of the most celebrated holidays in the area, you can also find shops with handmade costumes and masks that truly rival any available to us in Houston. Photographs of city are too numerous to count, and just about every shop that you wander into has at least one postcard or photograph of the French Quarter.

If you are interested in art, you are in for a treat. New Orleans is home to many famous fine-art galleries, including some private galleries exclusive to the area. Some of the private galleries have art studios, where you can watch

Continued on page 52



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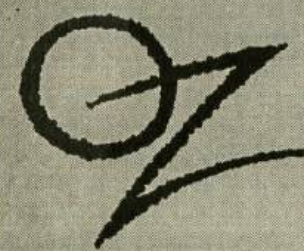
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On Being A Gay Man:

Part II

Midlife: Between the Ages of 40 and 60

Many young gay men will not believe this statement, but it is true: Older gay men have a much greater sense of inner peace, feelings of content and higher quality of life than younger gay men. In the last 25 years, gay people have continued upon a long journey of self-discovery. We have refused to be "defined" and "explained" by the so-called experts and authorities on human behavior, because we have realized through time and experience that WE ARE the best authorities about ourselves.



BY BILL SCOTT, LMSW-ACP



By and large, all the information you read about gay men and lesbians prior to 1969 indicated that we were bad, sick and needed to be "taken care of," which usually meant being locked away, removed from society, and/or cured of our homosexuality. Most of the information about older gay and lesbian people during this time was based upon a universal stereotype of lonely, frustrated, miserable people. We always knew this was wrong, based in ignorance and an attempt by these so-called experts to convert us to heterosexuality before it was too late.

In the last 25 years, we have moved from a more hidden population to a more open, relaxed and visible community. We have moved from a place of little or no support outside the individual self to highly structured community. However, while we advanced from the inaccurate and negative portraits of gay midlife and aging that used to depress us, we still have little information that has been collected on the impact of midlife and maturity for gay men in our society. We have learned over the years that older gay men are diverse, in both lifestyle and emotional well-being. Older gay persons also have distinct transitions and crises associated with their self-image, their sexual orientation and identity, their sexuality, their health and their efforts in seeking and/or maintaining long-term relationships.

TRANSITION VS. CRISIS

However, before we can explore these issues, two questions first need to be addressed as we examine the "journey to maturity": What do we mean by midlife? What do we mean by the related terms of "transition" and "crises"?

In order to answer the first question, we need to first explore the various age ranges that have been identified by different authorities to represent midlife. Research psychologist Daniel Levinson says, "Various discussions of mid-life crisis refer to times of great difficulty in the 'middle-years' which may cover any part of the span from 35 to 65." In contrast, behaviorist Roger Gould refers to the "mid-life decade as 35 - 45 years of age with critical examination of mid-life transition beginning in the late 30's." In the writings of psychologist Carl Jung, the period after age 35 signifies the period in which quality of life surpasses quantity of life in importance and in fulfilling emotional needs.

For purposes of this discussion, we will refer to the period beginning at about age 35 and extending to approximately age 65. If there is one theme that is central to this population, it is an awareness or recognition of "time left in life," of our personal finiteness, which means limited time and experience to achieve what we think should be personally

experienced and achieved. This realization or acceptance then becomes our transition.

Now that we have answered the questions of "What is midlife?" and "What do we mean by transition?", we are ready to determine what is meant by "crisis." In the simplest terms, it can be defined as "an upset in a steady state"—our "steady state" being our ongoing efforts to maintain, adapt, and problem-solve as we achieve our basic needs for survival, security, self-esteem and love. Thus, the objective of this discussion is to examine ways we can maintain our steady state during the transition of midlife and to address crisis, whether in the form of serious illness of self or others, changes in appearance and self-image, diminished sexual activity and/or other issues that affect our shift from one life structure (early adulthood) to midlife.

We realize that there are both positive and negative aspects of maturity, but we must also look at the relationship between the transition or adjustment to midlife and our understanding of what it means to be gay. Just as the adolescent looks forward to the future, remembering the personal past in ways that are believed to be consistent with future attainment, persons at midlife begin to use memory of the past as a guide to solving problems. Another factor that appears in the research about adults and midlife is the increasing evidence of a "midlife introversion" or looking inward for personal growth and awareness. The transformation to midlife is characterized by:

- An increasing preoccupation with the meaning of life (This has become even more intense for gay men because of HIV/AIDS.)
 - Taking stock of personal accomplishments and disappointments
 - Diminishing interest in various ties with relatives, particularly in those we perceive as obligatory
 - An awareness of self-mortality fostered by the illnesses (HIV/AIDS) and/or deaths of parents, other family members and friends
 - Acceleration of feelings of self-mortality due to multiple loss with early isolation, loneliness and depression
 - Lessened interest in taking on new challenges
 - Lessened anxiety about direction of life and career.
- Other aspects on the journey to maturity that need to be addressed include physical and biological changes and changes in motor development during the period of middle adulthood:
- Decline in vision and hearing
 - Fat accumulation
 - Changes in the activities of the heart and coronary arteries
 - Loss of elasticity in the muscle tone (or when

everything that has been facing north now starts going south)

- Settling of joints
- Graying of body hair
- Hair loss (or discovering hair in places that it's never been before)
- Decrease in gross motor skills (Good News/Bad News—Fine motor skills continue at a high level, enhanced by experience.)

Additionally, the primary focus of this journey to maturity is the impact of a changing sense of time and the use of memory to serve a new function: to maintain a sense of continuity

GAY PEOPLE DO NOT—OR, IN REALITY, ARE NOT ALLOWED TO—GO THROUGH THE SAME EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AS HETEROSEXUAL PEOPLE AT AGE-APPROPRIATE LEVELS. THUS A GOOD DEAL OF OUR EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS PUT ON HOLD UNTIL EARLY ADULTHOOD WHEN WE HAVE ACHIEVED SOCIAL, FINANCIAL AND EMOTIONAL INDEPENDENCE FROM OUR FAMILIES AND CAN BEGIN TO EXPERIENCE OUR FEELINGS AND EXPLORE OUR NEEDS AS GAY PEOPLE

and integrity. Persons in their 40s and 50s can experience particular disharmony, lowered morale, increased concerns about health and increased anxiety and depression. With advancing age, reminiscence becomes increasingly important as a part of taking stock of one's life, in letting go of dreams never realized and in settling accounts with the past. Then, we can proceed upon our journey to maturity.

GIVING PEACE A CHANCE

Men at midlife can become increasingly concerned with issues of personal comfort and seeking support from others. We increase the move away from reliance upon our mastery in solving problems at home and work. As a consequence of our increased awareness of the loss of time and the view of life as something finite, men at midlife can intensify concerns with self and display less patience for demands upon our time and energy, which are acutely experienced as being in short supply.

Realization of our goals and reworking the course of our lives in order to maintain a sense of personal clarity or harmony become important in middle age and require time and energy, which is less available for other pursuits (like

going back to school). The ability to let go of those goals and objectives we have not attained and accept the ending of life without a sense of discouragement provides us with some evidence that our efforts have been successful. Now begins inner peace.

In midlife we use our memories to give us a sense of belonging and to help us make sense of the world around us. This can be particularly challenging for gay men who reached maturity in a society with a historically hostile attitude toward gay and lesbian people. In understanding the role of memory in midlife, we need to remember the characteristics of our own emotional development and events unique to us as gay people. We need to review our specific turning points, which have generated our very unique and personalized styles of being gay and coping with the hostility of a heterosexist society. We also must remember that emotional and psychological development occurs throughout life at all ages.

We define basic psychological development by stages. In early infancy we must solve the emotional conflict between trust and mistrust of those around us. If our environment does not allow us to feel secure, we may never trust for the rest of our lives. In middle adulthood or midlife we must solve the conflict of generativity (continuing to create and grow) vs. stagnation, or caring vs. apathy. In late adulthood our challenge becomes integrity vs. despair or wisdom vs. irrationality. How gay people choose to manage these turning points unique to their lives will generate different styles of being gay and will effect their overall emotional development throughout their lives.

What we know from personal experience is that gay people do not—or, in reality, are not allowed to—go through the same emotional development as heterosexual people at age-appropriate levels. Thus a good deal of our emotional development is put on hold until early adulthood when we have achieved social, financial and emotional independence from our families and can begin to experience our feelings and explore our needs as gay people.

THE SELF-ACCEPTANCE FACTOR

Current psychological research of gay men appears to indicate a significant relationship between adjustment to later life and satisfaction with being gay. Additionally, current research indicates that adjustment in adult and middle-aged gay men is related to higher levels of disclosure (i.e., coming out) and greater social involvement within the gay community. According to psychologist Marcy Adelman (1992), "Generational differences do exist between middle aged gay people today and their pre-Stonewall era brothers and sisters. The avoidance of identification and minimum in-

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volvement with other gays in the pre-Stonewall era operated as the only successful adaptation to the negative status assigned to gay people by a hostile society. Fortunately for gay people today, homophobic cultural values are being challenged by a visible and viable gay community. This status brings gay people together and promotes self-esteem through self-affirmation, self-disclosure and identification with other gay people."

Our acceptance of ourselves, our socialization with those in our community and how we cope within a hostile heterosexual society contribute to our emotional development and successful adjustment to later life. Still, the transition to midlife can be stressful and problematic for individuals in Western societies. Gay men share many stresses of maturity with their heterosexual counterparts (about age 35-45). Career plateaus have been reached. Work is mastered. Promotions may end. Commitments made in the past may no longer provide satisfaction in the present or give guidelines for the future. Gay men may reflect more on what they are getting from work, relationships, family (biological and choice/extended) and friends.

THE NUMBERS SOMETIMES LIE

Because of the gay community's emphasis on youth, gay men can be considered to middle-aged and elderly by other gay men at an earlier age than heterosexual men in the larger society. Some research indicates that these age-status norms occur earlier in the gay community. When a group of gay males between the ages of 16 and 79 were asked when youth, middle age and old age began and ended, the majority saw youth as beginning before 18 years and ending around 30. Middle age spanned the years between 30 and 50, and old age was defined as 50 and over. Thus, gay men can think of themselves as middle-aged and old before their heterosexual counterparts do.

Research on gay men between the ages of 40 and 79, conducted by Raymond Berger, Ph.D. (1982), found evidence of polarization between younger and older gay men. His findings showed that:

- 47.4% of those surveyed only socialized with peers who were within ten years of their age or older.
- 53.7% felt that younger gays sometimes take advantage of older gays.
- 42.9% felt that gay bars and clubs were not as welcoming to older gays as to younger gays.
- 60.3% felt that most younger gay people wouldn't like to associate with older gay people.
- 31.5% felt that most younger gay people do not want to make friends with older gay people.
- 34.8% felt that most younger gay people think that older gay people are pretty dull. (Another 34.8% disagreed with this statement.)

This research would indicate that, to a great extent, older gay men do not associate with younger gay men and believe that younger gay men would react to them negatively. Due to the small amount of research in this area, we do not know if such negative

attitudes are real or imagined. I believe that, with the general feelings of ageism that exist in our society, it would not be surprising if younger gays did indeed reflect these attitudes about older gays. These feelings perpetuate a vicious cycle between each generation's attitude about the other. Negative attitudes lead to mutual avoidance—which leads to loss of communication, limited or no exposure to new beliefs and attitudes and, from a sociological view, a loss of continuity and sense of history within the gay community itself.

SMASHING THE STEREOTYPES

In light of this information, we must ask each other, "What role do mature gay men have in the gay community?" and "What responsibilities do we have to young gay men?" Do we continue what appears to be a generational split within our community, or do we actively pursue the functions of role model, mentor and teacher within our community?

Historically, there has been very little age-specific research of sexual activity in the gay community. Does sexual activity increase or decrease? Are we more, or less, sexually active than heterosexual men as we mature? Do our sexual needs change as we get older? Do our sexual tastes change as we mature? Currently, this is still being debated, and current studies must, of course, include the role that the HIV epidemic has played in changing our sexual identity.

As we noted earlier, the stereotypes of older gay men are being effectively challenged. Earlier societal myths of the aging gay man included:

- He no longer goes to bars.
- He has lost his physical attractiveness and sex appeal to the younger men he craves.
- He is oversexed, but his sex life is unsatisfactory.
- He has been unable to form a long relationship with a partner.
- He is seldom sexually active, and when he does have sex, it's usually anonymous public sex or with a prostitute.
- He has become an "old queen" as he has grown more effeminate.

These stereotypes began to disappear with a landmark study of the sex lives of older gay men by John Kelly in 1977, which indicated that their sex lives were very satisfactory and that most adult men desired sexual and emotional contact with men their own age or older.

Raymond Berger's *Gay & Gray*, a study of gay men between the ages of 40 and 79 years of age, indicated that the majority of men in the study (27.9%) reported an average frequency of same-sex relations of more than once and up to twice per week, but with the majority (57.1%) listing one sex partner and 36.7% reporting two, three or more sexual partners. In their responses to their level of individual satisfaction with their sex lives over a six-month period, 25.9% reported being "somewhat satisfied," 25.9% reported being "satisfied," and 21.4% reported being "very satisfied." Although this infor-

mation is over a decade old, it seems to indicate that more than likely the individual pattern of consistent sexual activity in earlier life carries over into later years.

Current research by Mark Pope and Richard Schultz (1991) of older gay men within the Chicago area indicates that 54% of men in this study between the ages of 40 and 49 reported having sex once per week, 34% in men 50 to 59 and 38% in the 60-and-over age range. Of the men studied, 91% considered themselves to be sexually active, with 90% describing themselves as having a moderate-to-strong sexual interest. Sixty-nine percent reported no change in their enjoyment of sex from their younger years to the present, with 13% reporting an increase in enjoyment.

We, as gay men, need a "framework to successful maturity." Because gay men live in a dual culture, we base our perceptions and beliefs about age in both a dominant heterosexual society, where age status is usually defined by legal and social conventions, and a youth-oriented sub-culture within the gay community, where age status is defined by sexual attraction. However, greater flexibility in gender-role definitions within the gay sub-culture have allowed mature gay men and lesbian women to develop higher levels of independence and self-sufficiency. These feelings and skills may be less developed in heterosexual people, who may be used to having or expecting a wife or husband to care for them.

In fact, recent research seems to suggest that, as a result of managing what it means to be gay in a heterosexual society, many gay and lesbian adults develop skills for managing their lives which facilitate the adjustment to the aging process presented here as a framework of successful maturity. The theory of this framework to successful maturity is based upon the idea that gay people who will age successfully are those whose identities are formed in an affirmative direction. This affirmative direction is in direct contrast to ageism or ageist assumptions that persons in midlife are less productive than younger people, more dependent on others, less sexual or asexual, or are less attractive or unattractive.

Given that such myths and stereotypes are the foundation for many of society's negative attitudes about midlife and aging, such beliefs can and must be challenged and reconstructed in positive and affirmative ways as with homosexuality. Access to more diverse models of what it means to be an older person is essential to the process of challenging stereotypes. These models include the presentation of mature people as active, productive, sexual and self-determined individuals.

An affirmative framework to successful maturity for gay people who have had experience in defining their roles of what it means to be gay or male, in their own terms, are more likely to be able to transfer these affirmative feelings to their identities as older people. Competence with crisis situa-

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tions, flexibility in gender roles and the ability to define our own meanings of homosexuality and maturity have very powerful affects on our own individual psychology. These factors, combined with our own affirmation of personal worth and daily living skills which promote feelings of competence and empowerment, are the key factors to the framework to successful maturity.

According to Dr. Franklin Kamney, a gay activist and research scientist, "Now that I am among those who are older, I do not merely sense that stereotyping is wrong, I know it is wrong from my own firsthand experience. My forties were better than thirties, and my fifties were better than my forties. When I leave my sixties I know they will have been better than my fifties. Life continues to be more rewarding, exciting and satisfying than I could have ever imagined when I was 20. My life is too full to permit misery or loneliness."

This also applies to people living with HIV within the context of "I don't have the time to be depressed or sad—I must live in the moment."

THE EXPANSIVE GAY NUCLEAR FAMILY

Our social support systems, which can include both biological families and families of choice (friends, lovers, social networks) can also be sources of affirming homosexuality as positive in a way that facilitates successful maturity. Some research indicates that, during the transition to midlife and maturity, many adults believe that their children or extended family will provide for them in their old age. With the greater longevity and current changes in family patterns, this type of social support is not always certain.

According to researcher Kenneth Dawson (1982), gay people have been less likely to assume that their families would provide for them in old age and are more likely to carefully plan for their future security. Additionally, another strength within the gay community is the re-definition of family, with a strong network of friendships and surrogate family members, which can include current lover, past lovers and friends in addition to biological family members.

Likewise, rather than simply replacing lost family support with the support of friends, gay people simply reinforce family support with that of lovers and friends. Gay people appear to be unique in this reinforcement of family, with our ability to include former and current lovers/affectional partners within our social support system. In the research of John Alan Lee (1991) of middle-aged gay couples in Canada, 47.7% reported close affectional and social relationships with former lovers. Raymond Berger also finds that gay men aged 60 and older share close relationships with former lovers and that current and former lovers are an important part of a gay man's social support system.

With regard to long-term relationships and life companions, these, too, become easier to maintain between the ages of 40 and 50. Without the pressure of having everything judged by peers, it becomes much easier to settle into a routine that fits both you and your partner. During this period of life, both partners are usually both settled in their careers/professions. Greater income allows increased security and more freedom of choices (real wealth is having choices!). Due to this heightened sense of maturity, many relationships of gay men between the ages of 40 and 50 can be very fulfilling and provide enhanced opportunities for intimacy and emotional growth.

In conclusion, midlife and aging are a significant part of the human experience. In our own journey to maturity, we can discover a greater capacity for caring, wisdom, integrity and inner peace. This time in our life can be recognizable by reduction in anxiety, less judgment of self and others, less involvement in relationships that don't provide enjoyment and better capacity for empathy and understanding. These changes in midlife are essential to our overall emotional well-being as we progress towards old age and prepare for the final stages of life.

In Part III, we will examine the older gay male and the quality of life for gays after the age of 60. (I wish to acknowledge the contributions and research of Harry Livesay, LMSW (c) to this article, and express my thanks for his hard work.)

Bill Scott, LMSW-ACP is a psychotherapist with New Counseling Center. For information regarding this article call 529-1913.

A Final Gift

by Connie Moore

This summer I attended the sorrowful, beautiful resurrection celebration for my friend Cathy Lenaban. I was comforted and touched by the songs and words that she had chosen to be presented to her family and friends after her death. Yes, I meant 'she had chosen.' Anyone that knew Cathy knew that she had every detail of her services planned, along with the rest of her mortal matters. She was a firm believer in taking care of business, and personal planning was part of that business.

Many persons do estate planning without ever taking into account what is going to happen to their body after death. Granted, for many this is a very difficult issue to consider. But consider the emotional state of your loved ones at the time of your death. Is it kind to add to that stress? And what happens if your loved ones can't agree on what arrangements should be made?

We often get questions from our clients about who controls the disposition of bodies after death. Many people assume that the person named as agent for health care will also be authorized to make arrangements after death. While that may happen occasionally, it is usually by agreement of the next of kin. If there is a dispute, the law is clear on who has priority in this decision.

Texas law provides that, unless a person properly leaves other written instructions for the disposition of remains, the priority of persons who can control the disposition is: the person designated in a written instrument signed by the decedent;

- the decedent's surviving spouse;
- any one of the decedent's surviving adult children;
- either one of the decedent's surviving parents;
- any one of the decedent's surviving adult siblings; or
- the adult person in the next degree of kinship by judgment of heirship.

We call the written instrument referred to in the first item of this list an Appointment of Agent to Control Disposition of Remains. The Texas Health and Safety Code defines the contents and the legal sufficiency of that document. Some people do not want their next of kin to have the legal right to make these decisions. In that case, the person can sign an Appointment of Agent to Control Disposition of Remains that gives another the right to



control the disposition of remains after death. That way, the person can choose who is to replace the legal next of kin for this decision. The agent and any alternates must agree to be named and also must sign the document. The statute gives the financial responsibility to the person named as agent if the estate does not have the funds for the disposition expenses. This method of planning gives the appointed agent the authority to make all necessary decisions.

Other acceptable methods for leaving written instructions to direct disposition of remains are in a will, a prepaid funeral contract,

or a written instrument signed and acknowledged by the person. This means that one can leave instructions regarding cremation, embalming, and other matters relating to the disposition of the body, instead of leaving someone in charge of making those decisions. One may also leave written instructions about the type of funeral or memorial service to be arranged. The instructions can be changed or modified only in writing. If the instructions are in a will, they must be carried out immediately without the need for probate first. This method of planning results in decisions about the details being made, instead of leaving a person in charge.

Some people are more concerned about what plans are to be made than who is going to make them. Others are more particular about who has the right to make the decisions. Either way, the easiest way to be certain that wishes are respected is to make them known in writing. This is a very important and often overlooked step in the personal documents planning process.

My friend Cathy planned for everything, down to the last detail. She made sure that her wishes would be taken seriously, and I am pleased to say that they were. Her final gift to us was to ease the pain and emptiness that her death caused.

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



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SARAH McLACHLAN:



Fumbling Toward Identity

It's understandable how Sarah McLachlan might have a burning drive to explore who she is. Since the age of 17, she's enjoyed and excelled at more than a half-dozen careers by recording hit CDs, touring, directing her own videos, designing her own promotional T-shirts and lending herself to an humanitarian excursion with World Vision relief organization to east Asia. Oh yes, she writes and performs all her own music, too. Busy gal.

In fact, even when she rented a cabin in the woods outside Montreal to "be with herself", she emerged from the wilderness with "Fumbling Towards Ecstasy", her newest and most successful release to date.

A native of Halifax, Nova Scotia, 26-year-old Sarah McLachlan has become, musically and lyrically, the gentle goddess of teen angst that has crossed over to equally embrace a more mature adult consciousness. With a presentation that's been described as a cross between Sinéad O'Connor and Joni Mitchell, McLachlan takes a stranglehold on her neuroses, sets them to music, and makes them our own. Or vice versa. No one is quite sure which.

Citing as reason the current trend of pronoun-less lyrics that may indicate a sexual orientation other than hetero, it is speculated that McLachlan might be the next addition to the list of mainstream lesbians soon to bolt out of the closet.

When we spoke, I was prepared to hold that door wide, wide open for her.

by Nancy Ford

NANCY FORD: Is there anything special you would most like to tell the people of Houston—gays, straights, lesbians, undetermined?

SARAH McLACHLAN: Figure out what you want and go for it.

Is that what you did?

Yeah. I think so. It took me a while to figure out that I had to figure stuff out. And I'm still figuring. But definitely, it's really cool that I can be in control of my own destiny. It's a good feeling.

In your song "Heaven," there is a passage that goes "I believe this is heaven to no one else but me." What's your heaven?

Ohhh, the place where I know who I am, where I can be exactly who I am and be accepted unconditionally for that.

Has that ever happened? Have you ever been there?

I've been pretty close, when I was by myself. That's the most important acceptance—accepting yourself. For a long time I didn't. I didn't have much confidence or faith in myself, because I didn't really know who I was.

I think being by myself for seven months really forced me to address a lot of things that I had been suppressing for many years. I'd just come off the road touring 14 months, and I also went to Thailand and Cambodia to help make a documentary film with World Vision. I felt like I had been through so much yet everything had moved by me so quickly that I didn't think any of it had sunk in. Or if it had, I had no time to deal with it, so it had just gotten put aside. So that time by myself was, for me, really necessary to let everything come to the surface.

How did the trip to Cambodia with World Vision come about?

They said they wanted a spokesperson, a female musician to be the voice of my generation.

That's a lot of responsibility.

No kidding. I said, "Can't I just go over and sing a song or something?" (She laughs at the preposterousness of the idea.) But they wanted me to take the journalist's approach of what was going on there, to the camera and to the audience.

"I don't tend to place gender as an issue anywhere... I think sexuality needs to be stated a lot more freely than it has been in the past."

What is World Vision?

It's a religious, nonprofit organization that funds relief projects all over the world for various reasons. They build schools, they build hospitals, medical facilities, they teach people [AIDS awareness]. One of the biggest focuses, especially in Thailand, is the sex trade. We went into a lot of really heavy situations. Thailand hurt me as far as being a woman because these young girls are being incredibly abused and mistreated and left completely helpless. One of the things World Vision is trying to do is to go in and actually get them at the train stations before the pimps did, and take them to a home where they could stay over night, and be put into a program where they could be taught a trade.

Truly a race for life.

Yeah. Absolutely. It was wild. All these guys who were standing around, just waiting and watching for the young girls to come in off the trains.

Recruiters?

Absolutely. It literally was a race. That was a really hard thing to see, as a woman. As far as Cambodia, that was much more traumatic—just as a human being—to really get a clear picture of how horrific people can be to each other, what with the Khmer Rouge and the mass genocide that happened.

It's amazing that you could pull yourself out, to be creative and put pen to paper after an experience like that.

It took me a long time before I could. My initial reaction was being incredibly jaded and being horrified and hating everybody—to think that this is going on today as well, and nothing has changed! We've learned nothing!

Well, to quote one of your songs, "Every generation yields the newborn hope unjaded by their years—"

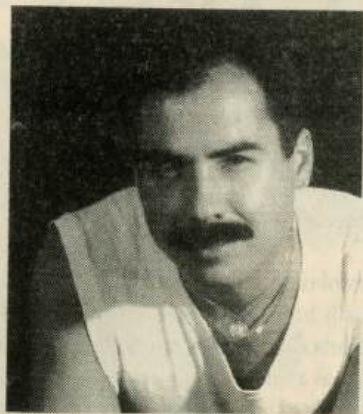
—which comes pretty much directly out of that [World Vision experience]. People say this is the enlightened generation. Well yeah, sure, when you're in your twenties, you are a radical and you'll try and make change. But by the time you're thirty, you're either sucked into the system or you're a total outcast.

Is that the impetus behind your music—you want to make a change?

Inevitably. Yeah. I have to say that, first and foremost, it's an incredibly selfish thing. I do it to please myself; I do it to learn about myself and try to get ahead, try to figure out what I'm all about and what everything else is all about.

Your press notes refer to your writing "Fumbling" as a kind of therapy.

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Writing always has been therapy. It's become more so and more so as my song-writing skills have progressed. For me, it's a way of figuring stuff out, a way of getting and working through stuff that affects me strongly emotionally usually, whether it's dealing with my past, dealing with things around me, or dealing with things my friends have been affected by.

Like what?

The most obvious is relationships failing.

Tell me about it!

(She laughs again.) Generally it's fundamentally pretty much the same. We've all been through shitty relationships. We've all had people mistreat us. We've probably mistreated people at the same time. It's a fascinating topic for me—the psychology of the human brain and how and why we do things. It's always a reaction to something else, whether it's recent past or distant past. For me, it's trying to figure out myself in relation to all that, and where I sit. It's a process of finding out who I am, really.

Your liner notes say writing helps you overcome long-standing fears.

Someone else wrote that. (More laughter.) I'm working on it. I'm not necessarily there, but any kind of therapy, generally you're trying to deal with something so it doesn't bother you anymore, or you can at least put it to rest. You can understand it a little better, and that's what the songs are for me. A lot of it's projection. I say "I won't fear love." That doesn't necessarily mean I won't, it just means I'm working on it. (Even more laughter.) This is what I wish for.

We do all aspire, don't we? In your song "Plenty," it sounds to me like there are some serious abandonment issues going on there. What was the inspiration for that?

Yeah—the ultimate jilted relationship song. How do I say this?—I told myself a huge lie. I got myself into a relationship where I decided that this was the perfect guy. And that was it. So I projected the perfected man onto him, and expected him to be that. When

he fell seriously short of it I was terribly offended.

Through no one's fault but our own, I guess—

Absolutely. It was an amazing thing; I couldn't believe I allowed myself to deceive myself to such a degree. But it was one of the best relationships I've ever been through because of what it taught me in the end.

We're representing a lesbian/gay magazine here—OutSmart. You have a tremendous gay/lesbian following.

So everybody tells me.

What do you attribute that to?

Probably the sexual ambiguity of my songs. I don't tend to place gender as an issue, except on occasion when I actually talk about women, whether it's the sisterhood and friendship or whether it goes further. I don't like to put boundaries on it, because I think sexuality needs to be stated a lot more freely than it has been in the past.

You very, very seldom use pronouns in your lyrics.

Mm Hmm.

Is that intentional?

Yeah, pretty much. One of the only songs that has sort of an actual gender thing is Good Enough. You could take it as far as a woman saying to another woman "I'll take better care of you than this guy."

A group of my friends and I were talking about that very song the other night. It has very heavy lesbian overtones.

Mm Hmmm. But you can also parallel that with a mother/daughter relationship, or a simple female friendship. You can take it to lots of different levels. That's what I like—that it's ambiguous that way.

You appeal to a much broader spectrum of audience that way. There is a lot of speculation what "Possession" is about.

(She chuckles.) Some people say it's about battered women, some people say it's about a lesbian love relationship. There's something about the line "I will hold you down, kiss you so hard, I'll take your breathe away" that is intrinsically lesbian.

(She hoots, laughing wildly.) Really? How curious. I think that's great. When people ask me to be specific about what my songs mean, my first reaction is: "What does it mean to you?" Whatever their answer is, I say, "Well, that's what it is. It means something different to me, but I basically told you as much as I plan to tell you, in the song, as to what it's about to me." If they really push me, I'll go into detail.

Well then, I hope you don't mind if I push a little.

"Possession" turned into a lot of different things, but initially it was inspired by letters I got from male friends who went really, really over the top, as far as their adoration and the fantasies they created and placed me in with them. It got kind of frightening because I don't know these people.

There's a fine line between a fan and a stalker, isn't there?

Very much so, very much so.

I think it would surprise a lot of people to learn that that was the basis for that song. Re-reading the lyrics, it certainly makes sense.

Yeah, but once again, on the outside it's a love song. It's got that same sort of thing as "Every Breath You Take." If you tend to go inside the lyrics and read what's behind them you think, "Oh this is kind of screwed up."

Let me ask you about "Ice Cream." The liner notes say this song is 'the result of your new-found ability to find inspiration and happiness.' What's making you happy enough to write about ice cream?

Well, the main thing, as I mentioned before, was being by myself and finding completeness in myself for the first time, without needing anybody to fill a hole. From that

point I could have a relationship with somebody and truly give myself to them, wholly and totally because I felt comfortable enough to do so. I'm still in this relationship and it's absolutely amazing.

How long has it been?

It's been about a year and a half now.

Congratulations. That's almost five years in lesbian years.

(Laughter.) Well, I want to have kids, and I've been searching for a good dad, too, because I want there to be two people raising this kid or these kids. And he's so into it. So I'm very lucky.

Well, you sound happy.

I am. And I do also have that feeling that if a person is really good and really happy and peaceful that—this may sound a bit corny, but I totally believe it—that they really shine.

I believe that, too.

If other people see that light shining—if it shines a bit onto their lives—then I really believe that can make a difference. I've met people who are like that and they've been amazing inspirations to me. I kind of dig that notion, that I can give other people happiness.

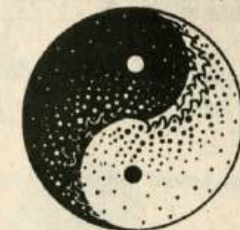
You certainly give a lot of people happiness, but at the same time you need to be aware that you are breaking a lot of lesbian hearts by being straight. (Laughter, hooting laughter.) It's a big topic of conversation in my neighborhood. It's impossible; you can't possibly be Het, the way you write.

(More laughter.) I love it! How flattering!

So what do you say to these broken-hearted women?

I smile. (Stuttering, stammering.) There's this one woman I know I met a couple months ago in Montreal who is just totally over the top.

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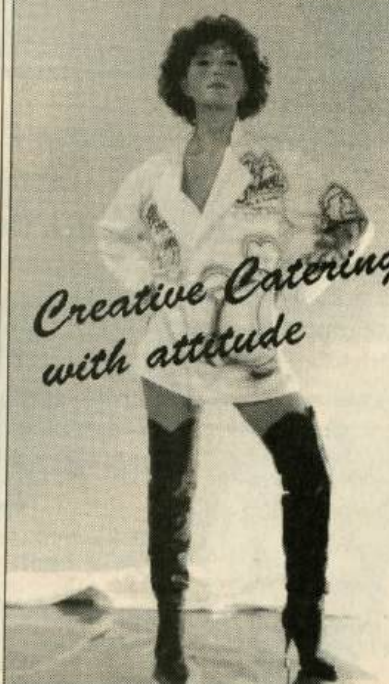


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Her nature. She's very touchy. She says, "Man, you've got a great ass, girl!" (Laughter.) So I blush and say thank you.

What's her number?

(More laughter.) Exactly! The wildest thing is, she got a big tattoo of my face on her arm!

Like Tom Arnold and Roseanne?

That was a bit frightening. She tells me, "Don't worry, I'm not a psycho."

Hmm. "Let me permanently scar my body for you, but I'm no psycho." So this was not the lick-on type of tattoo?

No siree, this was the permanent kind.

That 's the true measure of stardom, if someone tattoos themselves with your image.

A couple months ago, somewhere in the south, this fellow came up to me and asked if

I could sign his back. I said, "Oh come on, why don't you get me to sign a piece of paper or something; I'd rather not sign your body." But he turned around and slipped up his shirt, and he had his whole back covered in one of my drawings. They really do lend themselves toward tattoos.

I'm looking at the "Fumbling Towards Ecstasy" liner notes. The illustrations are so biological.

Yeah, the labias. Flying labias. Aren't they great?

Tell me about those. Were they inspired by a dream, or was this your friend with the tatoo?

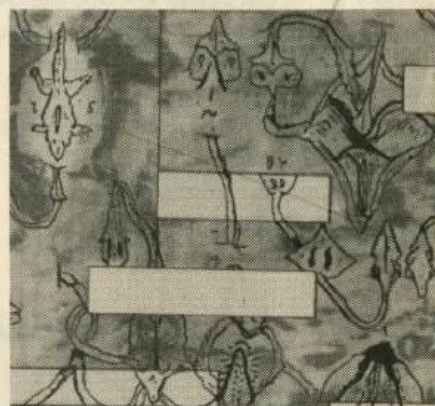
This is actually not my work—this is a friend of mine, Graham Gilmore. It's part of a painting that's about 15 feet long. I can't explain what any of this stuff means, except I love to look at it, because it is extremely vaginal and floral and luscious and erotic.

Sarah, are you sure you're not a lesbian?

(Wild laughter.) Ummmmm... fairly sure. I've kissed girls before...

Well, we'll leave that door open.

No, I'm a penis girl. I really am. But mind you, I'm not opposed to—



That's when Sarah McLachlan referred to her not being opposed to a certain lesbian sexual practice that left me, for all intents and purposes, speechless and breathless.

Oh, we should stop this right now. It's getting bad.

—and the closet door slammed shut. But that's all right. It's still an immense comfort to have "penis girl" Sarah McLachlan, straight though she may be, in our pronoun-less corner.

...
Nancy Ford is a Houston-based comedian and frequent contributor to the gay and lesbian press.

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To Tell or Not To Tell Or Don't Ask Don't Tell



Any person who is HIV positive eventually is confronted with the dilemma of telling someone of their HIV status. People will often choose to tell friends, family members and employers at some stage of their HIV infection. A question often asked in my office is "When should I tell a person I am dating that I am HIV positive?" Although this question surely doesn't have one correct answer, I would like to share with you some factors which might indirectly assist in the "best" answer for you. I have assisted many individuals in finding their own answer to this question, as well as having had a great deal of feedback from the "other side" of this issue.

BY
PATRICK J. VACHON, LMSW-ACP

First of all, there seems to be a common theme as to why this question is even asked. Because of the overriding perceptions of HIV and our cultural view of death, many, if not all, HIV-positive people have a great fear of rejection. This fear is certainly not without basis, as many, many people continue to be unable or unwilling to befriend, associate with or date people who are HIV positive. Countless stories have been told of family, friends and lovers who abandoned or disowned their sons, daughters, friends and lovers due to their HIV struggle or status.

There are certainly many opinions as to the best time to advise someone of one's HIV status depending on the perspective taken. From a health perspective, one might suggest that a sexual partner be notified before engaging in sexual activity. But then, the question or statement generally follows about safe sex: "If I'm playing safe why does it matter?" This question is followed by "I have a right to know" followed by "You should treat everyone as if they are positive!" As you see, there is always another response to the previous statement or question. Sound confusing? Well it is! A fairly basic reality is that honesty will "run off" some potential partners. I have found that, if the intentions are purely sexual, most people will somehow rationalize away telling their sexual

partners immediately of their HIV status, and in fact, most partners truly don't want to know. This denial often leads to behaviors that are less safe than if both partners are consciously aware. Most people seem to be more responsible when the words are spoken than if just an assumption of status is the guide.

A somewhat more difficult question arises for individuals who may be interested in something more than a sexual adventure or one night stand. If a person is more interested in a long-term relationship or dating, they often state that they want to let the other person get to know them before breaking the news. It is assumed that this will enable the couple to connect enough to override the bad news, increasing the potential for the relationship to continue. On the other side, however (assuming the person has an issue about it), the person will generally ask "Why didn't you tell me before?" This issue almost always puts the HIV-positive person in a double-bind or no-win situation. To further complicate this issue, it is believed by most HIV-positive people that only a select few HIV-negative people would consciously get involved with someone who is HIV positive. This belief would likely intensify the fear of rejection and substantiate the choice not to tell.

It is likely apparent, therefore, that the

choice as to when to tell a date or sexual partner is subject to these and potentially many other underlying agendas and fears. There is, however, one general source of guidance: Listen to your inner voice! If you find yourself becoming uncomfortable because you have not told your partner, then there is a pretty good chance that not telling him would conflict with your inner value system. This conflict would potentially result in some future regret, which will be overall unsupportive to your sense of self. The answer, therefore, would be to tell the person directly, relieving yourself of any future guilt or remorse. Then, of course, you have to deal with the outcome!

On this point, I would like to make a very strong statement: If a person rejects someone solely because of their HIV status, it is much more likely a result of that person's unresolved issues and NOT ABOUT YOU!!!! I have found that the more secure a person is with their own HIV-positive status, the more it becomes a non-issue, and rejection is perceived differently and understood.

In addition, if the dating process leads to a point where you begin to feel anxious about your partner not knowing, it is probably a good idea to go ahead and discuss it. This seems to be the most effective route, because not doing so will likely result in the issue surfacing in some other form. Clients of mine sometimes find themselves pushing away from dates sexually, physically or socially, fearing that closeness might lead to sexual activity which has not yet been discussed. Energy between two individuals is often directed into areas which are safer from the potential of being sexual, which sometimes deprives the two of physical and emotional connection. In addition, I have found that some people actually become impotent because of this issue. What better way to avoid the issue of bodily fluids than not being able to get an erection. The mind has a wonderful way of protecting us where we are.

As stated earlier, if an HIV-positive person chooses to tell his date of his status and if rejection does occur, it is more about the person that has been told. It is certainly helpful to keep in mind that many people have not (for whatever reason) had many interactions with HIV-positive people. Their fear often overrides them, and they may be unable to continue with a sexual or dating experience. In addition, some other people may have had previous experiences with HIV/AIDS and may still be recovering from the pain. Getting involved again may not be the best choice for either person until some level of healing has occurred. It is certainly helpful to re-envision these people as fearful, rather than presuming

character flaws, calling them names or taking the rejection personally. Seeing the person as scared often relieves some of the rejection felt by the person telling. After all, I truly believe that, if each of us looked deep enough, we could identify with the fear and potentially forgiveness would prevail.

If a person rejects someone solely because of their HIV status, it is much more likely a result of that person's unresolved issues and NOT ABOUT YOU!!!!

A not-so-functional adaptation to not telling or not asking is that it often keeps people stuck in their own denial. This allows individuals to avoid confronting issues that in most cases would best be addressed for sexual, emotional, spiritual and physical reasons. As stated earlier, many people will behave differently in sexual situations if HIV status is known. The treat-everyone-as-if-they-are-HIV-positive rule often goes out the denial window in the midst of sexual or emotional intensity. Not knowing also denies the opportunity to utilize partners as a mirror to the issues that would bring up our innermost fears, such as mortality and aban-

donment, which could likely benefit from confrontation and healing.

I would like to suggest also that we begin to consider a shift in some of the responsibility on this issue. I have heard all too many times "Well, he didn't tell me." My general response is "Did you ask?" Regardless if a person is HIV-positive or -negative, the issue can be brought up in conversation. The responsibility is not exclusively that of "the other person." If HIV is an issue for you (and I hope it is), then take responsibility and ask your partner of their status—AND honest disclosure of your own status goes without saying. It would seem that gay people, most of all, would be able to identify

that a don't-ask-don't-tell mentality just doesn't work.

If, as a culture, we can open up and be honest, the potential is that we will desensitize ourselves to this issue, address the underlying issues and ultimately reduce or eliminate the shame and fear that prevail. ▼

Patrick J. Vachon LMSW-ACP is a Certified IMAGO Relationship Therapist in private practice at New Counseling Center and can be reached at (713) 529-1913.

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THE RELIGIOUS WRONG

LIONS 3 / CHRISTIANS 7

"The Religious Wrong" is the first in a three-part series on the personal, political, and spiritual ramifications of the hate-mongering, fundamentalist religion, right-wing movement.

BY LACEY LEWIS



I'm not sure when the transformation began, but like most things in life, its origins can probably be traced back to the "Collective Childhood Experience." What I absolutely do know is that, as a child, I was very confused about religion, and I had an attraction to the spiritually persecuted.

My mother was a war-time bride, transplanted by my American-fly-boy father far from her native Australia to New York City. She was a theatrical dancer and gravitated towards others like herself who were also young, creative, talented and freshly immigrated—people like Tanya and George. Tanya and George were immigrated Russian Jews, and I adored them, and they me. I was enthralled by their stories of the Russian Ballet, the Symphony, even the Gypsy carnivals, but it was their Jewish religious ceremonies that most captivated my attention. Through the mystic glow of candles, the alluring sounds of spiritual songs chanted in a foreign tongue, and with the exotic smells from foods used in their traditions and celebrations, I became a young Jewish girl by osmosis. I perceived myself to be Anne Frank's kindred spirit and embraced her suffering like my own badge of courage and honor.

After my parent's divorce and my father's subsequent transfer to Miami, I did not find Miami to be the Mecca of Judaism I thought it would be. In fact, the move created a 180-degree shift in what would become an ever-broadening religious education. My father remarried a devout Irish Catholic, though he became an even-more-fervent-and-dedicated Atheist. Due to parental

forces beyond my control, borscht, bagels, blintzes and Passover made way for Madonnas, Holy Communion, Confession and glow-in-the-dark rosary beads, blessed by the Pope. Much to my chagrin, I found myself firmly ensconced in Our Lady Of The Holy Rosary Catholic School. It was a political statement on my father's part, as he frequently pontificated about the demise and disintegration of the public school system, which, although he didn't exactly say in so many words, may have included some inner feelings about the more ethnic cultures of South Florida. I believe his wife sent me there more out of religious concern for her immortal soul.

It's a little confusing, but as I understand it, during the 50s and 60s if a Catholic married a non-Catholic, it was incumbent on the Catholic person, if they could afford it, to sacrifice all the children at the altar of parochial schools. To do otherwise was a grievous offense that had eternal consequences regarding perpetual damnation for the Catholic parent's soul. The only reasonable cause was poverty. Catholics really liked poor people; I think they gave them something to do. If the parents were poor, they had to promise to have

their children report to Baltimore Catechism classes every Tuesday night to receive their Catholic indoctrination until the child reached the age of maturity. For the children, either way seemed like eternal punishment right here on earth. You could be the fashion reject on your block by wearing hideous and nerdy uniforms, go to church five days a week, Confession on Saturday and Mass on Sunday, which was tantamount to social suicide, or they could kill you slowly, piece by piece, by boring you to death with Catechism

classes every Tuesday night for the rest of your life.

I preferred the misery-loves-company approach, as suffering was already a part of my spiritual makeup, so (not that I was given the choice) Holy Rosary became my academic home for the next eight years. It was here that things really got confusing. I was the only child at school who could not eat pork on any day of the week, could not eat meat on Friday and who had a father who ate either ham, bacon or sausage with his eggs on any day of the week, without so much as a moment's reflection on what the implications of his dietary practices might be to the repose of his eternal soul. Either way, if God were Jewish or Catholic, or even just a Heavenly Cardiologist concerned with cholesterol, my Dad was a goner.

It was within the hallowed halls of Holy Rosary that I first learned about human sacrifices and about the Lions and the Christians. While initially I was quite horrified, I must admit I was somewhat relieved that Catholicism had a history of suffering and persecution all its own. (Fortunately for my formative years, it wasn't until college that I learned that it was the Catholics, more often than not, who were the Persecutors, not the Persecutees.) I was riveted to my seat the day we were taught that the ancient Romans led Christians into an arena where lions were turned loose to devour them. It didn't seem much of a sport to me, given that the Christians were trapped and all, but I must admit that I was really, really impressed with the quality of their sacrifice. It was through the dedication of those Christians who braved the Lions, in conjunction with the daily exposure to huge Crucifixes with excruciatingly contorted and suffering bodies of Christ, that I came to understand a whole new dimension and level of religious persecution.

The shift was gradual at first, but I was rapidly growing to understand

that we were the Christians and there were figurative Lions everywhere. As a responsible and dedicated parochial-school child, I was taught that I had a religious obligation to save Pagan Souls (especially Pagan Baby Souls) through prayer, bake sales, good deeds, sacrifice and UNICEF collection boxes on Halloween night. Believe me, this was no easy task since there were so many Pagan Souls and two places they had to be saved from, Purgatory and Limbo. The Catholic Church of my childhood had this extensive four-tiered level of Redemption. It had the standard Heaven and Hell of other religions,

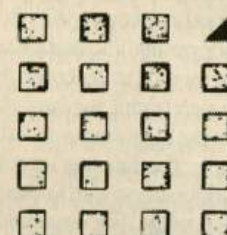
but they had added these two sort of middle-management positions. Limbo was kind of a spiritual warehouse where unbaptized Pagan Souls waited for enough good, baptized, Catholic-school children to pray fervently enough until a promotion into Heaven could be granted. Purgatory was a little more like spiritual probation for someone who had committed a series of venial sins,

different from the mortal sin variety with its instant condemnation to hell for all eternity, but serious nonetheless. These poor, wretched souls had to earn enough good time through the holy deeds of Catholic-school kids in order to be awarded their angel wings and finally earn a permanent place in Heaven.

Even though it was such a confusing time with so much to learn, at least I knew exactly where I stood. I was a Christian facing an ever-increasing list of proverbial Lions. The 60s held moments in time when it felt that miracles really could be created, both politically and spiritually, and they appeared in one human form. I believed that a band of Guardian Angels led the way for Camelot to be reinvented in Washington D.C. His name was John F. Kennedy, and it was through his campaign that I first learned that many people didn't think Catholics were Christians. Silly, naive, little pre-adolescent me was just concrete enough to believe that all one needed to do to be a Christian was to

Silly, naive, little pre-adolescent me was just concrete enough to believe that all one needed to do to be a Christian was to believe in Christ.

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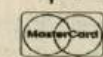
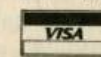
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felt that miracles really could be created, both politically and spiritually, and they appeared in one human form. I believed that a band of Guardian Angels led the way for Camelot to be reinvented in Washington D.C. His name was John F. Kennedy, and it was through his campaign that I first learned that many people didn't think Catholics were Christians. Silly, naive, little pre-adolescent me was just concrete enough to believe that all one needed to do to be a Christian was to believe in Christ. Someone tried to explain the complexity of it all, but I think that I just barely got the gist of the whole thing. I learned that it was a continuum kind of thing, with Jews on one end and Catholics on the other end, and that it was Protestants of every denomination who were the Real Christians and who held all the other spaces on the Western Religious Continuum.

For the first time in history, an Irish Catholic man had been elected President of the United States. His election brought tears of joy to the eyes of Catholics from Rome to Cape Cod. It was the first time I had experienced a blurring (or blending, depending on your point of view) of politics and religion. J.F.K. had done what no other predecessor had ever accomplished, and it was clear to any impressionable, parochial-school kid that not only had the Lions been defeated, but the Christians were indeed way ahead.

Like everything else in the 60s, change occurred rapidly. Although I went to a Catholic girl's school, even we could not be protected from the signs of the times. Radical notions like the Civil Rights Movement, the Women's Movement and the fight for equality and peace made its way to southern Florida. While most conjure up tranquil pictures of the sunny coast of Florida with its palm trees, white beaches, and citrus fruit, it also has a dark and evil under belly that rarely makes the brochures of the Florida Chamber of Commerce. Hatred and bigotry by any other name is still best known as the Klan or the KKK, and its Florida membership rolls held the names of the poor to the affluent, the forgotten to the famous.

I was a freshman in high school. We were returning from the football victory of our brother school over Saint Christopher High School. We were elated, so the four-hour drive on the crowded bus seemed more like a celebration than a chore. We had just won the regional championship and proudly wore our schools' names, LaSalle and Immaculate Conception, in four-foot letters, all over the outside of the bus. It never occurred to us to be ashamed or afraid until the black night air became acrid with the smell of smoke and the fields on both sides of the interstate were ablaze with fire. The Nuns and Jesuit chaperones understood a political reality from which we could no longer be spared. While they pushed the black students on the floor of the bus, they instructed the rest of us to cover them with football gear and letterman jackets. It wasn't until the bus, along with other traffic, had been forced to a stop that the nightmare seemed anything more than an out-of-control hallucination. The bus was surrounded by hundreds of creatures of evil dressed in white sheets with hoods over their heads. They rocked the bus back and forth while they screamed obscenities and ranted on about our "impure and ungodly ways." The entire scene, with all their hatred and violence, was upstaged by something else more profound. Looking past their angry eyes and beyond their screeching voices, we finally saw their primary instrument of terror, thousands of burning crosses. When we were finally allowed to pass, not even the full moon could light up our darkened spirit and permanently scarred souls. Collectively, we knew that, with a single burning cross, the Christians had somehow shifted positions with us, and we had been mistaken for Lions. An unconscious war had just begun, and as permanently branded Lions we had lost the first, and perhaps the most precious, battle, because it was the personal loss of innocence. The scoreboard was indelibly etched in my mind, Christians 1 / Lions 0.

Lacey Lewis is a psychotherapist and consultant. Her practice has been primarily devoted to the needs and issues of the gay, lesbian and HIV/AIDS community for the last four years. She has just completed a book on eating disorders and sexual abuse, a comedy stage play and a mystery novel. Lacey is a frequent contributor to OutSmart Magazine.

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The technique I recommend is to first brush your teeth with a fluoridated toothpaste and then floss. Then, fill the tank of your water jet machine with very warm water (not hot enough to burn). Use the highest pressure setting you can tolerate (you may have to gradually work up to the maximum setting). Position the jet tip at the space between your teeth exactly like you would position a tooth pick and spray for 5-10 seconds in each area. There is no need to spray from the inside. If there is water left over after you have finished, start over and continue until you empty the tank.

In my practice, I have found that water-jet devices give excellent results when used as a supplement to brushing and flossing. Remember to visit your dentist regularly, especially if you have any of these signs of gum disease: bleeding, swelling of gums, soreness of gums, bad breath, loose teeth or a change in the way your teeth fit together.

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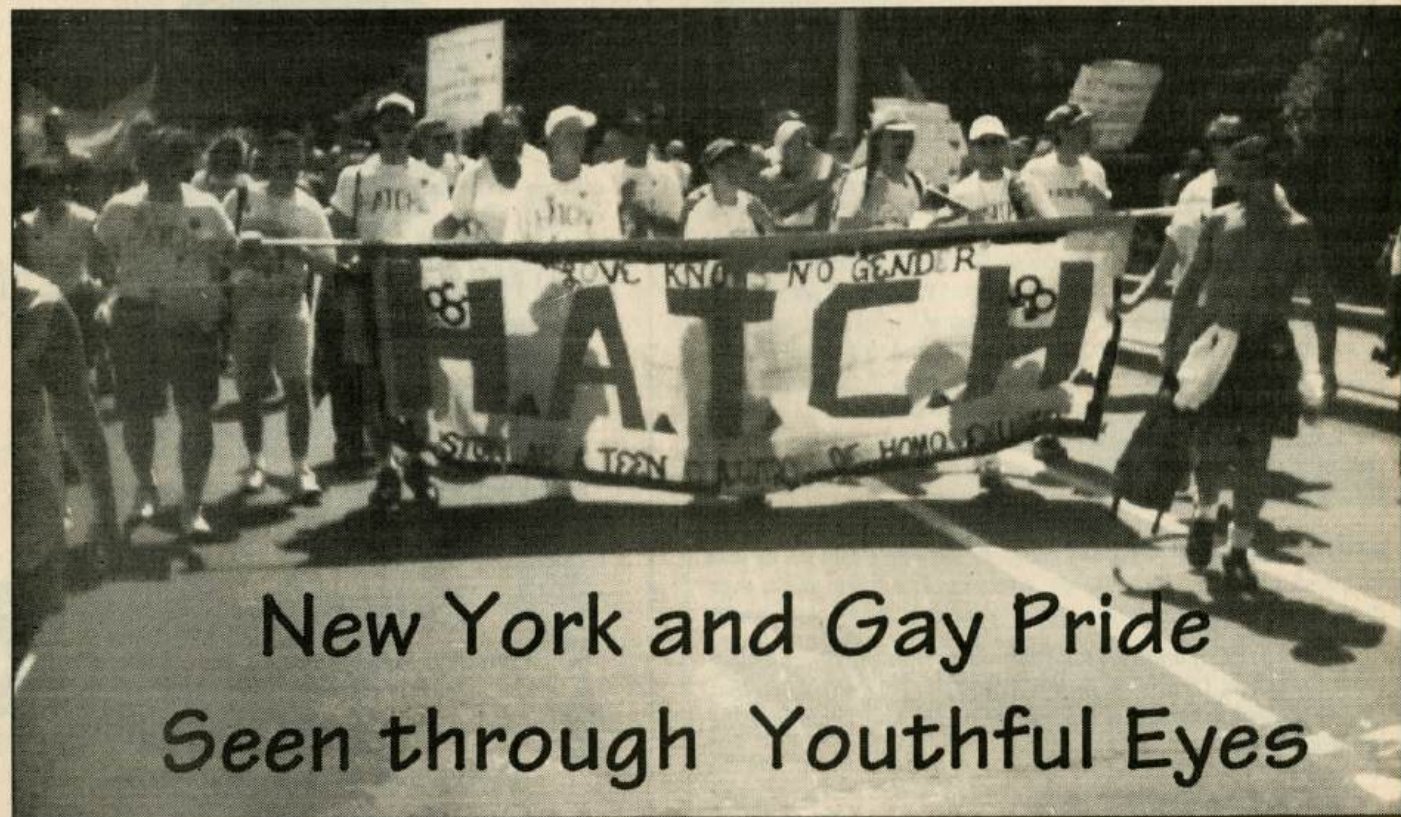
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New York and Gay Pride Seen through Youthful Eyes

Editors note: The following two stories were from members of H.A.T.C.H. (Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals), who travelled to New York to participate in the Stonewall 25 and Unity Gay Games '94 activities.

DISCOVERING FREEDOM IN NEW YORK

By Brandon P. Martin, age 18

I had been waiting what seemed like years for this day. I'm in New York. Well, actually, Newark Airport. But I was close. Manhattan was just an hour away—the city was hosting the Gay Games and Stonewall 25.

Taking a shuttle to the island during rush hour was not fun. Traffic was bumper to bumper all the way. It was figured that about 500,000 people would converge on New York in one weekend. There were 17 of us from Houston going to New York to represent H.A.T.C.H. (Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals). This consisted of both youth and adult facilitators.

After two hours of driving, we finally arrived at the Hotel Pennsylvania, which happened to be the same hotel that would be housing a lot of the athletes participating in the Games. As we entered the hotel, I saw that the lobby was filled with gays and lesbians from all over the world. The check-in area was a zoo, so it took a while to complete our registration. After

a while we finally got our room, unpacked and changed. With makeup on and our hair sprayed to a number seven hurricane resistance, we were ready to go.

We walked out onto 7th Avenue and were surrounded by sky-scrapers on every side. In front of us stood Madison Square Garden, about ten blocks to the right, Times Square, and Greenwich Village twelve blocks to our left. We were unsure of our destination, so remembering the large gay population in the Village, we headed to the left.

As we walked down the street, there were people everywhere. Along the way, vendors supplied everything from jewelry to hotdogs. The buildings ranged from very old, historic, elegant, 60s-style buildings to 100-story skyscrapers. The sky was blackened with metal and glass. The streets were filled with a sea of yellow cabs and buses, all in a hurry and racing by.

As we approached the Village, the buildings grew shorter and older and seemed to have a warmer feeling. There were coffee shops, small restaurants and gift shops, all proudly displaying the rainbow flag in their windows. There were men walking arm in arm and women with muscles that could make man envious. We knew we had arrived.

Our first order of business was to find food. There were eateries representing every ethnic group imaginable. Most of the restaurants were small, cramped, family-owned places. We decided to play it safe and patronize a huge, two-story Fuddrucker's that consisted of a large restaurant complete with karaoke bar.

In the evening, we decided to attend an alcohol-free youth dance described as being for those 25 and under. It turned out to be a very mixed crowd. In spite of it all, we had fun, danced, and met many new friends.

The next two days, Friday and Saturday, consisted of a lot of sightseeing expeditions. We visited the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, Times Square, the Polo outlet, and of course, all the gift shops in the Village. The Village probably had 500 or more gay-owned shops than Houston's Montrose business scene. We also got brave and ventured into some restaurants that, to our surprise, had great food.

Friday and Saturday the streets of the Village were packed with people. The police had many of the side streets blocked off from traffic. It was wall-to-wall homosexuals. There were many different events going on, such as carnivals, dances, drag shows, leather balls, concerts and lots more. I didn't have enough money, time or energy to do even a fourth of the scheduled activities. There was a wide variety of people dressed in kilts, skirts, leather, shorts, full drag, and just about anything else imaginable. The feeling of total freedom and equality was overwhelming. It lent a feeling of pride and relief that we could be who we are.

Saturday night was the first night that we really sampled the nightlife. There were numerous dances and clubs to choose from. Inside the dances, loud, pulsating music would fill your ears. People were dancing under laser lights and huge sound systems. The club scene really seemed to reflect the overall attitude of the event, party and have fun.

The march was to begin early Sunday morning, and H.A.T.C.H. was to be right in front and lead all of the other youth groups. We arrived at the march site in our H.A.T.C.H. t-shirts and carrying the H.A.T.C.H. banner. There were about 10 to 15 youth groups from around the United States and Canada. One group that really stood out was the Harvey Milk School. They were a collection of very vocal and diverse youths, singing and chanting. There were thousands of people everywhere. I took a moment to look up at the main parade route. The road curved up a hill, and there were people gathered for as far as my eyes could see.

After the Dykes on Bikes rode by, a truck drove up and people started pulling out the mile-long rainbow flag. As they pulled it out and walked with it up the hill, it stretched on forever, until it became a flowing, mile-long stream of colors. It was truly a moving experience that made one proud to be gay. We were next, walking proudly with our H.A.T.C.H. banner, leading the way for the rest of the youth groups. The parade route was flooded with people cheering and yelling. There were just as many people on the sides of the street watching as there were marching. One of the first stops along the route was directly in front of the United Nations building. This stop was the main reason we were there to march; to demand recognition for our rights as human beings. As we marched on, I felt feelings of invincibility and power. There were many other emotions and all overwhelming. I noticed that there were many people holding signs. One sign in particular that really caught everyone's eye was held by a woman in her 60's. Her sign said "I love my son and his husband too." Our five-hour march ended up in Central Park. The entire parade concluded approximately nine hours after it began.

As we entered the park, it was time for the moment of silence. This was a full minute of silence to honor all the people who had died of oppression and hatred in one form or another, whether by violence or by inaction in the face of the worldwide AIDS epidemic. As the moment struck, a hush fell over the entire parade route, and everyone bowed their heads in respect. For me, this minute was filled with feelings of anguish and helplessness due to the horrible plague of AIDS that hangs like a veil over our community. The end of the 60 seconds was followed by powerful feelings of rage and disgust. The park was filled with yells and cries. Tears streamed down my face as I was unable to control my emotions.

The march continued and thousands pressed into the park towards the stage area. People gathered to watch the musical groups, performers and speakers talking about oppression. The highlight of the entertainment for me was seeing RuPaul. Miss Thing herself strutted out there to sing a song. As two o'clock approached, the emotional and physical strain of the day had taken its toll on us. We stayed for a while longer and then headed back to the hotel for rest.

After a nap, the evening rolled around, and we decided to have dinner at a great Chinese place in the Village. Four other guys from Florida, also in New York to enjoy the Pride weekend, joined us for dinner. Then off we went to one of the many celebration dances going on that evening. The rest of the

night was filled with dancing and meeting people from all over the country. We did not want it to end.

Monday came and it was time to return home. I was not ready to leave this place of freedom and return to the real world. The feeling of freedom was the best part of the entire weekend. For a few days,



H.A.T.C.H. Members Brandon P. Martin(L) and Bobby Bass(R) stand proud in front of New York's Stonewall Inn.

we all lived in a fantasy world, we all lived in a world that gay men and women dream about. It was the closest to any Utopia that I had ever come. It was a depressing feeling, that of returning to reality. The flight home was a solemn one, mostly due to our exhaustion, also because of the thought of returning home, of work and everyday life. When I arrived in Houston, I found out that I had been fired from my job for taking the time off to go to New York. Still, I would not trade the memories and feelings that I experienced for anything. It was the most liberating, emotionally motivating and enraging weekend I'd ever experienced. A month later, I still think about it and wish that perhaps before I die, that kind of freedom can be felt by gay people in everyday life. I wish that my children could grow up and be proud of their father, and, if gay, proud of themselves as well.

UNITY '94: PAVING THE WAY WITH PRODUCTIVITY

By Bobby Bass, age 18

It's five-thirty a.m. I hit the snooze button for the last time. I to get out of bed and get dressed. I look out the window—outside it is cloudy, very cloudy. I put on a baseball cap, throw on some shorts, and my H.A.T.C.H. t-shirt. After I brush my teeth, wash my face, shave and all of that stuff, I head towards the front door and walk outside. It smells like rain.

I begin to ponder if I should drive the 78 miles from Beaumont to Houston, spending an hour and

a half on the road, just to wash cars in the rain. Of course! Why not? So another day I will get one step closer to meeting my goal of raising enough money so that I and other youth can hopefully make the journey from Houston to New York. Why do I want to go so badly? A year ago I did the same thing in order to attend the March on Washington, and it was well worth it. So once again on another rainy Sunday, I and other young people would wash however many cars that stopped by. On this day, I was more than surprised as a great number of cars actually stopped.

I have always asked myself why I do something, before I've done it, while I'm doing it and of course, after I've done it. All of my life I have heard that "children are better seen and not heard." I wanted to go to New York—to be seen AND heard!

While waiting to depart from Houston's Intercontinental Airport, I was a nervous wreck. I told my boyfriend that if I began to cry, to not laugh at me, for I have a severe fear of flying and of heights. I realized that if I really wanted to go, this was how I was to get there and that I had better just grow up. Besides, there were five other youths and several facilitators from our group there to calm my fears. Needless to say, I made it into Newark and in one piece.

Now, I've never been to New York before, and I don't know if there is really anything there that would make me want to go back. But I knew that I was flying there that day with a strong purpose—to participate in the march and to see all that I possibly could. When I say that I want to be seen, I want to be seen as a gay teenager. I was willing to do whatever it took to further our movement. I wanted the older gays and lesbians to see that gay youths do something productive with our time, that we aren't always shopping or going to clubs. I wanted them to see that we are willing to give of ourselves, that we are willing to go out in our own community and beyond, even into straight society, to get the word out. I wanted to spread the word that we are normal, everyday people. That we will march all of our lives, if it takes this, until we get the rights that we are entitled to. I also wanted them to know that if we, as gays and lesbians, are unhappy with something in our lives, then we will do something about it.

I also wanted the older gays and lesbians to see that we young people are grateful and that we do appreciate all that they have done. Because when they started out, there was not even a path—they had to clear a path and create a road. Now it is our turn, as gay and lesbian youth, to pave that road, to install traffic lights, to put up stop signs and, yes, even plant a few flowers along the way to make it more scenic. Because after us, there will be another generation of younger gays and lesbians, and I want to be appreciated for my efforts.

The whole time I was there, I kept comparing it to the March on Washington, and really, I could not easily do this. In Washington, we were so visible. In New York, we all kind of just blended into one large mass. Unless, of course, we had on a t-shirt with some sort of a gay logo or saying printed on it.

Continued on page 53

Cafe Anthony's:

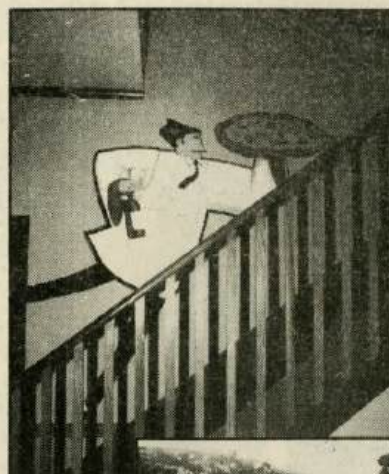
Heart Healthy
in the Heart
of Montrose



by Tom Fricke

The latest addition to the game of restaurant musical chairs on south Montrose Boulevard brings a slice of Italy to the area. The new addition is Cafe Anthony's. Owner Anthony Russo, whose restaurant is no relation to Anthony's of the Vallone restaurant empire, seems to be taking a stab at the multi-unit restaurant game with his third eatery using his first name. Cafe Anthony's on Montrose joins the already established Anthony's Pizzeria on Pineloch and Cafe Anthony's on Bay Area Boulevard.

Russo's latest endeavor seems to have captured the old world charm that was left over



from his predecessor, Gabriella's, while creating an atmosphere that is less stuffy. One of the key elements in the success of Montrose dining establishments is that they be fun, and Anthony's seems to be working toward that goal. The tables are decorated with red and white checked cloths and bottles of Chianti, like you might find on a visit to "little Italy" in New York. The walls are covered with colorfully painted murals of patrons dining and waiters serving pizza and pasta dishes. Whatever your pleasure might be, you may dine indoors or on Cafe Anthony's tree-shaded patio.

Russo came to the Houston area with his family from New Jersey in 1978. His father opened a restaurant called "Russo's" (of all things) in Galveston at the corner of 12th and the Seawall. That is where Russo got his training, and he believes his success lies in the fact that he prepares dishes in the traditional Italian way. "There are several different types of Italian cooking," Russo says. "I prefer going back to the basics."

Cafe Anthony's provides a "heart healthy" menu. In this day and age of calorie-conscious,

low-fat and no-cholesterol diets, Russo is dishing up what people want. Cafe Anthony's offers homemade low-fat breads, and all of the pasta is made with 100 percent Durham Wheat Semolina, which contains no fat or cholesterol. They also use 100 percent pure extra virgin olive oil in all their cooking, as well as low-fat cheeses on their pizzas.

On my most recent trip, I ordered the Fried Calamari (\$5.95) and really enjoyed Russo's version. Cafe Anthony's batter was very light, yet crisp. The calamari was tender and the marinara sauce was spicy to the point of being flavorful but not overpowering. The Stromboli (\$7.95), which is like a pizza that someone folded in half and sealed, was filled with pepperoni, sausage, mushrooms, bell pepper, black olives and tomato sauce. Incidentally, if you don't like some of the ingredients or want to add some, just ask your waiter—at Cafe Anthony's, service is a specialty.

The Shrimp Scampi (\$12.95) is delightfully seasoned with just a hint of garlic. I wanted to try the Antipasti Misto (assorted hot appetizer, \$9.95) because it is always a pleasant surprise when the dish arrives and you see what the assortment is. On this day it was lightly breaded fried mozzarella, Portabello mushrooms in a marsalla wine sauce, Calamari in a tomato basil sauce (I was feeling a bit of squid overdose by now) and Bruchetta Bread, which is prepared with Roma tomatoes, olive oil and garlic. Another favorite we noted while talking to some of the patrons was the

Heart Healthy Veggi Pizza (\$8.95) made with fresh spinach, Roma tomatoes, artichoke hearts, onion and mushrooms.

Russo has wasted no time in entrenching himself into the community he serves. On August 25, he is co-sponsoring "The Bellini Bash" to benefit Milam House, an AIDS hospice serving Houston-area PWAs. Russo wants to show his appreciation and his genuine desire to be responsive to the needs of the community. Not only is this a fundraiser, but it will also be Cafe Anthony's Grand Opening.

Cafe Anthony's serves beer, wine and Bellinis, as well as soft drinks. There is live local entertainment out on the patio every Saturday night. Cafe Anthony's takes cash and most major credit cards; however, they do not accept checks. Located at 4315 Montrose (near Richmond), Cafe Anthony's is open Sunday through Thursday from 11 am to 11 pm and Friday and Saturday from 11 am to midnight (or later).

Tom Fricke is the proprietor of The Lovett Inn, a distinctive Montrose bed-and-breakfast inn.

When/If Mr./Ms. Right Goes Right Wrong

Houston—How or where can I find love? Can I have fun out there without the fear of AIDS? How can I be sure that we're really playing safe? When can we decide that we don't have to worry about using protection? Can anyone really trust their partner?

These are many of the typical questions from people who call the AIDS hotline or those who seek HIV testing and counseling. Finding love and sexual fulfillment seem to be the two universally human quests—although not necessarily in that order. This search can be fraught with many challenges, most as old as our civilization. Until recently, society had prescribed some basic rules to be followed (i.e., dating rituals). But today's generation faces new complications for which few, if any, consistent guidelines exist. This confusing situation is compounded further for gay men and lesbians who must pilot their own course in a maze of hormones, crowded bars and attitude. With the 1970s as a coming out period of the gay sexual revolution, many gays and lesbians carved a path with independently defined relationships in a kind of free-for-all.

In the 1980s a new wrench was tossed into the machinery: the issues of STDs, AIDS, and safer sex. This new twist forced many to reevaluate sexual expression and commitment. Instead of being "free to do what feels good," we began to worry about sex that kills.

These new fears were dealt with in many ways. Some denied the dangers. Some became celibate. Some tried to limit sex partners to those who "looked healthy or young," fooling themselves into a false sense of security. Still others searched for options to reduce the risk, if not eliminate it.

Today, our community has been devastated by AIDS and there is strong peer pressure for safer sex. But while most gay men (and some lesbians) are aware and playing safe, the message still eludes many. The big problem today is

that it is NOT OK to admit to difficulty with staying safe, thus we don't talk about the issue. Many are not really clear on the risks that are out there and sometimes we make mistakes. So many of us are scared to death, but we don't talk about it with anyone.

Safer sex workshops were developed to address these issues to help individuals learn to safely enjoy whatever expression of sexuality they choose. They are non-threatening, entertaining forums designed to tear down the walls of fear, examine sexual attitudes and learn the facts. The workshops utilize games and role playing to discuss typical sexual situations and explore the many options for safer eroticism.

AIDS Foundation—Houston (AFH) offers these free workshops on a regular basis, on the 3rd and 4th Tuesdays of each month (August 16 and 23), 7-9 pm at their office, 3202 Wesleyan Annex. They are also available in "Safer Sex House Party" format. Anyone can host a house party for their friends, choosing any time, date and place. It is a great way to entertain, as well as share valuable information with groups of ten or more friends. It costs nothing, and there are lots of prizes (and surprises). Please call AFH at (713) 623-6796 for more information. Remember, excuses won't protect you, but knowledge and the right attitude can. There is no need to sacrifice safety to have a good time.

Bart Loeser coordinates and promotes various discussions and classes through AIDS Foundation Houston's Wellness Program. For more information regarding these programs or the monthly Wellness Calendar, contact Bart at (713) 623-6796.



by Bart Loeser

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As you slowly wake up, you remember what a wonderful day you had yesterday. A cool front had passed through town, bringing bright blue skies, a fresh, clean breeze and a full, white moon. You and your partner spent the day together, laughing, talking and enjoying each other's company. After a wonderful dinner, you retired for the evening. As you lie in bed this morning, you can hear the birds splashing and playing in the birdbath outside the window.

BY JULIE LARUE, LUTCF

From the other room, you can barely make out the sound of machinery purring. The smooth, well-oiled bearings, carrying out the job as they were intended, give you a feeling of security. In the top portion of this machine is a slot steadily emitting dollar bills. Maybe yours provides you with \$50, \$100, \$500 or more.

Because this machine does this every day and you would be financially devastated if the machine stopped producing this money, you decided to purchase insurance on your machine. This insurance says that if and when your

machine ever quits working, the insurance will provide you with the same amount of money the machine would have produced, as if it had never stopped. Although you're not required to own this type of insurance, you can't believe anyone would be without it. You feel satisfied knowing you took the time to get professional advice and an insurance plan that works for you and your machine.

In real life, your partner is your money machine and you are theirs. Our partners can be described in many ways—loving, caring, trustworthy, hardworking, gorgeous and handsome, just to name a few. I've never heard anyone call their partner a money machine, yet that describes exactly an aspect of the relation-



ship. One reality of life is, as we become involved in committed relationships, marriages and partnerships, we create financial responsibilities with that person. You both use your incomes to pay bills, dine out, vacation and invest, creating a certain lifestyle. You must ask yourself, "Can I continue my lifestyle, paying my bills, living in my home, doing what I like to do, if my partner died tonight?" It's a hard question to ask and answer. It's hard to think

of yourself as vulnerable and easier to believe nothing will ever happen to you or your partner, that you'll both live to be 100 years old. That may be true, but what if it's not? What if your money machine—your partner—died tonight? People who want to take responsibility for their financial lives recognize that proper life insurance planning is crucial to protect themselves from financial devastation. Yes, it's more fun to talk about your investments, but life insurance is crucial in the event of a premature death.

Many people realize the value of life insurance and may purchase mortgage insurance or credit life insurance. Mortgage insurance is generally offered through your mortgage company and will pay the loan balance on your home in the event of an owner's death. Credit life insurance is generally purchased through credit card companies and other lending institutions that are extending some type of credit to you. These types of purchases may include cars, appliances, furniture and computers. As with mortgage insurance, these policies will pay off the balance of your debt in the event of your death. Did you know that these are actually some of the most expensive types of life insurance you can purchase? Mortgage insurance is generally not transferable from one home to the next. If you decide to move and purchase mortgage insurance on the new home, you start from scratch again.

A more economical and sound financial approach is one in which you consider your debts, the income your partner needs to have replaced in the event of your death, the mortgage balance, future federal estate taxes and other financial factors. Once these needs have been discussed with a professional advisor, you can then choose the appropriate type of insurance to meet those needs.

There is another financial consideration to think about concerning life insurance. Because we are considered single by the IRS, we are only allowed a \$600,000 exclusion from federal estate taxes. The federal estate tax is imposed on the transfer of your assets. Upon your death, your assets are assigned a value and taxed accordingly. If those assets total more than \$600,000, you'll be paying federal estate taxes. When you add your savings and investments, the value of your homes, the 401K and retirement plans you've pumped money into for years, inheritances from parents, siblings and friends, you may easily have an estate valued at over \$600,000. Once over that amount, the IRS starts taking 37%, which increases with higher values. The life insurance plan that you own today to care for your partner can now become the solution for paying those federal estate taxes. Your tax bill—let's say it's \$200,000—has to be paid within nine months of the date of your death. Your life insurance premiums through your life were, oh, say, \$50,000. Your executor uses your \$200,000 death benefit to pay that bill, which you only paid \$50,000 for in premiums. Your estate just saved \$150,000. In this scenario, everyone wins. The IRS is happy; they got their money. Your partner, most importantly, got your assets as you directed. And you're in heaven, cruising on to your next life with no guilt.

Life insurance planning is an important, critical part of your financial life. It should be done first. Proper planning can help you to live your life without worry.

As the sun rises higher in the sky and you begin to awaken fully, what a surprise! Your loving, caring, generous, gorgeous partner has brought you breakfast in bed! Have a nice day!

Julie LaRue, LUTCF has authored several articles and conducted seminars on financial issues facing the gay community. A native Texan, she graduated in 1981 from the University of Texas at Arlington, where she competed on its nationally ranked volleyball team. She is a Registered Representative and Investment Advisory Associate with Calvert Securities Corporation, a registered broker-dealer and investment advisor and member of The Acacia Group. Information is general in nature. Be sure to consult an attorney for specific legal advice. For more information regarding this article, contact Ms. LaRue at 713/888-3500.

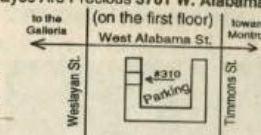
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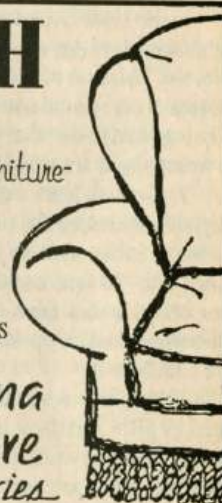
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TRAVEL



BY SANDRA WILKINS

THE EDUCATED GAY TRAVELER

company came to a dead end, and I was in dire need of a job.

One night at a dinner party for Zapata Offshore, I was seated next to a fellow who owned a travel agency. We chatted and I related what I'd been doing for the past ten years when he impulsively leaned over and said, "why don't you come work for me as a corporate travel sales rep?" I replied "I don't know sh.. about travel." "You'll learn," he said. And so I did.

Sixteen years later I'm owner of a travel agency and totally love my work. It's people intensive, and it allows me to use all the skills and talents I've acquired in my other careers. It still amazes me that most people don't understand a thing about what a travel agent does, and over 60% of people that go through airports every day still don't have a ticket in hand

until they buy it at the counter at the airport! Amazing.

So, I'd like to cover some basics about travel from time to time in my articles for Out Smart, in the hopes that being an educated traveler will enrich this delightful aspect of your lives.

First, with few exceptions, all services provided by a travel agent are FREE. If you call Continental for a ticket to Miami and the cost is \$398.00, you can book it direct with them, charge it and have it mailed to your home, or you can call a travel agent and get the same ticket for exactly the same price.

A travel agency's income is generated by commissions they earn on all types of travel product sales. This includes airline tickets, car rentals, hotel reservations, tour and package vacations, cruises...the whole range of components that make up a pleasure trip, or a business trip. Each supplier along the way will pay an average 10% commission if a travel agent "books" or "sells" their product. When your travel agent issues your airline ticket, reserves your car and hotel, and perhaps sells you a one day sightseeing tour of the city, each company will in turn send us a check for having made the booking with them.

The advantages of developing a close working relationship with your travel agency are many. First, their job is to do all the comparison shopping for you, and they have state-of-the-art technology to do so. Yesterday a man called complaining about the quote of \$1,100 he'd just received from American Airlines for a trip to New York on a Monday, with a return on Wednesday. He had the required 14 days in advance to qualify for a much lower fare, but he was not staying over a Saturday night, the usual requirement for the lowest fare.

The \$1,100 fare quote by American was legitimate, but I told him about a special fare on United which costs \$398.00 roundtrip, did not require a Saturday night stay, nor advance purchase. It did, however, require that the passenger *change planes in Chicago*, en route to New York. Well, in order to instantly save \$702, he had no problem at all with changing planes.

When you call a travel agent and give them your dates of travel and your destination city,

they can immediately plug a comparative fare quote request into their computerized reservations system. The screen pops up with more than 30 fares that exist between those two cities, starting with the least expensive and moving up to business class and first class fares. This process takes about 30 seconds, gives the passenger current information and availability, and can be confirmed in under 90 seconds. This is a far cry from sitting on hold for 4 to 10 minutes with each airline if you're shopping around for the lowest fares.

The same holds true for car rentals and hotels. If you want to rent a convertible in Miami for a weekend, we plug in the request and *Voila!* All companies offering convertibles at the Miami airport instantly appear on the screen, with rates ranging from least to most expensive listed. A hotel request through the computer system will immediately tell us if a hotel is available or not, if it has a weekend or corporate rate, and lists in detail the location of the hotel, room types and amenities, special services offered (i.e., free transportation between the airport and hotel, etc.), and can be reserved, guaranteed, and confirmation number returned in about 60 seconds.

So, in under five minutes with one phone call to a reputable, professional travel agent, you can "shop" all your travel requirements for a trip, confirm each segment, have special information entered, like frequent flyer numbers and special meal requests, and have this completed package neatly tied up AT ABSOLUTELY NO COST TO YOU.

Most travel agencies specialize in a certain type of travel. For instance, a majority of agencies concentrate on serving commercial accounts. Several agencies specialize in tours and cruises, and some serve a small market segment of independent travelers who like to design their own vacations.

When your travel agent recommends to you a particular tour or cruise company, or gay/lesbian hotel or guest house, they are putting their reputation on the line, knowing that to retain you as a good client requires their standing behind the companies they recommend.

Of course, as in all of life, disappointments occur. I may have sold Nancy's Bed & Breakfast in Provincetown 30 times in the past with happy clients returning to me, but last week Nancy sold her B&B to Mary Smith, who happens to be a gnarly old thing, and doesn't give a hoot about the appearance of the rooms or quality of the food and service. No one has control over these kinds of circumstances, but again, a good travel agent will act in your behalf when you return unhappy by contacting the establishment in question and letting your dissatisfaction be known, *plus* tell Mary New Owner not to expect any other clients from our agency to come her way. In essence, you've got the combined

buying power of an agency that sends lots of business to these companies fighting your individual battle, and that will frequently carry a lot of influence.

Travel agents who specialize in putting together a client's "dream trip" need to have a wealth of personal destination experience in order to expertly craft the client's ideal itinerary. It wouldn't make much sense to have someone organize a two-week driving tour of the northern lake district in Italy if they hadn't

WHEN YOUR TRAVEL AGENT RECOMMENDS TO YOU A PARTICULAR TOUR OR CRUISE COMPANY, OR GAY/LESBIAN HOTEL OR GUEST HOUSE, THEY ARE PUTTING THEIR REPUTATION ON THE LINE...

done it themselves. With this in mind, always qualify the actual hands-on experience of the travel agent before you place your dreams, not to mention your money, in their hands.

In future issues we'll address new educational travel topics, such as the ABCs of international travel, dos and don'ts of gay/lesbian travel in foreign countries, etc. If there is a particular topic of interest Out Smart readers may have, please give me or the magazine a call. We'd love to provide you with that information.

As I say, *au revoir* this time. I'll leave you with the just-released results of the 1994 Editor's Choice Awards for gay/lesbian travel, courtesy of *Out and About*, edited by Billy Kolber.

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- **GUIDEBOOK: Inn Places**—An extremely useful travel guide book with no sexual content.
- **TRADE PUBLICATION: Travel Weekly**—For their extensive and continuing coverage of the gay travel market.
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OUTSMART FUTURE OUTLOOK

ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19)

With an attitude of laughter and joy, Aries could go through a trying time, burdened by the problems of friends or family. Being placed in the middle of a confrontation could force you to draw lines. Does Aries compromise the truth or not? People could get hurt and loyalties could be tested. Remain true and, in the end, everyone wins.

Forever there is a need for more money. A much-needed vacation is thirsted after, now more than ever. Even though the money is there, don't spend it too fast. Unexpected expenditures could occur. If time away can be taken, by all means take it. It could be some time before it's offered again.

All in all, smile. The path to life eternal is smoothed out. If only for a time, smile.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

Abounding with opportunities, life offers you a new direction—a comfortable home, a satisfying relationship, love, beauty, sex, marriage and security, a way to see yourself out of the past difficulties.... For some time you have denied yourself this magic because of others around you. You have delayed your good fortune, perhaps because others aren't as fortunate. But this can no longer continue. Dead weight will fall and the oppressive shackles shall crumble.

If married, times could be tense. Decide what you want and go for it. If single, HOO-RAY! Romance is everywhere! This may not be a time for something serious, but cupid's arrows are certainly afloat.

You are entering into a cycle of manifestation. Ideas, projects and emotions all begin to take form. Fantasies now become reality.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

An opportunity for renewal, rest and healing is present in your life now, but you may be unaware of it. Anxiety, insecurity and lack of confidence have overshadowed your eyes so that you cannot see the blessings in your own life. A sign of hope is indicated. You need to relax your attitude and not fear the unknown. Look to tomorrow as an adventure. Everything you require now for your continual growth is right beneath you.

The Hand of God is now placed upon you. It will guide you through a difficult period, whether the difficulty is related to love or finance. Spiritual guidance is offered, but does this guidance come from your own unconscious mind in the form of dreams, fantasies, feminine intuition, or an outside source? In any case, you need to understand that all things cannot be controlled by your hands

alone. To try to force something beyond your own control could be self-defeating.

Financially, unforeseen bills could crop up. Be careful—watch how you spend. Alone time could be elusive as it seems the whole world wants to talk to you. For now, just kick back and deal with it. Your much-needed R & R shall come.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

Many Cancers could feel themselves riding on an emotional roller coaster. For some, love can be the hardest gift in life. Knowing what you want can be one thing, but actually getting it could be quite another. With Cancer's sense of commitment and

FOR THE WORLD

Magic, love and mystery fill the soul of the planet. The cycle of rebirth begins now. In a crystallized state, the universal energy became still and uncreative. But through love and warmth, the mother begins to heal and, with her, so do her children. No longer will the planetary field stagnate. Movement occurs. Everyone's dead weight shall be dropped and an inner psychic healing shall take place. To keep this universal state of bliss, we must do something as a whole to create life. Learn to talk to the trees. Whisper with the animals. Make love in a forest. She is alive, and through her, so are we alive. Blessings to us all.

determination, it can be hard. For some time you have been focusing on an emotional situation that surrounds you. Although you have made leaps and bounds in dealing with it, you still feel as though you've gotten nowhere. My advice is to grab hold of the reins and pull the situation to a stop! Throw out your old garbage and start fresh. Only then will you feel strong and able to persevere.

Health issues could become a major focus this month. A cloudy mind and a stress-filled body doesn't help the situation. Indulge in a massage or an aromatherapy treatment. Learn to relax. For Cancer I suggest many nice, long, warm baths filled with the scent of sandalwood and rose petals.



LEO (JULY 23-AUGUST 22)

With Leo's sense of pride and optimism, this period could be a difficult one. Lion Kings and Queens now move into a time filled with uncertainty. This could leave Leo feeling very alone, and depression could become very marked. Fears and phobias become extremely pronounced as you try to stuff your emotions. In your own way, you need to find someone around you, to help make you smile. A wise hand is offered to give you strength in the coming time.

Move forward with caution, taking nothing in stride or to the extreme. A blessing in disguise is offered to you. Through these sudden events, a new path shall be aid for you. Through sorrow shall come enlightenment. If married, you need to learn to open up; not everyone knows what's going on inside of you. If single, exercise caution in all affairs of the heart.

Learn to play again, like a child. Swing in the park, dance in a field of flowers, have a picnic. Allow Mother Earth to lend a helping hand.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

In a time of reflection, you come to a new awareness that the past is the past. Yesterday is no longer today. For the first time in a long while, you feel an inner push, a call from within to make an important change. This change may be practical, such as starting a new job or looking at life in a new way. At first, you feel the need to be frivolous, to act without thinking or to allow your immediate desires to control you. You buy things you do not truly need, go places simply for the sake of the going. This is a time of regeneration, a time for you to shed your skin.

If looking for love, possibilities abound. Someone you've felt rejected by returns, and the beginning of a beautiful romance could begin. Parties are all around and your social life takes off again.

If married, there's a lot of work that needs to be done on building confidence in the relationship. Learn to get intimate; give in equal ways.

Plant the flower of Myrtle around your home. Mark the end and the beginning while bringing the aura of Love back into your space.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

Now would be a good time to watch how you spend your money. It cannot be too highly stressed, do not overextend.

If married, money could become a major issue. With only one of you pulling the weight and the other struggling, other ways of creating financial security need to be found. Ignoring this problem could only make problems worse, creating tension that could be avoided in the relationship.

In general, in the past Libra handled problems by pushing everything over an emotional fence. If you let nothing approach you, then nothing could hurt you. But now this method no longer works. Being placed back into reality brings about a shift. An opportunity could be offered to create something new and wonderful in your life. But because of past mistakes, you are hesitant. Without risks, life would be very boring. Kick off your heels and revel; this could be the change you've been waiting for.

With Venus as Libra's ruler, the magic of dance is recommended. Let her joy of living fill your soul as your feet dance to the song of life.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

Recently Scorpio has been in a muddled state, for life has not been giving the Scorpion what it wants. Get ready for all that to change. Like a fairy tale, a wish could now be fulfilled. A new relationship, for those who are interested, is offered. The return of a past love could also be indicated. Something new, something fresh is presented. It is offered to give you a clear path to happiness.

Partnerships in business are also indicated. This is a good time to form partnerships on any level. This time is very powerful for business. Starting a business could be your best choice now, for financially you are on the upswing. This is also a good time for buying or selling property, or working on any type of loan.

One warning: although all is good, care needs to be taken in scattering one's self and one's projects. Take on only as much as you can handle, and no more.

All in all, this coming cycle will be very beneficial for Scorpio. The only thing you need to remember is that this time is yours—if you play your cards right, you could win the jackpot. Go with Love.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

With Sag entering into a cycle of self-exploration and understanding, the realizations could be astounding.

Fighting to hold together a dying situation could leave you feeling less than whole. You need

to step out of yourself, so that you can regain the confidence that you require to be strong again. Maybe then you can make this situation work. At first it will seem irreparable, but soon you could find the pieces to bring the harmony back again.

Another indication is that assistance from a definite guide is being offered—sometimes a psychic from within—but more often a real person who will help you in your self-discoveries.

The focus here is on the self. For a period, do not concern yourself with the external; let your inner child sing free. Visions will fill your mind and songs will fill your ears. In times of the greatest stress, that inner child could be your best salvation.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

With life moving very slowly, Capricorn could be feeling very ungrounded. With this sense of ungroundedness, the goat will begin to search for other methods of security. Grabbing onto everything that comes their way, they could overdo it just a little.

Here we see a warning: do not act impulsively. A careful, well-thought-out plan is required. Starting a new business or spending large sums of money would not be wise. If you are unhappy in your current situation, then change it. It seems, though, that your current problems lie mainly in your inability to change other aspects of your life, so you have to channel the energy somewhere. Or perhaps you've just reached a distinct level of boredom. Nonetheless, rather than change these issues, you will find it sufficient to simply rise above them. Later, aid will be offered and an alternative plan will go into effect. Money issues will improve as your attitude gets better. Fill your home with the scent of sandalwood and bask in its spirit.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

Aquarius must remain strong through this period of material instability. With life not following along your chosen path, it can leave you feeling empty and trapped. At this time, all you can do is be strong. Use love and will, not force, to surpass your present difficulties. You could end up moving or taking a little trip, which will be a blessing in disguise. In any case, watch how you spend your

money; you may not have as strong a cash flow as you used to.

This is a time for you to get back to your center. By doing this, your mind becomes clear and your direction in life will become focused again. If single; love is all around, don't be afraid to ask someone out. An old romance could pop back up into your life, or someone you meet could seem as though you've known them forever.

With the aid of a friend, you will move into a much better and more positive space. The past ties will be released and a new life will form. Trust in the power of the infinite.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

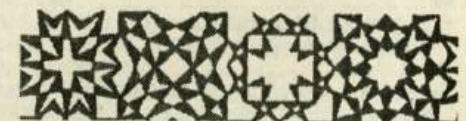
Your past efforts now become success and achievement, the kind which you can finally enjoy. You have worked hard in bringing about change in your life, and now you may be rewarded. At first this could be difficult to visualize, the sun having been so clouded over for so long.

If married, your partner could begin to cause you to feel tense and uptight. Little things could set you off. A little solitude could go a long way.

If single, no comment. People will most likely begin to annoy you, more so now than ever. In the area of health, extra special care needs to be taken. Your energy could be low; some unknown ailment could arise. Shut no one out and learn to communicate your emotions. Through this a solution to better health can be found.

The key is to remember when people are trying to help. You need help—so let them.

Joseph Molina has lived and studied the sacred sciences for over 14 years and is a practicing psychic in Houston. He specializes in Tarot, combined with clairvoyant insights for personal growth. Joseph also teaches and guides students in their development and is available for private consultations. For more information, call (713) 527-8135.



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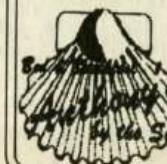
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Youthful Eyes *continued from page 43.*

It wasn't really until the day of the march itself that I became so overwhelmed. We were lining up, and as far as my eyes could see, there were gays and lesbians, bisexuals, friends, family and supporters of those who had come. At that moment in time, every part of my body began to shake. And as silly as it seems, I was scared. I felt like I was doing something that I shouldn't. For a brief moment fear ran through my body. Then it was gone as tears welled up in my eyes. I was about to march for myself, for the gays and lesbians that could not be there, for my friends, and even for the gays and lesbians that are in my family.

I saw people from different countries, from far-off places. Places that I had not even thought that gays and lesbians did, in fact, exist. It opened my mind and it opened my ears; it made me realize that even though we have come a long way as a society, we have so much farther to go. I was surprised at the behavior of some of the people during my stay in

New York. This only gave me more reason to stay the exact way that I am and to carry myself with pride and with respect and to know my own limits.

When it was time to leave, I panicked. I was not ready to go. I had not done all that I had wanted to do. I wanted to stay in this city, New York, the city that never sleeps.

In a way I felt safe there. I felt like I was at home. When we returned to Houston and went to our group meeting the next week, I sat and listened to all of the other youth talk about how they had hated to come back to a straight environment, how they would have to return to their places of employment and go back into the closet. It appalled me, it shocked me, it scared me to hear those things, because for me to just return to Houston, back to the same old thing, would ruin everything that I just marched for. So once I returned home, I kept my own credo that the only thing that went into my closet were my clothes.

The people where I work were aware that I was going to New York and why. I brought my pictures

and I showed them to my co-workers. Everyone was really thrilled that I got to go. And surprisingly, some had even watched the news coverage to see if maybe they might spot me. Everyday I try to come out to someone new. I pay my taxes, donate to local charities, recycle, and damn it, hold my head up high. I have nothing to be ashamed of, and I have no need to hold my head down. Before, I did feel ashamed and held my head down. I did this through high school, graduated not too long ago, and I'll be damned if I ever do it again. I believe that Pride Day should be everyday. I do, however, realize that every person's circumstances are different and that not everyone is as fortunate in their situation as I am. But if we all work together as a community, one day, and hopefully in my lifetime, every single one of us will be able to hold our heads up and not feel shame. I, as an individual, will be able to do that, no matter what the cost, and will keep marching until that goal is met. ▼

NEW ORLEANS

continued from page 22

works in progress and speak with the artists themselves. Many famous artists and writers have made their home in the French Quarter at one time or another. Some include writers Tennessee Williams, William Faulkner and Anne Rice to painters George Rodrigue, Takis and many others.

Furthermore, museums, ranging from fine art and photography to voodoo, are as plentiful as the galleries. There are several voodoo museums that boast historic visits from the late Marie Laveau, the most famous Voodoo Priestess of the area. She is also said to have been employed by the Catholic Church to hold rituals behind the St. Louis Cathedral. Voodoo, a religion derived from African ancestor wor-

ship, is a very important part of the history of the French Quarter and was once almost as popular as Catholicism. Many of the more famous citizens of New Orleans, especially if they were ill, visited voodoo practitioners on a regular basis, much as we read our horoscope or visit a psychic today.

The nightlife in the French Quarter is like an ongoing nightly festival. On any given night, it rivals any of Houston's best-planned parades or festivals. Most of the bars open all their French doors to the street, inviting patrons to come and go as they please. You can carry drinks (in plastic cups, not glasses) from bar to bar and back to the hotel, if you choose, giving the phrase bar-hopping an entirely new outlook. Most of the bars are located within blocks of each other, but some are in the Faubourg Marigny outside of the Quarter. There are also many 24-hour restaurants, where people tend to go and sober up before their trek home. It's often amusing

to watch the straight couples stand across the street from the gay bars and gawk at the goings-on, but even funnier when the women drag their husbands and boyfriends (often *not* so unwillingly) into these bars. The bars are open 24-hours a day and tend to get crowded late in the evening and stay that way until 5 a.m. or so. Then everyone wakes up for another day of hussle and bussle.

New Orleans is also host to many festivals and parades. Coming September 2-5 is the Southern Decadence parade, which winds through the French Quarter with its colorful costumes and drag extravaganzas, proving just how decadent New Orleans really can be.

Earle Dutton, former resident of New Orleans' French Quarter, now resides in Houston. Earle lends his knowledge and abilities to the staff of OutSmart and is a welcomed addition to our publishing family.

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Insurance & Investment Planning. If your business is a sole proprietorship, partnership, or corporation, it may be at serious risk without sound business planning. I offer solutions and plans to protect your professional investment. Call **Julie LaRue** at **Acacia Financial Center of Houston** (713) 879-1311.

REPRINT! The only printshop in Houston to win the Golden Ink Knife Award. Copies 3 1/2 cents. MAC rental \$4.95/hr. Business Cards \$12.99/500. Good people w/good prices. Reprint! 1624 Richmond Ave., 522-9299.

EMPLOYMENT

OUTSTANDING SALES OPPORTUNITY! OutSmart Magazine now hiring commissionable sales team members. Call Greg at Up&Out Communications, (713) 520-7237.

HAIRSTYLIST/IMAGE

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HEALTH/WELLNESS

Alternative Health and Wellness Center. Jacqueline A. Doval-Graziani, M.S., D.C., specializing in Chiropractic Care and Exercise Physiology. We also offer 24-hour emergency care. Call for appointment, (713) 522-WELL (9355).

FEELING RUN DOWN? Formula One can give you the energy you need. Call 658-0308.

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FARMERS INSURANCE - Laura Feldman Agent, 552-9436. Auto, Home, Life, Annuities, Commercial; for all your insurance needs. One West Loop South, #100, 77027.

MISCELLANEOUS

LESBIAN DATES FROM HELL. We have all had them. Some are funny, some sad, many involve U-Hauls. We want to hear about your worst date ever. Send to: LDH, 1572 West Gray, #294, Houston, TX 77019.

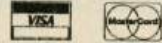
Nancy Ford. Musical Comedy for private parties, fundraisers, special events. Call for holiday reservations. 520-7237 or 627-0301.

GAY PEN-PALS for gay and lesbian youth. For instructions on joining the Alyson Letter Exchange Program, write to Letter Exchange, c/o Alyson Publications, 40 Plympton Street, Boston, MA 02118. Participants must be 21 or younger.

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WORKSHOPS

CELEBRATING THE BODY EROTIC. Many men long for a deeper connection with their bodies. Most of our education has taken us out of our bodies, away from the simple pleasures of touching and being touched, breathing deeply and feeling joyously alive. Celebrating the Body Erotic teaches men how to feel at home in their erotic bodies. Through SACRED sex rituals and conscious breathwork, we guide men into feeling states that awaken their deepest centers of pleasure. Erotic initiation rituals based on Taoist, Tantric and Sufi traditions, allow men to experience their erotic energy as playful, sacred, energizing and transformative. Sept. 24-25, 9 am-6 pm. Tuition: \$275. Reservations/Information: Tom Crow (713) 528-6588.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING RATES

Basic Classifieds are \$13 for 30 words or less and 25¢ for each word thereafter. Add additional 25¢ per each bold word. Discounts available for 3 or 6 months if ads are prepaid. Sorry, we do not bill for classifieds. Three insertions base rate of \$10 per month; six insertions base rate of \$8 per month.

Boxed Ads are \$23 per vertical column inch (2 3/8" x 1"). **Reversed Ads** are \$28 per column inch. 10% discount granted to advertisers who prepay for three or more consecutive months.

Deadline: The first of the month prior to publication. Order by phone and pay by VISA, MasterCard or American Express. Or FAX it to us at (713) 522-3275. Sorry we do not bill. Mail ad and payment to: OutSmart Classifieds, 3406 Audubon, Houston, TX 77006.

Questions? Call OutSmart Magazine at 520-7237.

Please remember to tell them you saw their ad in

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WE'VE GOT YOUR PRICE!

Their New Bravo W/ 3 mo. Airtime & Activation **\$147⁰⁰**

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HOW TO RESPOND TO AN INTRO-EXPRESS PERSONAL AD:

Scan the ads listed, perusing them somewhat as you would items in a catalogue, but not nearly so callously. Make your selection of the person(s) you would like to meet, and dial 1-900-370-8687. (A charge of \$1.95 per minute appear on your next phone bill. You must be at least 18 years old to use this service.) You will be instructed to record a response to your potential love mate's ad. Make your recording dazzling and descriptive, giving the box-holder plenty of incentive to return your call. If dazzling and descriptive is too much to ask, just shoot for audible.

If you're more of an old-fashioned guy or gal, write a response to your potential love interest. Put this letter in a STAMPED envelope addressed with nothing but the box number you're responding to. Put this envelope and \$2 in yet another envelope. Mail the whole thing to OutLookin' Personals c/o OutSmart Magazine, 3406 Audubon Place, Houston, TX 77006. We'll forward your letter to your new honey within 48 hours. After that the two of you are on your own. We claim no responsibility for fireworks or fizzles. Love's kinda funny that way....

WRITE YOUR OWN INTRO-EXPRESS PERSONAL

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

MEN SEEKING MEN

REGULAR GUY TYPE

Handsome, in-shape GWM, 6', 175# seeks similar straight-acting/looking WM, 30-something as buddy or maybe more. I'm 39 look 29. Must be disease free. Interests include rock, beaches, Caribbean, eating out and sane partying. Blue-collar welcome. Please write.

OutSmart Intro Box 70151

COURTSHIP WITH STYLE

GWM, 44 br/br/mstch, 5'9", 165 lbs., attractive and fit, Italian heritage, masculine acting/appearing, professional, financially secure, conservative lifestyle (politically liberal), traditional values...seeks same. Did you ever feel that you should have been born in the 19th century when courtship, romance, morals and commitment meant something? If so, please respond. Letters preferred.

OutSmart Intro Box 70135

SEEKING NIGHT-TYPE SOULMATE

Mingle(ing) Night Mail, XXII. A bit of an eccentric. I love collecting one-of-a-kind stuff from music to shirts. Looking for the right night-type soulmate. I've had too many people think of me as "some straight white boy" (indeed mistaken). Good journalism, art and style top my list. Yours? Write me a letter.

OutSmart Intro Box 70178

WANTED: HAIRY CHESTED STUD

I am 23, 150#, 5'11", Blonde/Blue. I am looking for a hairy-chested stud with brains and a bod, 30 and older. Send letter with photo if possible.

OutSmart Intro Box 70163

FREE THINKER

Open-minded GAM, 23, graduate student, attractive (physically, mentally and socially) seeks GM, age 20-30, good-looking, same interests (art, science, literature, philosophy, old movies, theatre, volleyball, swimming, biking and hiking) and really nice. Let's get together and see what happens. Letters and photos exchanged.

OutSmart Intro Box 70145

BUSCANDO AMIGOS

SGM, 29, sincero, atractivo (no superficial), fanático de salsa/merengue, futbol, viajando, pachangueando, dando paseos, mucho mas. Busco amigos con gustos similares. Escribame. I'm sincere, attractive (not superficial), enjoy salsa/merengue, soccer, traveling, partying, walks and much more. Looking for friends (any race/sex) with similar interests. Please write.

OutSmart Intro Box 70143

CIAO! COME STAI?

Handsome 35 y.o. well educated GWM. Outgoing and attractive. Seeking student/professional (preferably medical, engineering or arts field) from Italy, Greece or Middle East. Looks ARE important but brains, charm and a fun personality are the real

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After we receive it we'll give you a number to record your own FREE voice greeting—at no charge! You'll be assigned a voice mailbox number which will appear in your ad. Record a free greeting about yourself to be heard by those responding to your printed ad.

YOU'LL GET THEIR EAR...

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

AND THEY'LL GET YOURS...

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

THEN GET TOGETHER...

Once you've listened to your messages, you'll decide whom to contact. Only then do you make your identity known. It's completely confidential!

Call 1-900-370-8687

\$1.95 per minute • You must be at least 18 years old to use this service.

catch. I am interested in exchanging views on politics, religion, philosophy and other topics. This is no joke! Could be an opportunity for a wonderful and rewarding friendship. Might be fun! Serious replies only. Why not respond with a letter (photo optional).

OutSmart Intro Box 70139

IF TRUST IS IMPORTANT

Healthy GWM, 34, 6'2", 215 lbs., brn/brn with goatee seeks similar sized/age W/H male for friends first, possibly serious stuff IF things click. I prefer non-smokers; light drinkers okay—facial hair a plus. All sports (tennis, bowling, working out), travel, my friends are a few of my favorites. If you still believe in old fashioned values, and that trust and commitment are important in both friendships and a relationship, call or write me. You might like the response you receive!

OutSmart Intro Box 70159

WELL READ CONVERSATION

GWM, 27, brown/baby blue, 5'4", 150 lbs., handsome, NS/DDF... seeks mature, professional, financially secure, romantic. Are you into cuddling and candlelit lovemaking? Is monogamy a part of your vocabulary? Do you enjoy travel, museums, music (all kinds), dancing, sports and intelligent conversation. If so, please write. Photo requested.

OutSmart Intro Box 70157

PLAZA 9200

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Listen to the *Minute Waltz* ten times.
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Say *I-Mississippi* 600 times.
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Complete a ten-minute work-out.
Thank your lucky stars.
Have safer sex.
AND...

**Drive Safely from the Heart of Montrose, the Galleria,
Downtown, Greenway Plaza, Hobby Airport,
and All Points in Between
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Weekly Events

Every Tuesday: Moonlight Volleyball and C&W Dance Lessons with Southern Country

Every Wednesday: Complete Dinner Buffet and Happy Hour Prices All Night Long

Every Thursday: Moonlight Volleyball and Billiards League

Every Friday: LIVE COUNTRY & WESTERN MUSIC (check for dates)

Every Saturday: Hottest and Newest Music and Videos with DJ's Tiger and Paul

Every Sunday: FAMILY BAR-B-QUE ON THE PATIO! Steak, Chicken, sausage, stuffed baked potatoes, salad, country baked beans and all the trimmings!

Special Events

Thursdays, August 18, Sept. 1 & 15,
8:30-midnight:
KARAOKE!

Thursdays, August 25, Sept. 8 & 22,
8:30-midnight:
MUSIC, COMEDY & OPEN MIC
WITH NANCY FORD

Thursday, August 25,
9:30 p.m.
AIDS Foundation Houston's
Safer Sex Seminar for Lesbians

Watch for Your Invitation to the
\$1 Million Party-coming in September.

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