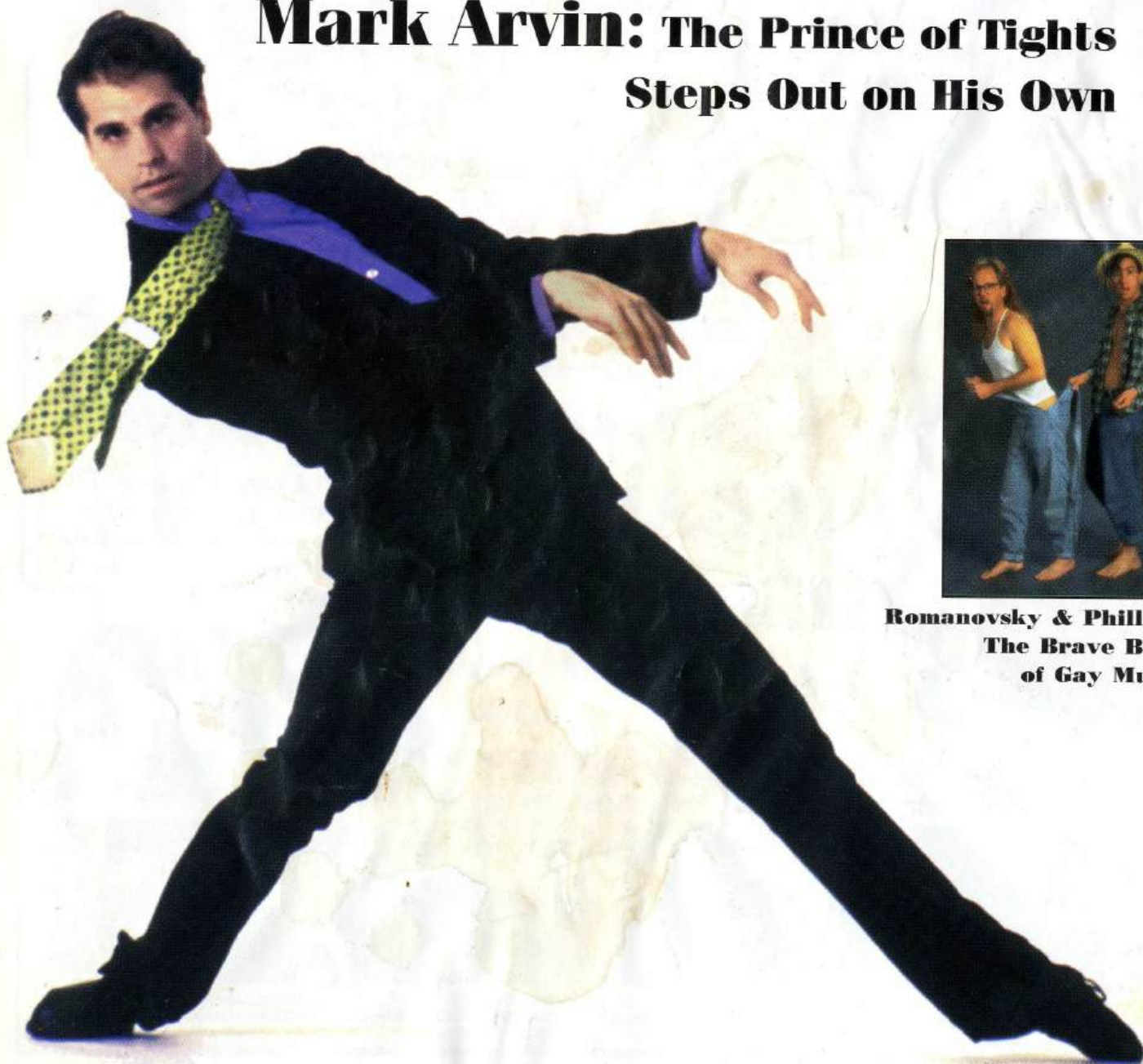


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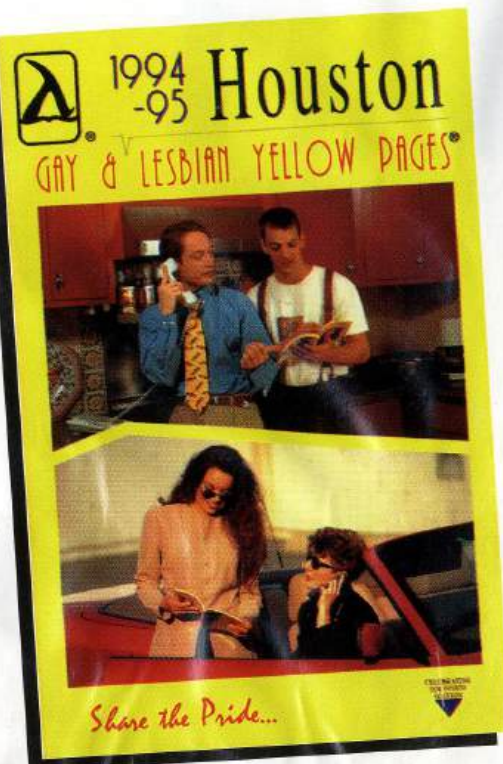
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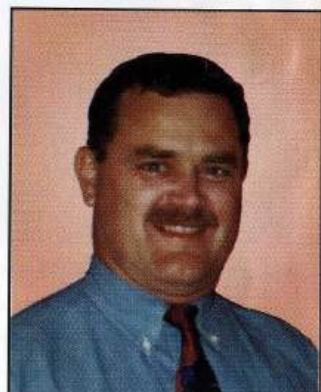
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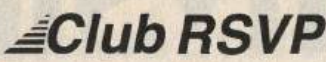
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OutSmart provides positive information to gay men, lesbians, and their associates to enhance and improve the quality of our lives. Our goal is to build a bridge of communication and understanding between cultural and social communities that are separated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

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OutSmart

HOUSTON'S GAY & LESBIAN MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Volume 2, Issue 4 May 15-June 14, 1995

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ON THE COVER: Houston Ballet's Mark Arvin in *Rooster*. Photo by Drew Donovan.

OutSmart Contributors

Shaila Dewan is a freelance writer living in Houston. Look for her upcoming exhibit documenting Berlin squathouses at Lawndale Art and Performance Center this fall. Shaila has written for *Texas Monthly*, *Houston Press*, *High Performance* and *Ten Percent*. In this issue she profiles feminist authors Leslie Feinberg and Minnie Bruce Pratt.



Steven Foster divides his time between writing for advertising, film, and frequent contributions to OutSmart. He is currently working on his second screenplay, *Absolutely Positive About Positively Nothing*. Part II of his article on the Alley Theatre's production of *Angels in America* is continued in this issue.

Bart Loeser is Education Director for AIDS Foundation Houston. Through the "Positive Choices" Wellness Program, he schedules a variety of free seminars ranging in topics from nutrition, legal planning, and healing alternatives for people affected by HIV disease. In this issue he discusses the Safer Sex Workshops and House Parties offered by AFH.



Eric L. Roland, Assistant Editor, has served on the staff of OutSmart since the magazine's inception in 1994. Last month he reviewed the movie *Priest* and a new film reference book titled *Images in the Dark*. For this issue he profiles Houston Ballet's Mark Arvin and Romanovsky & Phillips, the gay comedic singing duo that will be performing at Spectrum '95's Concert of the Stars.

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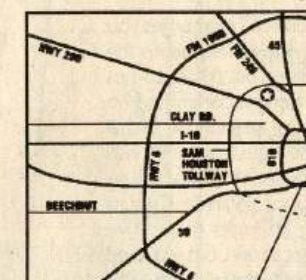
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INCLUSION, NOT EXCLUSION

It always amazes me when minorities oppress each other. I used to presume that if someone was oppressed, they would be more sensitive to discrimination and oppression. Sadly, I was wrong, as is the case with Dale Carpenter's editorial [April 15, 1995] on the transgendered community.

I disagree with Dale's separatist views. We need to support and include the transgendered community to end oppression and discrimination against all people. We should not be emphasizing the distinctions between the gay and lesbian communities and the transgendered community, because such distinctions create an adversarial situation. We should be emphasizing the similarities which unite us all.

Instead of trying to come up with the best excuse for saying "no" to the inclusion of the transgendered community, we should try to figure out ways to include them. If we can't welcome someone who is transgendered into "our" movement, then I see little hope for the other minority communities to take up our cause and include gay and lesbian issues.

—Mitchell Katine
Houston, Texas

Endorsed by Ella Tyler, Rev. Carolyn Mobley, Suzanne Anderson, Henry L. "Rick" Barnes, Clyde Williams, Connie Moore and Debra E. Hunt, all of Houston, Texas.

I read with interest Dale Carpenter's article on the issue of including transgender persons in the movement—a nicely written article. I think, however, that the issue needs to be approached from a global standpoint.

LETTERS
TO THE EDITOR

Got something to say? Send your comments, suggestions, lucky lotto numbers to: OutSmart 3406 Audubon Place, Houston, Texas 77006-4412 or fax to 713/522-3275.

This country really has quite a bit of cultural diversity, always had and always will. Yet many people in this country are uncomfortable with this cultural diversity, and it is easy for politicians to appeal to this discomfort. The result is insidious discrimination or the threat of insidious discrimination. I myself do not recall any trouble stemming from my preference, but the threat is there. The issues of both gay rights and of transsexual rights are part of this larger issue. There are many other people who also have a stake in cultural pluralism. Unfortunately, this block of people is badly fragmented. Often these people assume that they can get something if they don't ask for too much. That assumption keeps the forces defending pluralism weak and fragmented. Different groups tend to sell each other out, and many groups are prejudiced against each other.

Dale and I belong to the Houston Gay/Lesbian Political Caucus. A few years ago Phyllis Frye proposed a number of bylaw amendments to make the caucus more inclusive. One was an addition to the statement of purpose, which I supported and still would, but it was voted down with a rather hostile attitude from some people. I must add that Dale was not a member at this time and had nothing to do with it. I think that we need to strengthen our ties with the transsexual community. Our particular affinity is that we both dissent from some rigidly held traditions that are widely assumed about how people should conform to their gender. Yes, many sacred cows come attached to gender.

On a personal note, I was once very upset when a boyfriend of mine expressed an interest in getting a sex change. Yet I must paraphrase Voltaire—"I may not care for what this person wants to do, but I will defend to the death his/her right to do it."

—Scott Tillinghast
Houston, Texas

Dale Carpenter has tried to assuage our (i.e., gay people's) conscience by providing us with a "reasoned response" to the transgendered "problem." Unfortunately, while he is correct in his assessment that well-meaning gay leaders have "squirm[ed] nervously" about the effects of including transgender concerns in the gay agenda, his argument rests on the shaky premise that being gay is pretty much a matter of "affectional preference" and nothing more. He assures us that we are not at all like the transgendered who are "affected" by "gender dysphoria." Ignoring the queer scholarship of the last decade, he dismisses "gender identity" as a mere "catch phrase." Alas,

Mr. Carpenter, the line between you and them may be fuzzier than you would like.

But my real complaints lie not with your sexual or political analysis. On the latter, you are probably correct that it will be harder (perhaps much harder) to get pro-gay legislation passed if we insist on the inclusion of the transgendered. I would have had less trouble with your essay if you had frankly acknowledged your underlying Darwinian belief that gays must consider themselves first: if the transgendered must be kicked off the raft for us to succeed, so be it. It would not have been the first time that our movement sacrificed principle for expediency. But please, Mr. Carpenter, if you truly respect the transgendered, don't pander to them. After your simplistic medical conceptualization of them, your half-hearted "Transgendered people should be welcome" and nauseating "We have much to learn from [them]," rang as sincere as the Vatican's recent pronouncements on God's "love" for homosexuals. When you tell us that "on occasion, we will want to explore the intersection of sexual orientation and gender identity," I am reminded of many of our so-called "friends" in elected office who, on occasion, support us, but only when there is no cost. The transgendered community has had a long history supporting us; it certainly deserves better than that.

—Christopher V. Bacon
President, Bar Association for Human Rights,
Houston, Texas

I would like to take an opportunity to let the readership of OutSmart know that not all gay and lesbian attorneys are on the same wavelength with Dale Carpenter on the issue of who are the rightful participants in the gay and lesbian civil rights movement.

At the National Lesbian and Gay Law Association's Lavendar Law IV conference last October, a significant amount of time was devoted to legal issues of particular concern to the transgendered community. As the programming chairperson of that conference, I believed that it was important to include the transgendered community because of the broad spectrum of issues that directly affect and are a part of the gay and lesbian civil rights movement. Perhaps if Mr. Carpenter would get out of his office and start participating in the gay and lesbian movement as it is debated and formed on a national basis, he would better understand why the struggle for transgender civil rights is the same struggle for equality he claims to be engaged in.

As an additional note, in addition to including the transgendered legal issues on the agenda for the Lavendar Law IV conference, I would like to point out that NLGLA, which is the only lesbian and gay legal group affiliated with the American Bar Association and has a seat in the ABA's governing body, elected two transgendered persons to its board of directors and made a commitment to continue to include transgendered legal issues in future Lavendar Law conferences.

—Robert M. Rosenberg
Houston, Texas

During a visit to Houston in April (I moved from Houston last summer after 13 years as a resident), I read your magazine, including the article by Mr. Carpenter regarding the transgendered individual's "place" in the fight for gay and lesbian civil rights. Carpenter would have us exclude the transgendered folks until "we," i.e., gays and lesbians, attain equal rights. His logic states that gays and lesbians are slightly more acceptable, generally, and shouldn't jeopardize their chance at inclusion by fraternizing with "those" transgendered types. The gay and lesbian movement, according to Carpenter, is now organized and well-funded, and should resist being splintered by too many disparate goals. But we will, of course, remember the transgendered community once we have reached our goals.

For a moment, I will use Carpenter's logic to either prove his logic false, or to challenge him to apply and live by his own tenets. Because, you see, the discrimination against gays and lesbians is a proven and direct result of the generations of discrimination against women. Therefore, Mr. Carpenter, according to your own rules, our interests as gays and lesbians will be best served by abandoning our "disparate" gay and lesbian goals, dismantling GLPC and putting all our efforts and support into the older, more established, and better-funded movement for women's rights. (The chair will now entertain a motion for the abolishment of GLPC.)

Mr. Carpenter, the transgendered individual is already a member of our community, is equal in all respects to every gay and lesbian in our community, and should be utilized and relied upon and supported in every way. Our community is not so numerous, powerful or invulnerable that it can afford to do without these valuable individuals who will help fight for equal rights for all of us.

—Latisha K. Frederick
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

As moderator of the Transgender Caucus, I wish to thank Dale Carpenter for recognizing the value of our new federation. There is, how-

ever, a certain irony in his attitude.

For years, the transgender community has been split into many warring factions. Transsexuals, cross dressers, and drag queens have traditionally emphasized our differences more than our similarities; only recently have we realized that everyone lumps us together. Now that we are learning to cooperate, good things are starting to happen.

The irony is that while Mr. Carpenter applauds unity within the transgender community, he opposes it for the greater sexual-minority community. Although the straight world lumps all sexual minorities together, he stresses the difference between gays, transgendered, leather people and sadomasochists, and declares that his only concern is civil rights for boardroom gays.

Mr. Carpenter's approach is not only morally bankrupt, it can't be effective. Transgendered have learned that unity is required for our own progress; the same holds true for the entire queer community.

—Dee McKellar

Moderator, Transgender Caucus, Houston, TX

Contemporary man

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STOP THE VIOLENCE, STOP THE HATE, WRITE YOUR REPRESENTATIVE

Editor's Note: The Hate Crimes Bill has been passed in the House and is now on its way to the Senate. Once again, this is a crucial time to write to your elected officials. Your letters WILL make a difference.

In 1994, eight gay men were brutally murdered in cities across Texas simply because they were queer. The lives of these men matter to us and we know they matter to you. The violence must end.

The Lesbian and Gay Rights Lobby of Texas urges you to send letters to your state representatives explaining the need for passage of a strong Hate Crimes Bill. A hate crimes law would enhance the penalty for a crime committed on the basis of a person's race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation. The Senate version of the Hate Crimes Bill was recently approved, but getting it through the House will be more difficult. Conservative Democrat Warren Chisum and his cronies are already making attempts to remove sexual orientation from HB 365. We can win, but we need everyone to call and write their representatives. Here is a sample version of such a letter. Please write a letter in your own handwriting. YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

—Michael Crawford
Houston, Texas

For more information contact the Lesbian and Gay Rights Lobby at (512) 474-5475 or P.O. Box 2579, Austin TX 78768.

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Dear Rep. Lawmaker,

I have become aware of the proposed Hate Crimes Bill sponsored by Rep. Scott Hochberg. I feel that the legal system should protect the rights of all people, and aim to provide them the safety to live without fear. The Hate Crimes Bill will go one step further toward this goal by enhancing the punishment for those who would commit crimes against people merely because of race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation. It is time Texas reminded itself that we are part of a country founded on everyone's right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

I appeal to your sense of justice to vote for HB 365 as it stands. It will punish those who commit crimes, reduce the number of hate crimes committed in the future, ease fear which potential victims of the crimes feel as they lead their lives, and send a message that this senseless violence is unacceptable.

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From the Publisher...



In an attempt to focus on the diversity of our community, *OutSmart* recently found its way into a lively discussion as to who and what should be included in the gay and lesbian equal rights movement. Last month's featured article, "The Uneasy Case for Limits" raised some divergent—and

occasionally heated—exchange of dialogue. It also raised questions about our community and posed a challenge to all of us to define and understand our diversity. How do we expect mainstream America to understand us, when we have trouble understanding ourselves?

Could it be that our community, which claims to pride itself on celebrating diversity, can be divided because of it? One thing for sure, this article and the resulting clamor demonstrated how easily our community can become divided over opinion. Yet, as a community that celebrates diversity, shouldn't we also understand that there will be diversity of ideas as well?

Maybe as human rights activists we have forgotten how to stay focused on our real "agenda" (whatever that is). Maybe it would be helpful to remember what author Wayne Dyer says about purpose: "Remember that all that you fight against weakens you. All that you support empowers you." Rather than being against hate be for love. Instead of fighting against discrimination, concentrate on promoting equality.

In the past few years, some members of the pro-life movement have shown total disrespect for life through their actions. How can one claim to be pro-life and yet end the lives of surgeons and women's clinic workers?

Similar, though not so violent, contradictions abound in our community. With all respect to a healthy debate, how much more effective it would be for us to redirect our energies and take on the responsibility for promoting love and understanding among ourselves. Once that is achieved, how can we be divided?

It's a big responsibility. I believe we're up to it.

—Greg Jeu

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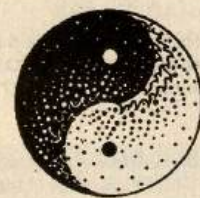
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—Dr. Wayne Dyer



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OutSmart Calendar



Longevity makes them citizens! The state makes them outlaws! Desire keeps them alive! Dancers Patrick Scully of Minneapolis, Keith Hennessy of San Francisco, and Ishmael Houston-Jones of New York put the sexual content back into contact improvisation in an exploration of gay men at mid-life. Friday May 26 and Saturday May 27, 8 pm, \$12, DiverseWorks, 1117 E. Freeway, 223-8346.

If you are part of a group or have a function that you would like listed in our calendar, please send an 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

May

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 and social hour, 6:30 pm, 2700 Albany, 529-6979.

17 BUILDING HEALTHY SELF-ESTEEM, a workshop to explore the issues of finding, building, and maintaining a positive self-image and its impact on health, 7-9 pm, Metropolitan Multiservice Center, 1475 W. Gray, 623-6796.

LAMBDA ROLLERSKATING, 8:30-10:30 pm, Dairy Ashford Skating Rink, 1820 S. Dairy Ashford at I-10. Admission is \$5. 942-7406.

MEN'S NETWORK for gay and bisexual men, 7:15-9 pm, Montrose Counseling Center, 701 Richmond, 529-0037.

19 ROOT WY'MN THEATER CO., an Austin theater group, performs a one-woman show, sponsored by DiverseWorks at their artspace, 1117 E. Freeway, for reservations call 228-0914.

LESBIANS IN BUSINESS, 6 pm, Innova Building, 20 Greenway Plaza, 529-0077.

20 INVESTMENTS, a spring fashion extravaganza hosted by DIFFA and featuring over 100 vests created by local and national artists, designers, and celebrities, 8 pm, \$40, Texas Medical Center, 2151 West Holcombe. For tickets call 713/552-9445.

LIBBY RODERICK IN CONCERT, singer/songwriter from Anchorage, Alaska, 7:30 pm, Emerson Unitarian Church, 1900 Bering, tickets at Inklings.

21 AIDS CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL, hosted by The HIV Service Providers, 7 pm, City Hall Reflection Pond, downtown Houston, 626-2837.

GAUCHOS DE ESPERANZA, benefiting Casa de Esperanza, sponsored by DIFFA, 6 pm, \$75, Americas Restaurant and The Pavilion on Post Oak, 529-0639.

ZERO PATIENCE, 1993 film billed as the first AIDS musical, 8 pm, Museum of Fine Arts, 1001

Bissonnet. In conjunction with DiverseWorks Beyond Desire Series.

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

FOOD FOR LIFE, concentrates on good nutritional habits for people living with HIV/AIDS, 7-9 pm, Metropolitan Multiservice Center, 1475 W. Gray, 623-6796.

LOG CABIN REPUBLICANS of Houston general meeting, 6:30 pm, Sierra Grill, 4704 Montrose, 529-9100.

23 IMPROVISATION WORKSHOP with Patrick Scully, Keith Hennessy, and Ishmael Houston-Jones, be prepared to sing, write, move, and play, 7-10 pm, call to reserve space, 223-8346. Sponsored by DiverseWorks.

DR. ABRAHAM VERGHESE BOOK-SIGNING, the author of *My Own Country: A Doctor's Story of a Town and its People in the Age of AIDS*, 7:30 pm, Brazos Bookstore, 2421 Bissonnet, 523-0701.

KATE BORNSTEIN BOOKSIGNING, author of *Gender Outlaw*, 7 pm, Crossroads Market, 610 W. Alabama, 942-0147.

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 MILESTONE FOR OMEGA HOUSE, help commemorate 10,000 days of patient care at Omega House, 6-8 pm, reception at the Michael W. Kemper Salon, 4027 Westheimer, 523-7110.

POLITICAL ADVOCACY: SHAPING YOUR COMMUNITY, Harry Livesay and Mende Snodgrass will teach individuals affected by HIV how to take action to ensure their rights, 7-9 pm, Metropolitan Multiservice Center, 1475 W. Gray, 623-6796.

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

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

26-27 UNSAFE, UNSUITED, performance art with a trio of gay men at midlife—Patrick Scully, Keith Hennessy, and Ishmael Houston-Jones, 8 pm, DiverseWorks, 1117 E. Freeway, 223-8346.

30 TOMMY HILFIGER, internationally famous men's fashion designer, will unveil his new fragrance for men and sign autographs, 5 pm, Foley's Memorial City, Men's Fragrance Department.

31 LAMBDA ROLLERSKATING, 8:30-10:30 pm, Dairy Ashford Skating Rink, 1820 S. Dairy Ashford at I-10. Admission is \$5. 942-7406.

We're Celebrating Gay Pride

Look in next month's issue of OutSmart for the complete listing of activities scheduled for the Houston Gay and Lesbian Pride Week 1995—Silence to Celebration.

service, etc., 9 am-3 pm, Montrose Counseling Center, 701 Richmond, 529-0037.

ROBERTA ACHTENBERG HONORED by Texas Human Rights Foundation, 8 pm, The Ragsdale Plaza, St. Edward's University, Austin, 512/479-8473.

4 GRAND OPENING OF CAFE 224, to benefit Omega House, \$25 includes buffet and mimosas, 11 am-4 pm, 224 Westheimer.

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

6 PRIDE COMMITTEE OF HOUSTON, Executive Committee meeting, 7 pm, 2700 Albany, 529-6979.

7 LAMBDA ROLLERSKATING, 8:30-10:30 pm, Dairy Ashford Skating Rink, 1820 S. Dairy Ashford at I-10. Admission is \$5. 942-7406.

HOUSTON GAY & LESBIAN POLITICAL CAUCUS, 7:30 pm, 2700 Albany, 3rd floor, 521-1000.

MEN'S NETWORK for gay and bisexual men, 7:15-9 pm, Montrose Counseling Center, 701 Richmond, 529-0037.

8 MONTROSE ICE PICKS for lesbian/gay ice skaters, 8-10 pm, Galleria Ice Rink, admission is \$4.75 plus \$2 for skates, 629-1432.

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

9-11 MEDITATIVE WEEKEND RETREAT near Brenham led by Alan Davidson and Guy Mann-Hiscock, for information call 942-0923.

13 FINANCIAL PLANNING WORKSHOP for people with HIV/AIDS, 7-9 pm, Metropolitan Multiservice Center, 1475 W. Gray, 623-6796.

HOUSTON GAY & LESBIAN PARENTS Support Group meets at the Montrose Library, 4100 Montrose from 7-9 pm, 980-7995.

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

14 PET PATROL FUN-RAISER, including a silent auction of celebrity items, 5-8 pm, Black Labrador Pub, 4100 Montrose, 526-3369.

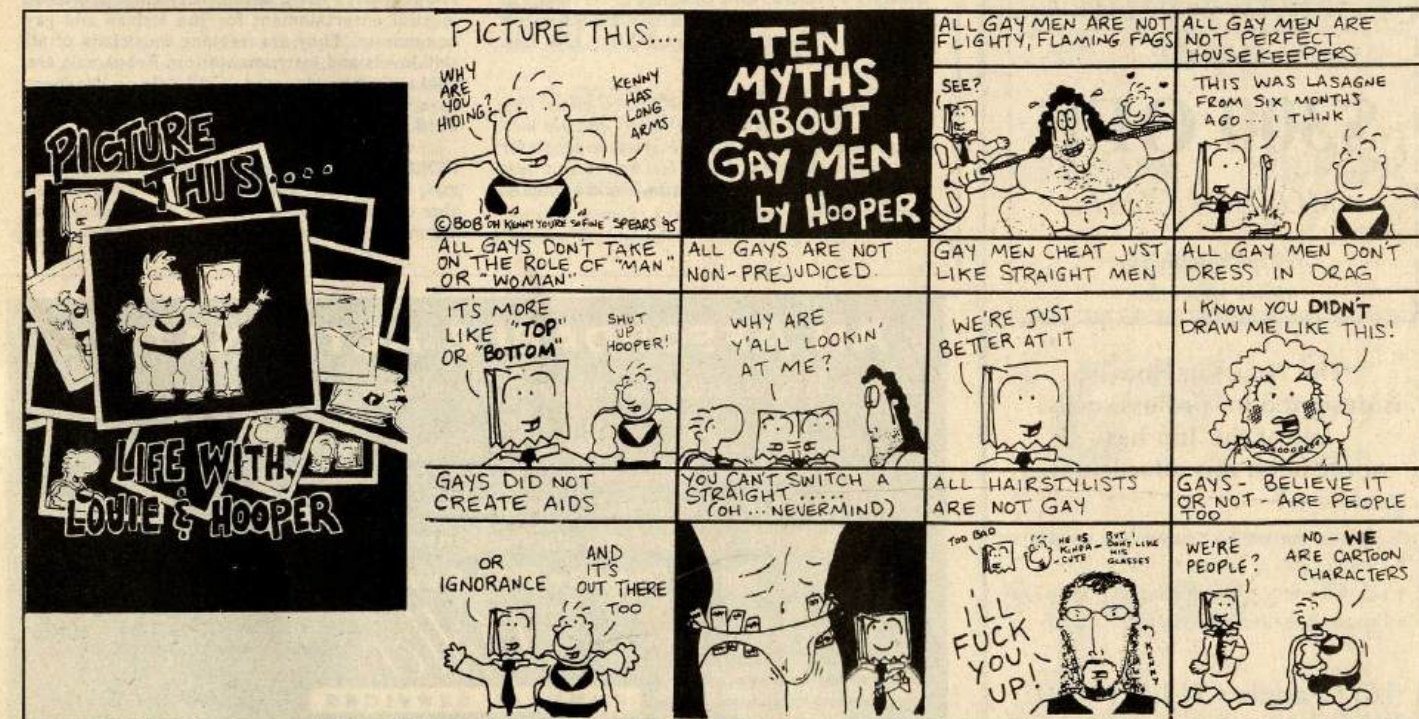
HEALING AND HAPPINESS THROUGH WELLNESS, explores wellness for improving and maintaining health and happiness, 7 pm, Metropolitan Multiservice Center, 1475 W. Gray, 623-6796.

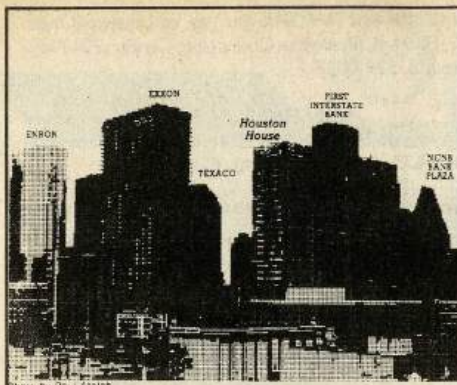
WOMEN'S NETWORK for lesbian and bisexual women, 7-9 pm, Montrose Counseling Center, 701 Richmond, 529-0037.

15 UNDERSTANDING HIV/AIDS TREATMENTS AND LAB RESULTS, panel discussion on the basics of HIV medical approaches and lab results, 7-9 pm, Metropolitan Multiservice Center, 1475 W. Gray, 623-6796.

June

3 BREAST CANCER PREVENTION DAY, information on breast self-exam, mammogram





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Ongoing

20 SOMETHING, a social group for adults ages 20 to 29, addresses issues concerning bisexual, lesbian and gay individuals. For more information, contact Jeff or Cindy at 713/315-6786.

AIDS ALLIANCE OF THE BAY AREA, support group for those infected and affected, Tuesdays, 7-8:30 pm, 17511 El Camino Real, #159, 713/488-4492.

AIDS FOUNDATION HOUSTON, free creative writing workshop for anyone affected by AIDS with freelance writer Gregg Rodriguez. Mondays, 3-6 pm. Call 713/623-6796 or 713/868-0008 for more information.

AIDS MASSAGE PROJECT, sponsored by AIDS Foundation Houston's Wellness Program, call Jeffery at 713/521-1394 for an appointment.

THE ART LEAGUE OF HOUSTON is offering free art classes for people with HIV. The ongoing course meets every Thursday and Friday from 1-4 pm. Among other media the course offers lessons in painting, printmaking and ceramics on a rotating basis. For information call Patrick Palmer at 713/523-8817.

BINET (Bisexual Network of Houston), Wed., 7 pm, MCCR Church, 1919 Decatur, 713/861-9149.

CAFE ARTISTE Open mic and songwriters night every Thursday, 8 pm (Sign-up begins at 7:45 pm). All instruments welcome. Hosted by Cafe Artiste and Tony Asch. Open mic poetry every Wednesday, 8:30 pm. Hosted by Cafe Artiste and Zachary Fox. 1601 W. Main at Mandell near Menil Collection, 713/528-3704.

CARING STEPS is offered to parents, family, friends, and loved ones of someone who is HIV positive. Provided by Montrose Clinic. Call 713/520-2073 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 the third Saturday of each month for an informal brunch. Call 713/802-1056 for meeting date, time and place.

DIGNITY HOUSTON, dedicated to the welfare of gay and lesbian Catholics and their friends, meets Saturdays at 7:30 pm and Sunday at 5:30 pm, 1307 Yale, Suite H, 713/880-2872.

THE DIZINGER FOUNDATION offers free classes in art and photography to HIV-positive individuals. The Foundation also gives grants to people for their completed works. Please feel free to visit their gallery on Avondale to view the many works on display. 713/522-8660.

EMPOWERMENT FOR LIVING, a weekly HIV-positive and negative support program and potluck supper, Tuesdays, 6 pm, MCCR, 1919 Decatur. For more information call 713/861-9149.

EN*LIGHT*EN UP, a gay men's spirituality group, Thursdays, 7:30 pm, Sunset Blvd. Call Howard at 713/528-6174 for more information.

GAY & LESBIAN PARENTS SUPPORT GROUP meets to discuss issues pertaining to today's gay families. If you have children or plan to have children, our support group can help with issues like coming out, ex-spouse problems, step relationships, etc. Meets at the Montrose Library, 4100 Montrose, the third Thursday of every month from 7-9 pm, 713/980-7995.

GAY FATHERS of Houston is a support group of gay men who meet every Monday, 8-9:30 pm at Grace Lutheran Church, 2515 Waugh, to discuss problems gay fathers share. For more information or directions, call 713/861-6181.

GLOBAL (Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Alliance at the University of Houston) is a social, political, and support group for the university GLB population and its supporters. Everyone is welcome. The group meets weekly on Wednesdays at 4 pm in the University Center. For more information, call Ruben at 713/743-7539 or e-mail at ST586@JETSON.UH.EDU.

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 713/862-PETS.

HOUSTON AREA TEEN COALITION OF HOMOSEXUALS (HATCH) is open to gays and lesbians age 15-21, meets Fridays from 7:30-10 pm and Sundays from 6:30-9 pm, call 713/942-7002 for location and information.

HOUSTON OUTDOOR GROUP is a social group for gay men and lesbians who enjoy the outdoors. Activities include camping, hiking, horseback riding, canoeing, etc. Day trips, weekend trips (typically a two- to four-hour drive from Houston) and extended trips to places such as Wyoming, Canada, and the Cayman Islands. Call 713/KAMP-OUT or write to P.O. Box 980893, Houston, TX 77098.

HOUSTON PRIDE BAND has formed to provide musical entertainment for the lesbian and gay community. They are seeking musicians of all skill levels and instrumentation. Rehearsals are held at Dignity Houston, 1307 Yale on Wednesdays from 7-9 pm. Contact Russell at 713/524-0218 or e-mail HousTxBand@aol.com.

KOLBE PROJECT is an ecumenical outreach to gays, lesbians, and other sexual minorities modeled after the ministry of St. Francis of Assisi. Potluck and community-concern programs, first Thursdays, 7 pm;

Healing Service, second Thursdays, 7 pm; Crossdressers Support Group, Tuesdays, 8 pm; Spiritual Direction by appointment; HIV/AIDS hospital chaplaincy. For information, call 713/522-8182.

LONE STAR NUDIST GROUP Join gay or bisexual men who wish to share nude experiences together. We currently have 72 members in the Houston area. Singles and lovers welcome. Monthly meetings. Nude social events, massage group, and out-of-town gatherings. Call 713/866-8847 for more information.

THE MOVIE CLUB meets on Saturdays, 8-9 pm, in front of a chosen theater and attending a restaurant after the movie. Call 713/867-9454 for more information and meeting time and place.

NEXT STEP is a free confidential program of information and medical testing for persons who are HIV positive. Provided by Montrose Clinic. Call 713/520-2000 for schedule and to register.

PEOPLE IN MEDICINE & HPHR (Houston Physicians for Human Rights), an organization for all lesbian and gay health care professionals, meets monthly providing socials, speakers, networking, and practitioner referral line. For information or a referral, call 713/523-4700.

PROTECT (People Respecting Ourselves Through Establishing Community and 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, 713/520-7870.

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 713/871-8519.

RAINBOW RANGLERS is a gay country and western dance club promoting Texas style couple dancing. The club teaches beginning level country dance every Thursday at 8:30 pm and advanced level dance every Wednesday at 7 pm at the Brazos River Bottom, 2400 Brazos. Dance classes are free and open to the public. Call 713/880-0670 for information.

SOUTHERN COUNTRY HOUSTON promotes pride and unity while providing country and western dance lessons, exhibitions, and charity events to benefit service organizations in the Houston area. Free dance lessons are offered at The Ranch, Plaza 9200, 9200 Buffalo Speedway every Tuesday. For more information, write to P.O. Box 1502, Houston, TX 77252-1502.

SUMMER SUPPORT GROUP FOR LESBIANS, call Diana Thomas, M.A., L.P.C., at 264-1671.

TEXAS GAY VETERANS OF HOUSTON is committed to ending discrimination against gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgenders in the military services. Meets for business on the first Thursday of the month, 6 pm, 2700 Albany, Suite 304. Write to P.O. Box 66135, Houston, TX 77266-6135 or call Patrick at 713/869-0982 or James at 713/649-8808.

WOMEN'S ACTION COALITION (WAC) is an open alliance of women committed to direct action on issues affecting the rights of all women, Wednesdays, 7 pm at Toopees, P.O. Box 131148, Houston, TX 77219-1148, Voice Mail 713/867-9581.

RADIO AND TV

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. Other times are listed in local television guides under Public Access Cable (PAC) channels. For more information call 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 729-4267.

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.

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

THEATER

A.D. PLAYERS, Grace Theater, 2710 W. Alabama, 526-2721. Through June 4: *Whatever Happened to the Villa Real?* June 8-11: *Smoke on the Mountain*.

ALLEY THEATRE, 615 Texas Ave., 228-8421. Extended through July 9: *Angels in America: Part I*. Extended through July 9: *Angels in America: Part II*.

THE COMPANY ONSTAGE, 536 Westbury Square, 726-1219. Through June 10: *Spider's Web*.

CURTAINS THEATER, 3722 Washington, 862-4548. Through May 27: *La Ronde*.

EMPIRE THEATER, 3201 Allen Parkway, 520-7529. May 19-20, June 2-3: *Heaven and Hell*.

HOUSTON BROADWAY SERIES, Jones Hall, 629-3700. June 13-18: *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*.

MAIN STREET THEATRE 2540 Times Blvd., 524-6706. Through May 20: *Sunday in the Park with George*. June 1-July 1: *Waiting for a Kiss*.

NEW HEIGHTS THEATRE, 339 West 19th, 869-8927. Through June 11: *The Glass Menagerie*.

STAGES, 3201 Allen Parkway, 527-0220. Through May 28: *And The World Goes 'Round*. Through June 3: *Heaven and Hell*.

THEATRE LAB HOUSTON, 1706 Alamo, 868-7516. May 17-June 24: *The Destiny of Me*.

THEATRE SUBURBIA, 1410 W. 43rd, 682-3525. June 2-July 1: *Busbody*.

DANCE

HOUSTON BALLET, Wortham Center, Brown Theater, 227-ARTS. May 25-June 4: *Haffner Symphony*, *Rooster*, and *Sinfonietta*. June 8-June 18: *Peer Gynt*.



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Queer notes

Compiled by
Blase DiStefano

Liberace

(Behind the Candelabra, 1988, Scott Thorson)
"Freudian theory ascribed homosexuality to a boy's overattachment to his mother and hostility to his father. Freud believed it caused the boy to mold his personality on his mother, thereby acquiring feminine reactions and behavior. In Lee's [Liberace's] opinion, that set of circumstances described his own background perfectly. He recalled his mother's love as 'completely suffocating and damn near incestuous.' And his dislike for his father—after he left home [when Liberace was a teenager]—bordered on hatred. If, as the psychiatrists claimed, homosexuals were really created by the circumstances of their childhood, Lee said he had the perfect parents to blame. In the past he'd learned to keep his family's secrets. Now he would keep his own just as carefully."
"Frances would never have to confront her son's true nature. Nor would she ever discover that Lee both hated and loved her. He continued to be her favorite. She was always touching him, kissing him, unaware that he almost gagged during those unwanted intimacies...."



Liberace (seen here in one of his many outlandish drag outfits, yet still in the closet): Did his overattachment to his mother and hostility to his father make him gay? It sure would have made Freud gay... uh, happy, that is.

Elizabeth Montgomery

(The Advocate, 7/30/92, R. L. Pela)
Pela: If one of your sons told you he is gay, would you support him in coming out?
Montgomery: I'd probably recommend it. I'd want to know why he wouldn't want to, just as I would with anyone else. With so many of our close friends being gay, the support system would be there.

Greg Louganis

(People, 3/6/95)
"...During the illness [a colon infection in 1993, when he lost 35 pounds], he told his mother of his HIV status. 'At one point,' he recalls, 'she wailed up and said she hoped she goes before I go, because a mother is not supposed to outlive her children.' He had shared the news with his father in 1989, when the elder Louganis was diagnosed with cancer. 'I figured we would battle together,' says Greg, who took care of his father during the last six months of his life. 'That really made us a lot closer.'"

Ricki Lake

(The Ricki Lake Show: "You're Gay...How Dare You Raise a Child," 4/27/95)
Gabriel Rotello (columnist, New York Newsday): This is from the New York Times: "A 1990 review of over 30 psychological studies comparing children of lesbian and gay parents to those of heterosexual parents showed no significant differences in

terms of gender identity, gender role behavior, social relationships or sexual orientation." Those are the real studies...

Paul Cameron (Ph.D., chairman of Family Research Institute): Those are not the real studies. For instance, Family Research Institute publishes a research about gay parents...
Rotello: That's like asking the Nazi Party to do studies about Jews....

Lake [directed to Cameron]: If you say gay parents are more apt to raise gay children, how do you explain that most gay people's parents are straight?

Cameron: Well, people can make mistakes....
Lake: Unfortunately, in today's society, there are so many children that aren't being raised in loving homes. It would seem that if a person, straight or gay, was sincere about making a commitment to raising a child with love and compassion, then the issue of their sexuality need not be an issue at all.

Lynn Redgrave

(This Is Living, 5/91, Lynn Redgrave)
"...My father, Michael, was already a shining star by the time I was born. Brilliant, volatile, dashing, sensitive, selfish, erratic, intellectually superior, and intensely shy. He had outstanding good looks, the embodiment of the leading man. Plus a blazing talent for transformation that allowed him to be both matinee idol and character actor.... He was



Lynn Redgrave (pictured here in 1987's Morgan Stewart's Coming Home): Would she want to know if her father were gay?

also bisexual, in an era when such a revelation could not only ruin a career, but put you behind bars....
"...I think I never truly came to understand the fear and hatred that I felt toward my father when I was little. I know that he was never there when I wanted him to be; it seemed to me that he did not take into account my presence in the world. I knew that he didn't want a third child. He had a six-year-old daughter and a four-year-old son, and had become more thoroughly entrenched in his 'other life.' Perhaps he was unwilling to take on the responsibility that comes with fatherhood. I don't want to imply that my father's homosexuality necessarily had anything to do with this. Interestingly, I did not know of his sexual orientation until I was a married adult, information carefully imparted to me by my husband. Although how it escaped me till then I'll never fathom. Maybe I didn't want to know."

Tom Hanks

(Newsweek, 2/14/94)
Newsweek: Would you rather your son grew up straight or gay?
Hanks: It's not a choice. I mean, you know, I don't care. I have two boys and a girl and I want them to be well adjusted and I want them to be funny. That's it. I don't know, maybe funny first and well adjusted later. But that's it. Anything past that I don't care.



Tom Hanks (shown here being boyish by blowing a bubble in 1985's The Man With One Red Shoe, before being boyish in 1988's Big and being bankable in Philadelphia and Gump): Would he care if any of his kids were gay?

Mary Fisher

(As a speaker at the Republican Convention in Houston, Texas, 1992)
"...Though I am white and a mother, I am one with the black infant struggling with tubes in a Philadelphia hospital; though I am female and contracted this disease [AIDS] in marriage and enjoy the warm support of my family, I am one with the lonely gay man sheltering a flickering candle from the cold wind of his family's rejection....
"If it is true that HIV inevitably turns to AIDS, then my children will inevitably turn to orphans. I want my children to know that their mother was not a victim—she was a messenger.
"To all within the sound of my voice, I appeal: Learn with me the lessons of history and of grace, so that my children will not be afraid to say the word AIDS when I am gone. Then their children and yours may not need to whisper it at all. God bless the children and God bless us all."



Roseanne (as she appeared in 1989's She-Devil, when she was Barr and bigger): Would she be shocked if any of her kids told her he or she were gay?

Roseanne

(The Advocate, 1/24/95, Peter Galvin)
Galvin: It's been rumored that D.J., your son on the show, is going to be gay. Is that true?
Roseanne: Everyone has said that about Sara Gilbert's character, Darlene, too. Well, we just don't know, do we? You never know if anyone's gay until he or she tells you. How would you feel if any of your kids told you they were gay?
I talked to my real-life kids, and I said, "If you tell me you're gay, I plan to be really, really bored. If you tell me you're going to be a Republican, I shall be shocked." I would hope that they would be safe and be in a good relationship and be happy.

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Three generations of imbeciles are enough."

"Living daily under conditions stemming from active lesbianism practiced in the home may impose a burden upon a child by reason of the 'social condemnation' attached to such an arrangement, which will inevitably afflict the child's relationship with its peers and with the community."

Smart people sometimes say stupid things. When those smart people are in positions of power, their stupid thoughts order others' lives. The first of the quotes above comes from an 1873 United States Supreme Court opinion, *Bradwell v. Illinois*, upholding a state law preventing women from becoming lawyers. The second comes from the Supreme Court's opinion in an 1896 decision upholding racial segregation, *Plessy v. Ferguson*. The third quote appeared in a 1927 Supreme Court opinion, *Buck v. Bell*, upholding a state law providing for the forced sterilization of institutionalized mentally retarded people. The ideas embodied in the first three passages were taken seriously, even widely accepted at the time rendered. By now each has earned its place in infamy, as dated and narrow in its assumptions about the world as the notion that the sun revolves around the earth. Each opinion took as gospel what we now take as nonsense, or just prejudice. The fourth quote made its appearance only last month in an opinion of the Virginia Supreme Court, holding a gay woman unfit to raise her own son. It will eventually take its rightful place beside the first three in history's hall of shame.

The Virginia Supreme Court's opinion upheld the decision of a trial judge to take Sharon Bottoms' biological child, Tyler, away from her. Bottoms' mother sued her for custody of the child. The trial judge awarded custody to the grandmother, ruling that Bottoms' homosexuality "renders her an unfit parent." Bottoms and her companion, April Wade, then appealed to Virginia Court of Appeals, which reversed the

decision of the lower court in an opinion considered favorable to the legal status of gay parents.

The Virginia Supreme Court then reversed the decision of the Court of Appeals, dealing a terrible blow to Bottoms, who cried when she learned of the decision. The opinion noted that homosexual conduct is a felony under the state's sodomy law, and thus is appropriately an important consideration when gay parents are involved in custody disputes. Now the only recourse for Bottoms appears to be the United States Supreme Court, not a court known for its sympathy for the rights of gay citizens.

The Virginia decision is unusual, almost unprecedented, in two ways. First, the decision takes custody of a child away from a biological parent, not an adoptive one. Biological parents ordinarily have almost a sacrosanct right to keep their children, even when they're guilty of terrible abuse and neglect. It's an extraordinary act for the state to take children away from their biological parents. Second, the decision does not give custody to the heterosexual parent, the usual way a gay mother or father loses a child by court action. (Indeed, Tyler's father believes that Tyler should remain with Bottoms and Wade.) Instead, the decision gives the child to a third party, the child's grandmother. Thus, the justices went to great lengths to take Tyler from his gay mother. Why?

The quote from the Virginia decision given above supplies the answer. The stated reason for denying custody to Bottoms is that growing up with an openly gay mom will subject him to "social condemnation" from his peers and the rest of society. You know, taunts in the schoolyard. Something about that claim reminds me of the repeated invocations of straight soldiers' discomfort with gays, in the showers and elsewhere, during the debate over gays in the military. There's just enough plausibility in it to give you pause; but after you've paused you realize how silly and destructive the claim is.

If bigots, through their discomfort with social outcasts, are able to limit the rights of those minorities, then we will have no end of mischief with civil rights. In the 1960s and before, a prominent argument against allowing mixed race couples to adopt children was that those children would suffer terrific ridicule at the hands of others as they grew up. If we had allowed those kinds of arguments against full equality for blacks to win the day, we'd still be sitting at separate lunch counters. There is no analytical distinction between the old racist arguments against mixed race parentage and the new homophobic arguments against gay parentage. They are of the same tissue.

But there's an equally important unstated premise behind the reasoning of the Virginia Supreme Court. Consider the phrase: "active lesbianism practiced in the home." I especially like the verb "practice" as the justices use it. Witchcraft is "practiced," but lesbianism? The

judges are horrified that the child might see a happy, loving gay couple and—what?—be led into homosexuality himself. Or, even more sinister, that the couple might have sex in front of him. Or, worst of all, *he might be sexually abused in a gay home*. Thus, the opinion implicitly buys into all the negative stereotypes of gay people: we're wicked, we recruit, and we're sexually predatory, especially when we can find little children to molest.

The problem with those claims is that they are lies. Most studies show that children raised by gay parents do not suffer long-term developmental problems. They are no more likely to be gay themselves than children raised by straight parents. And they are certainly no more likely to be molested by their parents. Gay parents can, of course, be domineering, selfish, unloving, and abusive. That is, they can be every bit as bad as straight parents. But they're certainly no worse. I predict that in his lifetime Tyler will be far more damaged by homophobia, whether directed at him or someone else (his mother, for example), than he will be by homosexuals.

The Virginia decision brings shame and disrepute on the justices who wrote it. Indeed, until it is undone in the wisdom of experience and of full reflection, it will bring shame on the entire American legal system. The racist prejudice it embodies will eventually be cast on the heap with all the other simple certainties of earlier eras: misogyny, racial segregation, and forced sterilization. As Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., America's most influential jurist, once observed, "time has upset many fighting faiths." He should know. He wrote the third passage quoted above.

Dale Carpenter is a lawyer in Houston and serves on the Board of Directors of the Houston Gay and 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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MUSIC FOR THE QUEERS: SPECTRUM 95 PROMOTIONAL CD NOW ON SALE

Hand in Hand, a collection of songs recorded by national and local gay and lesbian entertainers, has been released for local and national distribution. The CD, which benefits seven Houston charities, features songs by Pussy Tourette, Romanovsky & Phillips, David Pace, and Edna Garcia. Local entertainers Keith Caldwell, Nancy Ford, Ryan Bonn, and Juliana Wathen also have tracks on the CD. Three songs feature ensemble groups: Woman's Chorus of Dallas singing *Over the Rainbow*, MCCR's Chorus singing *Ode to Joy*, and a collection of various artists singing the title track. CDs are currently available from Spectrum '95 for \$10.95 each (plus shipping and handling). To order call Spectrum '95 at 713/526-2853.

DIANNE HARDY-GARCIA CALLS FOR DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS AT UH

At a forum sponsored by the Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Alliance (GLOBAL) at the University of Houston, Dianne Hardy-Garcia, the executive director of the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas, spoke out against hate crimes and bigotry and called for the University of Houston to implement domestic partnership benefits and a gay studies division. "We need to foment revolt and strive to change our environment. We cannot complacently accept the hatred thrust upon us from every angle at all times," she said. Domestic partnership benefits extend insurance and medical benefits for same-sex and opposite-sex partners of employees. Not having these benefits at a university that has a non-discrimination clause that includes sexual orientation is a violation of the rights extended by that clause.

RESULTS OF SURVEY ON LESBIAN HEALTH CARE NEEDS RELEASED

The results of a study on the health-care needs of lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered women has been released to our community and to national health-care agencies. The study, the first of its kind in Houston, was sponsored by the Lesbian Health Initiative of Houston and was performed by the Montrose Counseling Center. The results address such issues as sexual identity and behaviors; relationship patterns; history of sexual assault and domestic violence; health history and status; access to, barriers to, and gaps in health-care services; health services utilization; levels of health-promotion awareness; and sources of information/

referral. Completed surveys were received from 614 Houston-area women from June to October 1994. This number of participants is almost twice the number who participated in a similar study in Los Angeles in 1992. For more information on the study, please call the Montrose Counseling Center at 713/529-0037.

CELEBRATE NATIONAL FEMINIST BOOKSTORE WEEK



Jamie Anderson

Over 100 feminist bookstores across the United States and Canada have joined together to celebrate the first annual National Feminist Bookstore Week (NFBW), May 13-20. The event will draw attention to the contributions of feminist bookstores both in their local and national book communities. Over 100 feminist writers, from Dorothy Allison to Alice Walker, have signed the "Feminist Writers' Pledge" to support feminist bookstores and to call on their readers to invest in freedom of expression and independent thinking by shopping in feminist and other independent bookstores.

In Houston, Inklings Bookstore, 1846 Richmond, will provide in-store music with Alaskan-based singer/songwriter Libby Roderick on Friday, May 19, 5-6 pm. *Hot Wire* magazine's Favorite Performer Jamie Anderson appears at the popular alternative bookstore on May 23 from 7-8 pm. Both concerts will coincide with Inklings' popular "scratch and dent" new and used book sale.

MILLER OFFERS ALTERNATIVE TO FUNERAL HOMES

Miller Funeral and Cremation Services, a second-generation, family-owned funeral home, offers an alternative approach to the traditional, corporate-owned funeral services. "Because we are family owned and operated, we do not have costly administrative fees and salaries of most funeral homes in Houston," says owner Johnny Miller. "All of our funeral services are either cremation or held in the family's church, synagogue, or at the grave site. We can also accommodate families who request services at other locations." In support of the community, Miller Funeral and Cremation Services will donate five percent of funeral costs in the individual's name to a charity of their choice.

Fun Raisers Raise Funds



Money From the Jungle: Bayou City Boys Club Party a Success

The third annual Jungle Lust party, held on April 15 and sponsored by the Bayou City Boys Club (BCBC), raised more than \$18,000, wholly donated to the critical services provided by AIDS Foundation Houston and Houston Clinical Research Network. Due to a sellout crowd of over 850 people (visitors came from both coasts and all points in between) and cash contributions and in-kind philanthropy from community members and friends, the party was a success. BCBC's next fund-raising event will be Hurricane '95 in August.

Over \$5,000 Raised at Neiman Marcus Art of Style Event

A men's fashion show and fund-raiser held April 26 at Neiman Marcus in the Galleria drew over 300 attendees and raised over \$5,000 for the many services of Montrose Clinic. "Guest designer John Bartlett and the Neiman Marcus fashion coordinators prepared a fabulous fashion show that made for a great evening," said Montrose Clinic President Eileen Hegar. For the event, Neiman Marcus provided seven raffle packages ranging from a DKNY suit to David Yurman cuff links.

Rummage-Fest 1995 Raises Dollars for AIDS Housing

Held April 29 and 30, Rummage-Fest 1995 successfully raised over \$1,800 to benefit the TLC House, a transitional living center for people with AIDS run by the River Oaks Health Association. AIDS Housing Coalition Houston Committee Chair Dick Rancier announced that some of the funds will be used to purchase two new air conditioners and a refrigerator, as well as making emergency plumbing repairs to the TLC House. AIDS Housing Coalition formed in February 1995 to bring about funds to facilitate the growth of Houston area HIV/AIDS housing programs. Their next meeting is Wednesday, May 31 at 7 pm at 117 Tuam; for more information contact Director Matt Locklin at 713/902-2231.

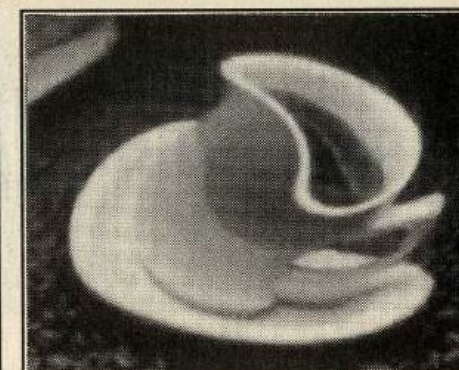
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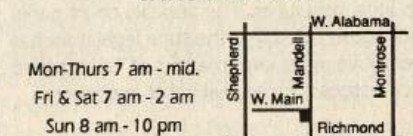
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OUT In Our WORLD

News Briefs from GayNet Wire Service

Major Victory in Oregon

SALEM, Ore.—The Oregon Court of Appeals has ruled that local and county governments cannot pass laws that discriminate against gays. The ruling strikes down anti-gay rights ordinances passed in some 27 Oregon cities and counties during the past two years and upholds a law passed by the state legislature prohibiting such local measures. The appeals court panel unanimously ruled that the state legislature has preemptive rights over matters of "substantive policy" issues such as civil rights legislation.

Most Members of Congress Continue Anti-Bias Policies

WASHINGTON—The Human Rights Campaign Fund announced at a press conference that 287 of the 535 members of the U.S. Congress do not discriminate against gays and lesbians in employment in their staff office positions. The HRCF survey reported that 223 of 435 House members and 64 of 100 senators had signed non-discrimination affirmations. Absent from the HRCF list were House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) and House Majority Leader Dick Armey (R-Texas). GOP presidential candidate and Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole of Kansas, however, was included on the non-bias listing. Speaking at a news conference, Elizabeth Birch, HRCF's executive director, said it was "encouraging that the critical bloc of moderate swing votes in this Congress supports the concept of equal treatment." Last year a similar HRCF survey reported that 296 members of Congress—225 House members and 71 senators—agreed to similar anti-bias policies in their offices.

Activists Urge Clinton to Fire AIDS Policy Advisor

WASHINGTON—AIDS activists have demanded that President Clinton fire his chief AIDS policy advisor Patsy Fleming for "bowing to the right wing" by eliminating mandatory HIV/AIDS education programs for all federal employees. Steve Michael of ACT UP/D.C. said, "This is just another example of the Clinton administration caving in to right-wing pressure

at the expense of people with AIDS." Michael said that the federal AIDS education requirement was dropped after just 18 months because of pressure from Republicans who said the training was promoting homosexuality.

Far-Right Group Wants 'Pro-Family Contract With America'

WASHINGTON—The Christian Action Network held a press conference in the nation's capital and proposed a "Pro-Family Contract with America." Among other things, the CAN "Contract" calls for reviving a total ban on gays and lesbians in the armed forces and would restrict federal funds from going to school districts that provide positive counseling for gay or lesbian students. CAN called on the new Republican majority in Congress to enact its "Contract" or face the prospect of a third party being formed. Rich Tafel, executive director of the Washington-based gay lobbying group Log Cabin Republicans, warned the GOP leadership, however, that the far-right wing's agenda would divide the party and undermine the GOP's prospects for keeping its narrow congressional majority. "If the Christian Action Network is trying to pick a fight, they'll get one," Tafel said. "The Republican agenda is one of limited government, and these people want to derail it. They want to replace the liberal nanny state with a right-wing nanny state." Martin Mawyer of CAN acknowledged that its call for a blanket ban on gays and lesbians in the military had not generated enough congressional interest to find any sponsors. Tafel said the failure to find any legislative sponsor for such a ban "shows how far outside the mainstream this group really is."

Another Challenge to Pentagon Policy

ALEXANDRIA, Va.—Navy Lt. Paul Thomasson has become the latest member of the U.S. armed forces to challenge the "don't ask, don't tell" policy. Thomasson's lawyers argued in court that the policy is not only a violation of constitutional guarantees of free speech, but that the Navy by enforcing it against Thomasson

would be kicking out "one of its finest" service members. Thomasson, in addition to his stellar record first as a pilot and later in a Washington, D.C. staff post, has received glowing commendations from former Joint Chief of Staff Chairman Gen. Colin Powell whom he helped prepare for congressional testimony, among other Navy brass. The Navy is trying to discharge Thomasson, however, because the day after the new policy went into effect last year, he notified his commanding officer in writing, "I am gay."

Founder William Waybourn Leaving Victory Fund

WASHINGTON—Gay rights activist William Waybourn, founder of the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund, has announced he will retire as the head of the Washington, D.C.-based PAC. A long-time Dallas activist, Waybourn said in a prepared statement that he had no immediate plans, but was leaving the four-year-old Victory Fund to promote new ideas in the agency. "It is my philosophy that organizations thrive best when new leadership and fresh ideas are encouraged," he said.

Methodist Minister Fasts Over Church's Anti-Gay Policies

AUSTIN, Texas—The Rev. Charles Moore of Grace United Methodist Church began a fast during the annual meeting of the Council of Bishops of the United Methodist Church in Austin to underscore an appeal to the bishops to remove anti-gay bias within the church. The Council, the governing body of the United Methodist Church, made no response to Moore's fast or to his appeal.

'Freedom Ride' to Camp Sister Spirit Postponed

LOS ANGELES—The Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) has announced it is postponing a planned "Freedom Ride" over Memorial Day weekend to assist the embattled Camp Sister Spirit in Ovett, Mississippi, because of insufficient interest in the trip. Oper-

ated by Wanda and Brenda Henson, Camp Sister Spirit has been the object of death threats, shootings, and intense local attempts to drive the women out of the area and close down the lesbian/feminist retreat. In a press statement, the Rev. Troy Perry of MCC, said, "It saddens me that we have been unable to respond, now, to this critical need. It is our intention for this project to succeed, and for that to happen we need more time. We are asking everyone to rally to this important cause and plan to be present in Mississippi when this event happens next spring."

Gay Military Ban Becomes Political Issue in UK

LONDON—A spokesman for the British Defense Ministry told Parliament that the country's policy of excluding gays from the British armed forces had the full support of the Conservative Party government, and that allowing gays in the nation's military was "not compatible with securing the aims of the armed forces." The Labor Party had earlier called for ending the ban on gays and lesbians in the country's military as part of the party's official platform. David Clark, the defense spokesman for the Labor Party, called the exclusionary policy an "infringement on civil liberties" and added, "It is important in the modern world that military law is as near as possible in accord with civilian law."

University Republicans Yank Endorsement Over Homophobia

MINNEAPOLIS—The College Republicans at the University of Minnesota have said they were withdrawing their endorsement of Ben Powers, a student running for the school senate and for the Minnesota Student Association's vice presidency, after Powers admitted he had scrawled anti-gay graffiti at a campus dormitory. Tom Gromacki of the College Republicans said the GOP student organization wanted to disassociate itself from Powers' admitted homophobia and to emphasize that such actions contradicted the ideals of the organization's 10-point "Pledge to Students," modeled after the Republican Party's Contract with America.

Researchers Find No HIV Risk From Health Care Workers

ATLANTA—In the largest study of AIDS transmission from health care workers to patients done to date, scientists found no evidence that the virus was passed to patients, according to a report in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*. Many people in the U.S. have been concerned about the possible risk of infection after the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention determined three years ago that a Florida dentist transmit-

ted HIV to six of his patients. The new study by the CDC covered more than 22,000 patients of 64 physicians, dentists, and other health care workers who are infected with the virus. The researchers found only 113 infected patients out of the 22,000 examined, and, of those, epidemiological and genetic evidence showed that all came from other sources, not from any of the health care workers.

Consumer Reports Rates Latex Condoms

WASHINGTON—The May issue of *Consumer Reports* includes the findings of its test of reliability of condoms. The consumer magazine tested 6,500 latex condoms, representing 37 brands. The magazine reports some surprising findings: Several types of the Trojan brand, for example, frequently failed the air-inflation test, a basic check of condom elasticity. The magazine also found that some brands that advertise as being "stronger" were in fact not as strong as others in its tests. Others that promote themselves as "thin" weren't particularly thin, the magazine reports, and some of the thinnest broke more easily. The best performing brands, according to *Consumer Reports*, were Sheik Excita Extra Ribbed, Ramses Extra Ribbed, and Sheik Classic. The magazine named Protex's Touch condom as the "best buy."



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Breakage Rate of Plastic Condoms Questioned

WASHINGTON—Tests of the new polyurethane Avanti condom have produced conflicting results, and the Food & Drug Administration, which approved Avanti for sale in the U.S. in 1991, has called for further testing. Regular latex condoms break in about 2% of the cases, according to FDA tests, and Avanti's manufacturer London International/Schmid Labs had presented the FDA with its own studies that showed breakage rates ranging between 0.4% and 2.1% when it applied for approval to sell the condom in the U.S. But five subsequent studies by the National Institute of Child Health & Human Development, conducted by the Los Angeles Regional Family Planning Council, found failure rates for the Avanti ranging from 4% to 15% with an overall breakage rate of 9.6%—so high a rate that the council stopped testing the Avanti in 1994, even though all its studies had involved fairly small numbers of couples. Dr. Susan Alpert of the FDA, however, defended the agency's approval of the Avanti polyurethane condom, even if it turns out to have a higher breakage rate, because up to 7% of the American population is allergic to latex.

'Pregnancy' Hormone Appears to Curb KS Tumors

LONDON—A hormone found in pregnant women, known as human chorionic gonadotropin, may have an important role in treating Kaposi's sarcoma, a skin and blood vessel cancer that affects many patients with HIV, according to a report in the British journal *Nature*. Dr. Robert Gallo and other researchers with the National Cancer Institute report that the hormone kills KS in the test tube, and that in experiments with mice, it reduced tumors caused by injections of KS cells. The NCI scientists found that the injected KS cells, which normally cause tumors in mice, were not able to do so if they had been exposed to the hormone before being injected. Mice that had been treated with the hormone for a week prior to being injected with KS cells also did not develop tumors or developed small ones, the researcher reported. The scientists also presented cases of two women who had KS, but whose cancer lesions inexplicably disappeared during or after pregnancy. "This is the first demonstration of an anti-tumor property of [the hormone], and offers a new strategy for treating patients with Kaposi's sarcoma," the scientists said.

AIDS-Related Cancers Linked to New Herpes Virus

BOSTON—A newly discovered type of herpes virus causes two cancers associated with AIDS according to a report in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. According to scientists from Co-

lumbia University, both B cell lymphoma and Kaposi's sarcoma are caused by a herpes virus known as KSHV, first discovered in skin lesions of patients with KS. Drs. Yuan Chang and Patrick Moore report that the newly identified virus causes all KS cancers, not just those in people with AIDS. They also report finding the cancer virus cells in eight patients who suffered from AIDS-associated B cell lymphoma, a cancer of the body's immune system.

Project Launched for Workplace Equality

NEW YORK—New York state Assemblywoman Deborah Glick, the state's only openly gay legislator and the co-chair of the International Network of Lesbian & Gay Officials, joined with New York City Councilman Tom Duane and San Francisco Supervisor Carol Migden and the Wall Street Project in launching a program to promote non-discrimination policies by businesses and institutions throughout the country. Known as "Equality Principles on Sexual Orientation," the guidelines are designed to "provide a framework for an ethical standard that all corporations, universities, and other institutions can voluntarily embrace in their business practices." Businesses that sign the principles would commit themselves to not discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation or HIV status in sales, purchasing or employment practices. The 8-point non-discrimination policy statement states: "To become successful in the ever-competitive world of business, a company must strive to create an environment in which all employees are treated with respect. Through the cultivating of diversity in the workplace, a company can draw fully upon the potential for creativity and commitment represented by all its employees. Implementation of these Equality Principles on Sexual Orientation are an important step in that direction. 1. Explicit prohibitions against discrimination based on sexual orientation will be included in the company's written employment policy statement. 2. Discrimination against HIV-positive employees or those with AIDS will be strictly prohibited. 3. Employee groups, regardless of sexual orientation, will be given equal standing with other employee associations. 4. Diversity training will include sexual orientation issues. 5. Spousal benefits will be offered to domestic partners of employees, regardless of sexual orientation, on an equal basis with those granted to married employees. 6. Company advertising policy will bar negative sexual orientation stereotypes and will not discriminate in media advertising on the basis of sexual orientation. 7. Companies will not discriminate in the sale and purchase of goods and services on the basis of sexual orientation. 8. Written non-discrimination policies on sexual orientation must be disseminated throughout the company. A senior company official will be appointed to monitor compliance corporate wide.

David Duke Wants People With AIDS Tattooed

LOS ANGELES — David Duke, the former Ku Klux Klan leader who also served as a Louisiana state representative, recently told *The Advocate* that people infected with AIDS should be tattooed in the genital area, "maybe even with glow-in-the-dark ink." Duke, who is currently considering running for governor of Louisiana, explained that the AIDS tattoos would serve as a warning to prospective sexual partners. Duke also said he believed HIV was first transmitted when a human had sex with a monkey in Africa.

Navy Ordered to Allow Gay Sailor to Remain

BALTIMORE—U.S. District Judge Joseph Young has ordered the Navy not to discharge Lt. Richard Selland, who told his commanding officer in 1993 that he was gay. Judge Young granted Selland an injunction that orders the Navy to allow the gay sailor to remain in the Navy while he continues his court battle against the Pentagon's "don't ask, don't tell" policy that excludes gays and lesbians.

Disney Studios Sued Over Health Benefits

LOS ANGELES—Attorneys for the estate of Robert Jahn, a vice president at Disney Studios who died of AIDS last year, have filed a lawsuit against the film company. The suit claims Disney forced Jahn to give up some \$3 million in life insurance, stocks and deferred earnings to collect health benefits. The lawsuit charges Disney violated the Americans With Disabilities Act when it asked Jahn to agree to give up his benefits just a month before he died. Jahn's attorneys claim the man was not mentally competent to sign such a contract at that stage in his illness.

Surprise 'Drag' Greets Anti-Gay Republican Dornan

WILMINGTON, Del.—Arch-conservative anti-gay Rep. Bob Dornan (R-Calif.), who has just declared his candidacy for the Republican presidential nomination, was kind of caught off guard when his train made an unscheduled stop in Wilmington recently. Carrying a sign that read "Dornan's the One" and shouting "Hi, Bobby!" in a high-pitched voice at the train station was a bewigged and begowned drag queen with a pillow stuffed under his dress making him appear pregnant. The "drag queen" in the case wasn't a radical member of Queer Nation, though. In fact it was Delaware Gov. Thomas Carper, a former Democratic colleague of Dornan's in the House of Representatives, who had come to convince Dornan to appear in a taped skit Carper was doing for a scholarship fund.

Vatican Denounces Milan Condom Sales

ROME—The Vatican has denounced plans by the city of Milan to allow condom vending machines in city bars, universities, and other spots popular with younger people as "the depravation of youth." The Milan City Council approved a resolution authorizing condom vending machines in public places frequented by sexually active young adults earlier in April. But a commentary in the official Vatican newspaper *Osservatore Romano* criticized the move as "moral blindness" and "an assault on good sense and sound teaching."

Two Pilots Sue United Airlines Over HIV Firings

LOS ANGELES—Two pilots have filed an employment discrimination lawsuit against United Airlines, charging that the airline barred them from flying because they are infected with HIV. The case is the first of its kind filed by commercial airline pilots under the Americans With Disabilities Act, according to the pilots' lawyers and some AIDS organizations. United, the largest airline in the U.S., insists that, in the interest of public safety, it acted correctly in grounding the pilots under regulations set by the Federal Aviation Administration. The suit, filed in federal court by R. Christopher Prilliman of Dallas and Paul Rafalowski of Laguna Beach, California, contends that the pilots were grounded after the airline learned they were HIV-positive, despite the fact that they passed physicals given by United and the FAA earlier in 1994. United's medical director, Dr. Gary Kohn, said the airline received information from the pilots' doctors last year "that led us to believe they had a disqualifying condition" under FAA standards. Although he declined to comment on the case, an FAA spokesperson said that being HIV-positive does not preclude a pilot from being approved for flying.

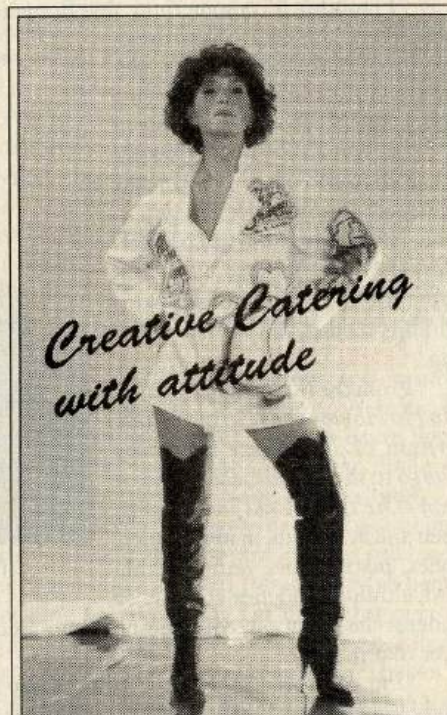
NIH Discontinues 'Reasonable-Pricing' Requirement

WASHINGTON—The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has dropped its requirement that U.S. drug manufacturers charge a "reasonable" price for products developed in conjunction with government-sponsored research. NIH Director Harold Varmus said the agency found that "the pricing clause has driven the industry away from potentially beneficial scientific collaborations" with government researchers "without providing an offsetting benefit to the public." Under the clause, adopted in 1989 amid protests over the price of the AIDS drug AZT, the public was supposed to benefit from drugs produced with the advantage of taxpayer-funded research. Once the policy was implemented, however, companies held back from using NIH research because they could

not guarantee that they would regain an investment in product development, said Carl Feldbaum, president of Biotechnology Industry Organization, which represents biotech firms in this country.

HIV Protein Discovery

WASHINGTON—Researchers have discovered how an HIV protein, called Vpr, forces its way into cells. Vpr enters the cell's nucleus more quickly than other proteins and makes the cell help do its job, found University of Pennsylvania pathologist David Weiner. Vpr hijacks a protein naturally present in human cells, one that moves specific steroid hormones through cells. Tests showed that some of these steroids activate HIV production and suppress immune cells, Weiner reported in the April 11 issue of *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. When Vpr was added, the protein used the steroids' cellular pathway to get to the cell nucleus and prompted steroid overproduction to help it produce HIV. Weiner found that the abortion drug RU-486, which is known to block steroid overproduction in other diseases, also blocked Vpr. HIV-infected cells treated with RU-486 produced 70 percent less virus than untreated cells, he found. Weiner warned, however, that it is still too early to know whether the drug would work in humans. ▼



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The Brave Boys

Some liberals say that it's okay that some of us are queer. As long as we don't "flaunt" it, but now let's get one thing clear: That love and affection is nothing you should fear. Sounds a lot like blatant homophobia to me.

—lyrics to *Ho Ho Homophobia*

"Flaunting it" is something that Romanovsky and Phillips do well. They have no problem dressing up in outrageous outfits, getting a little campy, and singing songs like *Ho Ho Homophobia* or *If There Is A God (He's A Queen)*. They've been called a "musically polished duo" by the *Chicago Tribune* and "witty and stylish performers" by *Houston Post*, but most of all Romanovsky and Phillips are just, simply, entertaining.

From the funky dance beat of *Ho Ho Homophobia* to the ethnic rhythm of *The Prince Charming Tango* to the world-beat sound of *Don't Use Your Penis (For A Brain)*, their music flaunts many themes, styles, instruments, and rhythms and, although it defies any sort of general classification, could best be described as gay music (whatever that means!).

"I'm comfortable with the label of gay music, although nobody knows what that is," says Paul Phillips, one half of this gay male singing duo. "We always said that our music is not defined by style as much as it is by content."

Indeed, the content of their music, besides their voices, is the only glue that

bonds it together, and the running theme is, undeniably, gay. These gay-oriented themes—some comic, some serious—are evident in all their musically divergent songs: polka, waltz, dance, rock, cabaret, ballad, etc. If ever there were eclectic musicians, Romanovsky and Phillips are them.

"I actually think that we are folk musicians or folk singers or folk singer/songwriters in the very traditional sense in that we are documenting our culture," says Ron Romanovsky, the other half of the duo. "We are writing songs about our lives. We're common people writing about experiences that no one else is really writing about. But I hesitate to call it folk music, because it has such a negative connotation these days. People think of it as boring."

"I would say in some ways we are more similar to cabaret in its original format, like German cabaret in the '20s and '30s. It was a very political type of music," Phillips comments. "The best example of that is the music in the musical and movie *Cabaret*. There was a lot of political satire, a lot of very subtle humor."

As you can see, even Romanovsky and Phillips have trouble classifying their music. But they're certainly not the only ones. Record stores, most of which are not as liberal as Tower Records in Atlanta which has a gay music section, have a difficult time putting R&P under a certain display category. They say they've been displayed in various record store sections, including comedy, vocals, folk, women's music (nothing could be more



Paul Phillips and Ron Romanovsky: simple and unadorned.

by Eric L. Roland

& Phillips



of Gay Music

appropriate for two *queens*, don't ya think?), and, believe it or not, the children's music section!

"And all those categories do describe some aspect of our work, but not all of it," says Romanovsky. "There's probably somewhat of a confused image about what we really do by people who have never heard of us. And we've been confused about ourselves over the years. There have been some periods where we've tried to identify more as a pop/folk group like the Indigo Girls, but recently I've been more comfortable with the comedy aspect of it."

And why shouldn't he be? In fact, they both should be comfortable with the comedy aspect of their music, because it's one of the things they do best. In the song *What Kind Of Self Respecting Faggot Am I?*, R&P sing about a gay man "who never really fits in" and who laments "I don't brunch on Sundays/I've never acted up/My life is somewhat mundane/From lack of shacking up/I even drive a Hyundai/I guess that wraps it up/What kind of self respecting faggot am I?" In honor of our lesbian sisters, R&P also have a set of lyrics about a gay woman: "I like wearing dresses/Don't care for Birkenstocks/I'm not a vegetarian/And this may be a shock/I sometimes use a dildo/That looks just like a...rooster/What kind of politically correct lesbian am I?"

"People are always telling us that the best thing about us is that we are really funny," Romanovsky remarks. "When you put an album out like *Be Political, Not Polite*, which is more serious, people complain about that. People are so scared of politics."

Whereas comedy may be the reason why R&P are popular with their audiences, their ballads should not be forgotten. Beautifully written and touchingly poignant, their songs about lost love,

new love, and, especially, living in the age of AIDS will bring tears to the eyes of anyone with a sentimental heart. In the song *Living With AIDS*, the refrain is a life-affirming anthem: "Living with love, not living in fear/Embracing the light when shadows appear/It's a place to begin, it's a good way to start/Releasing the power we hold in our hearts."

Pioneers of the gay and lesbian music scene, R&P began their career in San Francisco's Valencia Rose cafe in 1982 as the musical break for Gay Comedy Open Mic Night. In the fall of 1983, they began their first national tour, and five years later they had recorded three albums—*I Thought You'd Be Taller*, *Trouble in Paradise*, and *Emotional Rollercoaster*—on their own recording label, Fresh Fruit Records. In 1991 they recorded the more serious album *Be Political, Not Polite*, and earlier this year they released a greatest hits album called *Brave Boys*.

"In *The Advocate* for the last few issues, they've listed the ten top-selling CDs from A Different Light Bookstores, and our *Brave Boys* CD has been in the top four," remarks Phillips, "yet they've reviewed only one of our albums."

Phillips partly blames the national gay media for the fact that many gays and lesbians still have never heard of them, even though they've been performing and recording gay music for over a decade. He says that the national gay publications, such as *The Advocate* and *Out*, haven't supported them because they haven't gotten the

requisite heterosexual or mainstream stamp of approval. Phillips also believes that these two magazines are coastal centric and primarily devoted to their respective cities.

"*Out* magazine is still primarily a New York City magazine with a New York City attitude. *The Advocate* is an L.A. or Califor-



Paul Phillips and Ron Romanovsky: flaunting it.

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Brave Boys

Continued from previous page

nia magazine and they have a very L.A. attitude," Phillips says. "We're in New Mexico, and that's not considered cool, that's not considered hip, that's not considered trend-setting."

"But a lot of people still think we live in San Francisco," Romanovskysays. "Our appeal is probably more to places within the coasts—the inner country. There is a certain sort of Midwestern wholesomeness about us, and that's why we're probably not hip enough for New York or L.A."

But they are hip enough for Houston, and that's why they're one of the featured performers at Spectrum '95's Concert of the Stars to be held at the Astroarena, June 18. They've also contributed their song *Brave Boys* to the Spectrum promotional CD *Hand in Hand*. Both Romanovsky and Phillips are excited to see Spectrum '95 be the biggest gay and lesbian event to hit Houston in years, and they're anxiously anticipating their return to Houston.

"One of the things we love about Houston is that it's an accidental city. It never meant to become a city, it just became one by accident, and it just keeps growing," Phillips says. "As a result, it has this wonderful blend of big city and hick town all rolled into one. There are a lot of idiosyncrasies allowed there."

Of course, Phillips means this as a compliment, and I'm sure Houstonians that see them perform at the Concert of the Stars will return many compliments. They're funny, they're talented, they're musically diverse, but most of all they're simply entertaining.

Romanovsky and Phillips will be performing at Spectrum 95 in Houston on June 18. For ticket information call 713/526-2853.

BRAVE BOYS



THE BEST & MORE OF
ROMANOVSKY & PHILLIPS

COMING OUT



Again & Again

by
Suzanne
Anderson

About six months ago I saw a notice in the newspaper. The University of Houston

Small Business Center wanted women who owned their own businesses to help develop a mentor program. The program would help other women who had owned their businesses seven years or less. In my never-ending search for people to come out to, and my never-ending challenge to entities to close their doors on me because I am a lesbian, I called the center and volunteered for the program. They received my call enthusiastically and faxed me an application.

The application was a series of questions to be answered. *What are your reasons for wanting to participate in the program?* "I am a natural leader." Blah, blah, blah. "I would offer diversity to the group." Safe enough. *Tell us about your educational background, goals, motivations, values, etc.* I have a degree in bassoon from the University of Oklahoma. I've been in sales for over 20 years. I left the securities business 17 years ago to go into real estate as a broker. Again, safe enough. "My focus as a broker is on Houston's gay and lesbian community."

Bingo! Now that I have your attention....

I sent off the application. When the call came a few days later, I was ready: "We appreciate your interest, but we've filled all the positions...." But no. Instead: "Suzanne, we'd be delighted to have you participate in our Women's Business Roundtable. We're having an orientation next Thursday night. Can you attend?" Well, OK. I'd throw away the script I'd prepared to combat their resistance, and instead prepare myself for spending some time with straight women.

"Sure, that would be fine. I'll see you there."

Thursday night: name tags, soft drinks, well-dressed women. An overview from the organizers, and a time for introductions—who you are, what your business is. Easy enough. I love to stand up in front of people and talk, especially about my efforts as a woman business owner.

Introductions begin on the opposite side of the room. Good. I have some time to think about what to say. I try it out in my head: "Hi. I'm Suzanne Anderson, broker and owner of Suzanne Anderson Properties. I used to be a V.D. investigator for the City of Dallas, making the career segue into real estate a natural. (Chuckle, chuckle.) Now, uh...."

Now what? I signed up for this group to challenge the organizers to a debate. They didn't bite. Now, am I going to stand in front of all these straight women and tell them I'm a dyke? I guess I could do that later. I mean, is that a proper introduction? Are they going to think I want them? They may not be able to concentrate on my words of wisdom if I tell them there is a lesbian in their midst. I love to speak in public. I don't get nervous. Usually. Then why is my heart rate picking up? Because, you idiot, this is not a TV camera, or a radio microphone. It's not a bunch of queers who know you're an outspoken dyke. This is mainstream America, all of whom will be staring at you!

We're halfway through the introductions, and I haven't heard a word these women are saying. A couple of more intros and it's my turn. The room is suddenly starting to get warm. Is this a test? Are you really as brave as you think you are?

If you don't tell them, you're copping out. Oh, you live and work in Montrose, you do live radio—KPFT's "Lesbian and Gay Voices." You talk about queer issues. You're out—to other queers!

All of a sudden I'm standing. "Hi. I'm Suzanne Anderson, owner-broker of Suzanne Anderson Properties." There was more, but all I remember now is: "I have Houston's lesbian and gay real estate firm. I thought it was important that you know a successful lesbian."

There. I did it! I got their attention, I think. Some of the women aren't looking at me anymore. Oh, well. But after the introductions are over, some of them come up to me. "I appreciate what you said tonight," and, "Girl, we've got to talk!" One after another. They don't think I want them. I survived. Yeah, it wasn't so bad.

Maybe I'll do it again....

Suzanne Anderson is co-Grand Marshal of the 1995 Houston Gay and Lesbian Pride Parade.

GENDER OUTLAWS

Violating the Gender Code

On the day you are born, the doctor either does or does not see a penis.

On the basis of this biological quirk, you are labeled as either male or female. This labeling on the basis of biology is called your sex.

Gender is the set of different behaviors that society expects of persons who have been labeled as male or female. The demands society places on our behavior as a result of both our sex and gender are called gender expectations. The acting out of these societally assigned behaviors is called gender expression.

I offer these definitions because many people do not understand the difference between sex and gender. Sex is biology. Gender is the set of behaviors expected of individuals because of their biology.

As we were growing up, nearly all of us internalized the societally dictated gender codes. "Boys wear pants, girls wear dresses." "Boys play football, girls play with dolls." "Boys grow up to be sexually attracted to women, and women grow up to be sexually attracted to men."

Wait, what was that last sentence? Yes, that's right, a gay/lesbian sexual orientation—the sex of the person to whom you are physically and/or emotionally attracted—is a violation of both the gender expectations of our society and a violation of societally demanded rules of gender expression. Whether they perceive themselves this way or not, gay and

lesbian people are in fact "gender outlaws" because by the very act of loving a person of the same sex they violate the gender code which says it is only proper to love a person of the opposite sex. Furthermore, by actually acting out this violation of gender expectations, gay and lesbian people also violate the societally dictated code of gender expression.

According to the San Francisco Human Rights Foundation, "The term transgender is used as an umbrella term that includes male and female cross dressers, transvestites, female and male impersonators, pre-operative and post-operative transsexuals, and transsexuals who choose not to have genital reconstruction, and all persons whose perceived gender or anatomic sex may conflict with their gender expression, such as masculine-appearing women and feminine-appearing men."

Does this definition mean that gays, lesbians, and transgenders are "gender outlaws" fighting essentially the same "shoulds" and "supposed to's" of a bi-polar, heterosexually dominated society? Yes it does. It also explains why we have so many common allies and enemies. We are in the same war together. Yet some would have us fighting against each other. Why some would have us fight rather than cooperate against our common enemy is what this article is about. Before we can do that, however, we need to be speaking the same language and using words that we all understand. With that in mind, let's examine the definition of transgendered as written by the San Francisco Human Rights Foundation.

by Sarah DePina



MALE AND FEMALE CROSS DRESSERS

While there may be a clinical difference between cross dressers and transvestites, I am not aware of any great differences between the two groups. For the sake of brevity, I will speak about the two groups as cross dressers.

There is a general misconception that cross dressers are primarily married heterosexual males. However, a recent study by Dr. George Brown has brought that assumption into question. It is true that some cross dressers are heterosexual males and that these people are clearly evident in the drag bars. What often gets overlooked is that these people go to gay drag bars because—though they are sometimes viewed with amusement—they are well tolerated. Consequently, cross dressers are also excellent message bearers of tolerance and understanding from the gay/lesbian to the straight community. As has been pointed out by gay/lesbian activists for many years, people who know gay/lesbian people are far less likely to be homophobic than those who do not.

Jackie Thorne is a prime example of a straight person who is very proud to be a past president of the Gulf Coast Transgender Community (GCTC), a support group for transgendered individuals, and also to be very active in the Imperial Court of the Single Star, an organization which does drag shows benefitting the gay/lesbian community. The current president of GCTC is another good example of a person who has worked hard to make it clear that the organization is open to both gay and non-gay cross dressers.

Today it is considered perfectly normal to see women wearing a T-shirt and jeans. It is easy to forget that as recently as the late sixties/early seventies, lesbians wearing button-fly jeans were often arrested for violating the cross dressing ordinance in Houston. Furthermore, there is a long history of tolerance for female cross dressing that did not and still does not exist for men. Witness open lesbian and movie director Dorothy Arzner as a case in point. Known for her trademark mannish suits and short hair, she still managed to have a successful 14-year career (1929-1943) directing such stars as Cary Grant and Katharine Hepburn.

PRE- AND POST-OPERATIVE TRANSSEXUALS

Again for the sake of brevity, I will put transsexuals who choose long-term hormonal alteration instead of surgery into this category.

When a person realizes that their gender identity—the deeply personal sense of whether one is a male or female—is in conflict (i.e. gender and biology do not match), one seeks professional help from a therapist skilled in gender issues. If, after a series of tests and other criteria, it is determined that one is a transsexual, the person is required to live a minimum of 12 months in their new gender before they can be considered a candidate for surgery or permanent hormone alteration. This is called the "real life test" or "transition."

Now let's say the person in question is changing from male to female, but during the transition period falls in love with a woman. Is this considered a lesbian relationship? The answer can vary according to the self-identification of the people involved, but as a general rule, the answer is yes. A major issue in the transgendered community involves male to female transsexuals who obtain surgery, find female life companions, and disappear into the lesbian community without a trace. This is a far more common occurrence than most people realize. I would go so far as to say this is true about 60 percent of the time. The ironic aspect of this is that when asked why they choose not to tell their lesbian friends they are transsexual, the most common answer is fear

of ostracism and derision. Sound familiar?

Another issue involves lesbians who eventually decide to become female to male transsexuals and follow the same pattern of disappearing into the transgendered community, although this occurs much less often than does the reverse.

MALE AND FEMALE IMPERSONATORS

It never ceases to amaze me how some people in the gay and lesbian community are willing to take the money raised by the many benefit drag shows, but then want the drag community to take a hike when they become "politically inconvenient." Whether it is true that the riot at the Stonewall Inn was instigated by drag queens or not, there is no denying that homophobia has exacted a terrible toll on this group of individuals. What is often glossed over is that the drag community is a proud violator of the gender expectations and gender expression of both the gay and non-gay communities. Consequently, they are also the victims of trans-phobia from both the gay and non-gay communities. In sum, they suffer the worst of both worlds by epitomizing what many men (gay or non-gay) fear the most—the stereotype of sissies in dresses. To the extent the gay/lesbian community continues to participate in this oppression, it should be ashamed.

MASCULINE-APPEARING WOMEN AND FEMININE-APPEARING MEN

As I mentioned earlier, today's society thinks nothing of a woman wearing the clothes of a man. Men who wear the clothes of a woman quickly learn the meaning of the words "double standard." The point that needs to be made about this category however, is that we are talking as much about the mannerisms exhibited by masculine-appearing women and feminine-appearing men as we are about clothing they may or may not choose to wear. Is there anyone who doesn't know someone labeled as a "nelly queen" or "a butch dyke"? The "crime" being committed is the violation of societal gender codes which dictate how men and women "are supposed" to act, instead of allowing people to simply act out who they are as they feel is correct for them. Think of the people you know who have mannerisms not normally associated with the societal view of maleness or femaleness, or of the numerous derogatory names and labels you have heard being attached to those individuals, and I think you will see my point.

Clearly, gay/lesbian people and transgendered individuals not only have a great deal in common, but in many ways we are mirror images of each other. Yes, it is true that issues of sexual orientation are not identical to issues of gender or transgender. But as I think has been clearly demonstrated, transgenders and gay/lesbians have far more in common than we have in differences. We are your brothers and sisters who have long supported the gay/lesbian rights movement. Since this is the case, why would anyone suggest we narrow the focus and not include transgenders in organizational mission statements or legislation? We'll examine that issue next.

THE POLITICS OF INCLUSION/EXCLUSION

Houston is a city in which transgendered people are unusually active and high in profile. Wendy Allen is on the board of The Montrose Counseling Center and is heavily involved in a project with Denise Kopp to educate county judges about transgenders in court and imprisonment situations. Dee McKellar is the board secretary for Spectrum 95, and is involved in numerous other organizations. Phyllis

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Gender Outlaws

Continued from previous page

Frye is the Executive Director for the International Conference on Transgender Law and Employment Policy, and a well-known human rights activist for more than 20 years. Many readers already know I chair It's Time, Texas!, a political action group working on behalf of transgendered people and their families. In addition, I co-host a segment of "After Hours" on radio station KPFT, the first program in the nation by an openly transgendered person specifically aimed at transgendered issues.

Legislation to protect the transgendered was enacted in Minneapolis in 1974, Seattle in 1986, Santa Cruz in 1992, Minnesota in 1993, and San Francisco in 1995. In January of this year, the National Lesbian and Gay Law Association unanimously passed a resolution urging "... the inclusion of the transgender community into the Employment Non-Discrimination Act and other statutes, ordinances, and regulations along with lesbians, gays, and bisexuals."

In Texas, and in Houston in particular, the vocal activism of transgendered people has made us pawns in a game not of our making: The assimilationists versus the queers.

Assimilationists are not new; it's just that in the past they were more often known under the somewhat derisive name of "closet queens." We know them as the people who demand that any gay or lesbian political information be sent in a plain brown wrapper because they don't want the postperson to know they are gay. Their sexual orientation is "nobody's business." These are the people who write letters that the leather and drag communities should be excluded from the gay pride parade. (Forgive me, but how do people with these attitudes and the term "gay pride" go together?)

In recent years, assimilationists have taken on a new tone with the advent of "the conservative gay and lesbian." They may not be as closeted as before, but the attitudes remain the same and are now cloaked in velvet language: "No one is ever being excluded—the focus is simply being narrowed or readjusted." Sure, and nuclear missiles aren't really weapons of mass destruction, they're "peace keepers."

Assimilationists argue that if the heterosexual majority can just be convinced that gays and lesbians are really no different than heterosexuals, except for one little thing that only occurs in the privacy of the bedroom, the winning of political rights will be easy. That's where transgendered people present a problem. We aren't "just like them" and we are never going to be. Thus the assimilationists are left with two choices: Attack us or isolate us. Clearly, they have chosen the latter.

I attended the Parents and Friends of Gays and Lesbians convention with Phyllis Frye. The reason I attended is because my radio program is now being heard on many college campuses all over the country. Consequently, I receive many letters and phone calls from the parents of transgendered children wanting to know if support groups for them exist. Although the issues for parents of gay/lesbian children and transgendered children are not identical, they are extremely similar. The pain, confusion, lack of factual information, and even the lost expectations are precisely the same. The overwhelming majority of people I spoke with agreed that inclusion of the parents of transgendered people made perfect sense, and indeed several meetings to address this idea have already been held in locations around the state.

The crux of our disagreement with the assimilationists is that they believe inclusion of transgendered in the P-Flag convention would have moved the conference away from its intended focus, while we believed inclusion would have added a great deal to it. This disagreement is important because it is the key difference between assimilationists and queers. Assimilationists see diversity as a threat to the effectiveness of the gay rights message, while queers see diversity as increasing the

power of the message and the strategic capability of the movement. In other words, the battle being fought is over which ideology will lead the gay/lesbian rights movement in the years ahead, and transgender inclusion is the battlefield in which the war is being waged.

One interesting strategy of the assimilationists can be found in the attempt to use the straight part of the transgendered community as a weapon against our inclusion in the gay/lesbian rights movement. As I pointed out earlier, male heterosexual cross dressers are excellent message bearers of tolerance and understanding from the gay and lesbian community to the straight community. Particularly during the period of "transition," straight transsexuals also experience the problems of discrimination in the areas of child custody, employment, housing, threats of violence, actual acts of violence committed against them, and much more. By the end of this transition, they have acquired experiences in the way no usual heterosexual could ever understand, and this nearly always carries over in the form of support of gay/lesbian rights.

Are assimilationists suggesting that because some transgenders have a "different orientation" (as in heterosexual) that the scope of the gay rights movement exclude all transgenders? Should we discriminate against straight transgenders on the basis of their sexual orientation? Isn't it a key goal of the gay/lesbian movement to attract supportive straight people and then maintain their support? Shall we pass a rule that says even though the types of discrimination faced by transgenders are extremely similar to those suffered by gay/lesbian people, the support of gay/lesbian transgenders are welcome, but the support of straight transgenders will not be reciprocated? Why not just pass a rule that states even though straight transgenders support and often actively work on behalf of gay/lesbian causes, the gay/lesbian movement will not reply in kind because it is biased against straight people? "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Does this sound at all familiar?

Another aspect of their strategy is to imply that the mere existence of a transgender political group such as It's Time, Texas! suggests some sort of threat to the gay/lesbian movement. On the contrary, I have already said several times that transgenders and gays/lesbians are very similar. I did not say they were identical.

For example, one situation unique to transsexuals involves a problem with their name and legal change of gender identification. It will sometimes happen that a judge will grant a change of name but not the legal change of gender. Consequently, the person may have a driver's license which says "Susie," but the gender marker still says male. As I'm sure you can imagine, this makes it nearly impossible to obtain employment or even cash a check. A bill sponsored by my organization which would alleviate this problem recently passed in a legislative committee by a wide margin. We neither need nor want the gay/lesbian movement to fight all our battles. But duplication of effort and expenses in areas where we have clearly common interests simply makes no sense. That approach just makes it easier for our enemies to pursue their "divide and conquer" strategy.

Transgenders are good for the assimilationists in the same way that gays and lesbians are good for the religious right. We are ideal for the manipulation of fear in the intended audience.

The religious right uses gays and lesbians as a weapon for fundraising. "Convince the public that the gay agenda equals man/boy love or the destruction of the military," the theory goes, "and we can scare people bad enough that they will send millions of dollars to protect their family values."

In a similar manner, assimilationists use a strategy which says, "Let's use the unspoken fear of being labeled a sissy to our best advantage, scare enough people that the inclusion of transgenders will sink our political agenda, and we will garner the support we need for

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Gender Outlaws

Continued from previous page

our narrower 'we're just like you' strategy."

The fact is we could have sunk, or at least made far more bloody, the battle for hate crimes legislation had we chosen to do so. After we led a protest in Austin due to our exclusion from the hate crimes bill, several legislators called us to see if we wanted to force a fight on the issue of transgender inclusion. Rather than risk the chance of the hate crimes bill being sent to subcommittee for further review which could have effectively killed the legislation, we chose to drop our fight for this session. I already explained our success in the legislative hearing. Clearly, we are not the political liabilities we have been made out to be.

Still I have to wonder, if the situation was reversed and the choice was available for the gay/lesbian movement to sell out the rights of transgenders for the sake of political expediency, would gays and lesbians have stood by us or sold us out? Given the history of most gay/lesbian political organizations in Texas, transgenders would have been sold out in a heartbeat.

Transgendered people have intention-

ally been left out of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). This exclusion has not come at the hands of right-wing extremists but rather at the hands of a few gay/lesbian activists in a position to block transgender inclusion. As a result, transgender activists are not only working to secure inclusion on its merits, but after more than two years of fruitless discussions with the gay/lesbian political groups, transgenders have secured 20 votes from lawmakers who agreed they will not support or re-support ENDA unless transgenders are included. This action was taken in response to some gay/lesbian political groups who claimed including transgenders might cost 20 votes.

Yes, it has come to this. After more than a decade of asking for inclusion, transgenders have reached the flash point of saying "Include us or fight us; we will not be sold out again."

I have publicly stated on my radio program, and I will now repeat: Should the hate crimes bill sponsored by the Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby fail in this session, It's Time, Texas! will immediately begin to seek support of its own hate crimes bill. The LGRL can then decide to join with us or fight us for every vote in a duel of hate crime bills. Of

course, if the LGRL would simply add the words "gender identity or perceived gender identity" into their bill, no duplication of effort would be necessary. Either way, transgenders in Texas will never again allow ourselves to be sold out by our gay/lesbian brothers and sisters.

For transgenders, it is this perception of having been sold out one time too many that has fueled the fight for inclusion. We understand that gays and lesbians are our brothers and sisters. We have been made painfully aware how easy it is to bargain away our rights if we are viewed as outsiders instead of included family members. We understand that some would continue to exclude us in order to further their own grab for political power. What we don't understand is why this power grab isn't as obvious to the gay/lesbian community. Transgender political organizations have in large part been organized as a form of self-defense against our perceived sellout by the gay/lesbian political groups. It could truthfully be said that we are your children demanding to be included in the family. We want to belong. The question being put to the gay/lesbian community is: Will you recognize us as part of the family or will you force us into taking actions we never wanted to take and still hope to avoid taking?

All of this raises a very important question. Who would benefit from this fratricide?

COMMON ENEMIES AND THE BOTTOM LINE

The religious right recently held a convention and raised two million dollars in 24 hours. To make matters worse, this money was raised for the specific purpose of fighting the "gay, lesbian, transgender agenda."

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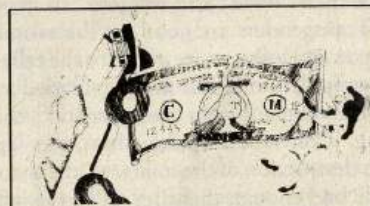
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Do assimilationists think they are going to convince these people that gays and lesbians are "just like them," or do they think gays and lesbians are such a powerful group they can fight the war without allies? Perhaps as the military believes it is better off without gays and lesbians, the assimilationists believe they are better off without transgenders? Is this what is meant by narrowing the focus of the gay and lesbian rights movement? Call it what you will, it's still the same issue of exclusion, isn't it? Could it be that by using transgenders as the dividing wedge between assimilationists and queers that a certain element hopes to foster its own new, conservative, contract for gay/lesbian America?

What we are seeing is in fact the culmination of an "us versus them" mentality that has crept into the gay rights movement from the conservative agenda. The poor aren't like us, let's get back at them for being poor. Legal aliens aren't like us, let's strip away their rights. Drag queens aren't like us. Cross dressers aren't like us. Transsexuals aren't like us. Masculine-appearing women and feminine-appearing men aren't like us. If all these people aren't like us, who's left? Why, the politically conservative, straight-acting, straight-appearing, gay men and lesbian women, of course! The few, the proud, the elite, and they know what's best for you. Don't they?

Sarah DePalma chairs a statewide political and educational organization called It's Time, Texas!, co-hosts a monthly segment of After Hours on 90.1 KPFT-FM (which airs the second Saturday each month) and is frequent contributor to Lesbian and Gay Voices, also on KPFT-FM radio.

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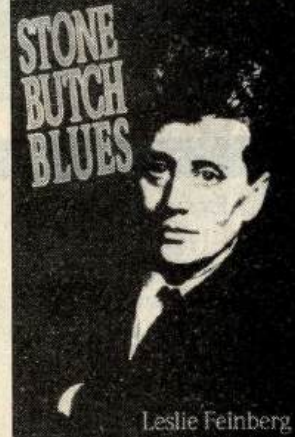
One of the most difficult tasks that we as human beings must do continually throughout life is forgive one another. I'm talking about forgiving someone not only when they have wronged us and apologize, but also when they have wronged us and are not sorry for it. From a human perspective, if someone wrongs us or offends us, we should have the right to retribution of some sort. We may expect an apology in the form of "I'm sorry." We may think that we should be repaid in whatever terms we want it. After all, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" should still be the motto. Right? Wrong!

Jesus Christ gave us a new way of thinking, and forgiving. Peter asked Him, "How many times shall I forgive my brother or sister when they sin against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:21,22). In other words, forgive without number.

You've heard the expression, "When you point your finger at anyone, remember that there are three more pointing back at you." It is natural to point the finger and accuse another of a wrong done to us. In fact, not many of us have to practice this. It happens automatically. When we set ourselves up to be the judge of the earth we tend to forget what it is like to stand before the judge. Jesus is reminding Peter about forgiveness he has received. Jesus tells him a parable about the unmerciful servant. This servant so desperately needed mercy and forgiveness for a debt he could not pay even if he had a lifetime. Upon receiving mercy and complete forgiveness he quickly ran out and began to harass others who owed him a few coins. When they asked him for mercy he had none to give. Instead, he threw them in jail. The ruler, whom he had owed a lifetime of service, returned and was surprised that this man did not give out the same mercy that he had received. The ruler then threw that man in jail and withdrew his forgiveness.

Jesus had to deal continually with abuse and injustice. He was mocked, humiliated, beaten beyond recognition, rejected, and abandoned. He knew the temptation to take matters into his own hands. He knew what it would be like to harbor unforgiveness. He had every right to resent the treatment he had received. Jesus, like every one of us, had a choice. Jesus was able to forgive because his love was great. He was able to see past all of our faults. God sees the big picture. We see the immediate pain. God sees what mercy can do. We can only comprehend how a little bit of retribution would make us feel better.

We have two choices: 1. Accept the love of God which can enable us to forgive, or 2. Harbor unforgiveness and reap the torment of bitterness and resentment that come with the package. What will you do?



Leslie Feinberg



Minnie Bruce Pratt

A COURTSHIP LIKE A SLOW FIRE BURNING:

LESLIE FEINBERG & MINNIE BRUCE PRATT

by Shaila Dewan

It's always a joy to watch high femme in old movies—women with independent means and good wardrobes, seamless control and a touch of sultry vulnerability, women who invariably meet their match and oh how the sparks fly and the makeup melts! Ginger (r.i.p.) with her magically debonair Fred, Vivien with her all-too-knowing Clark. The voyeuristic pleasure of watching the leading man inexorably drawn to the leading lady, as if the two had electromagnets in their lips and some crafty film director was slowly turning up the power.

Sisters and brothers, transgendered and transvested, butch/femme-curious and body-conscious, finally the queer community has an old-fashioned chemistry experiment all its own. Would that the silver screen could be graced by the king of drag

and the femme queen, the gentleman butch Leslie Feinberg and his/her dangerous lady, Miss Minnie Bruce Pratt!

Alas, the two are successful writers and activists and seem pretty set on staying that way, though I'd eat my fedora if they didn't pass a screen test with flying colors. But Houston will have a rare opportunity to witness their particular magic when DiverseWorks and Lesbians in Business present their "intimate, intense and sexy conversation" about lesbian life and gender boundary crossing on June 16. Set up as a dialogue where the two read in turn, the performance "gets pretty intense," Minnie Bruce says coquettishly. "Sometimes I'm blushing and fanning." And while the married couple may not waltz with their bodies, they certainly waltz with words. In fact, they courted with words:

Minnie Bruce first saw Leslie when the latter was reading from her now legendary novel *Stone Butch Blues*, then a work in progress. And, just as Feinberg got to the juicy part, her eyes found Minnie Bruce in the back of the room. Fan, fan; blush, blush.

For the romantic, to read *Stone Butch Blues* and Pratt's *S/he* in quick succession is to read a call and response, an invitation and acceptance, two halves of an ardent love poem. But the two works lend themselves to serious discussion as well as sweet daydreams. Feinberg's novel recounts an unconscionably violent and relentlessly swift coming-of-age as a butch lesbian in the factories and bars of Buffalo. As a "he-she," the protagonist is profoundly misunderstood, first by parents and schoolmates, then co-workers and finally other lesbians. When jobs become scarcer and the streets more dangerous, the protagonist, Jess, resorts to "passing" as a man, losing her lover and friends in the process.

Just as Feinberg so fearlessly describes the complexities of being transgendered—

and Jewish—in an unfriendly world, and her own grappling with difference, *S/he* astutely examines butch/femme from a femme perspective. A series of short stories, the book takes the narrator from a childhood crush on a tomboy through an

**TODAY PRATT AND HER SONS
ARE VERY CLOSE, AND LESLIE
CONSIDERS HERSELF THEIR
"DRAG STEPDADDY."**

unsuccessful first marriage and early exposure to the women's movement, and on into courtship with a woman so masculine she is often taken for a gay man—Leslie. Pratt skillfully sifts through and arranges day-to-day events—from visits with family to Brandon Teena's murder to intimate lovemaking—pinpointing how she and her lover cope both outside and within the queer community, and reveling in the precious mysteries of gender and relationship all the while.

"My experience of coming to a femme identity really is very different from what's implied in the word *role*," Pratt explains. "Role sounds like a stage role, something you put on and you take off like a costume.... My understanding of being a

femme really deepened not too long ago when I went home to Alabama and saw these pictures of me that had been taken when I was about three years old. And Leslie looked at these pictures and said, 'You look just like you look now. Just the way you turn your head, the way you're flirting in the picture when you were

three is just like how you flirt with me now.' And I thought, 'Oh, this is no *role*.' This is something that Leslie calls gender spirit."

Pratt is quick to note that butch and femme aren't the only two stops on the gender spirit spectrum, and that people are often mistaken about what "gender spirit" entails. "People sometimes assume that a woman who is very femme *can't* be a lesbian and that a woman who is very butch *has* to be a lesbian. We have to separate out

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gender expression from sexuality from what people do in bed." Pratt and Feinberg promise to talk in-depth on new sex and gender theory arising from the intersection of feminism, the lesbian/gay/bisexual movements and transgender liberation during their workshop, Talking Gender, on June 17.

For now, Pratt is working on her sixth book, *Walking Back Up Depot Street*, and enjoying the success of *S/he*. Pratt's third book of poems, *Crime Against Nature*, was chosen as the Lamont Poetry Selection by the Academy of American Poets in 1989. The book, whose name was taken from Alabama's sodomy statute, detailed Pratt's relationship with her two grown sons, of whom she lost custody after her divorce because of her sexual orientation. Pratt says she was shocked by the judges' choice, because she was the first out lesbian to receive the prestigious award. "I felt that it was really a victory for all of us in the various liberation struggles. I felt that our struggles had cleared a cultural space." Today Pratt and her sons are very close, and Leslie considers herself their "drag stepdaddy." "We're a family," Pratt says, while lamenting lesbian mother Sharon Bottoms' recent loss of her custody battle in Virginia.

Since publishing *Stone Butch Blues*, Feinberg has become a popular speaker and hero(ine) for transgendered people worldwide, doing a slide show and lecture for packed audiences. *S/he* is now hard at work on a book to be published next March, *Transgender Warriors: A History of Resistance*. Feinberg has appeared on TV and radio talk shows, at Stonewall 25 and countless queer events, and at Princeton, Yale, Brown, Penn State and many other campuses. Yet, this month s/he has a very special speaking engagement, for which she will don a cap and gown for the first time. Students at tiny Bradford College in Massachusetts have fought hard to invite Leslie to deliver their commencement address.

When the president of the college unilaterally vetoed their choice of speakers, saying, according to Feinberg, that "commencement was not an appropriate time for a transgendered speaker," students launched a sustained protest that may mark the first time in modern history that non-transgendered people have spoken out for the transgendered. After they took over the main administration building, organized a fax and phone blitz, and garnered the unanimous support of the faculty and some staff and alumni, the president was forced to relent.

"It's had a tremendous impact for me both personally, and for so many transsexual and transgendered and drag people that I know," Feinberg says. "We are just thrilled that someone who doesn't face that oppression every day would take it so seriously that they would fight to defend the voices to be heard. It's a real historic turning point."

It's a graduation address that promises to be far from typical, but one that is sure to inspire.

Leslie Feinberg and Minnie Bruce Pratt's performance is part of Beyond Desire, DiverseWorks' annual gay and lesbian performance series. The reading will take place on Friday, June 16, at 7:30 pm at Rice University's Hamman Hall. Tickets are \$12, \$10 for DiverseWorks and LiB members, and \$7 for students. Talking Gender, a workshop, will be held on Saturday, June 17, 1 pm at DiverseWorks. For directions and reservations, call 228-0914.

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His fluency in the language of ballet has made him a world traveler, visiting Great Britain, Denmark, Norway, and China, as well as numerous cities around this country. In each locale, Arvin has spoken the language in the best

Mark Arvin: *The Prince of Tights*

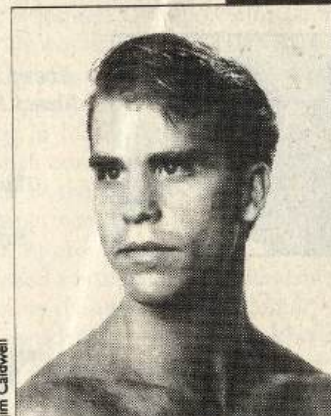
way he knows how—through the graceful beauty of dance, an artform in which he is extremely accomplished.

However, after 11 years with the Houston Ballet, five years of which were spent as a principal dancer, Arvin is leaving the company to pursue another artform that will push him even further. His aspiration now is to use his talent in dance, mix it with his acting ability and his gift in singing, and pursue a career in musical theater.

"I'm really excited about exploring the world of musical theater," says Arvin. "When you're training as a ballet dancer, you have to put all your energy into that. You can't do other things on the side. I'm ready to focus all my energies on developing as a singer and an actor."

At 31 years old, Arvin knows that he has only a few more years left as a classical ballet dancer, since it is not uncommon for these dancers to retire in their early or mid-30s. He says he began thinking about pursuing his dream after spending last summer in Tampa, Florida, at the Musical Theatre Project headed by Ann Reinking. "Ann told me I would be one of the oldest ones there, and seeing these kids in their 20s, just coming out of high school, who were phenomenal actors and singers, helped me make up my mind."

To make the transition easier he has been taking voice lessons from Kitty Karn for the past two and a half years and recently began studying acting with Chris Wilson, director of the Actors Theater of Houston. In making the career transition, he knows there are still many hurdles to jump,

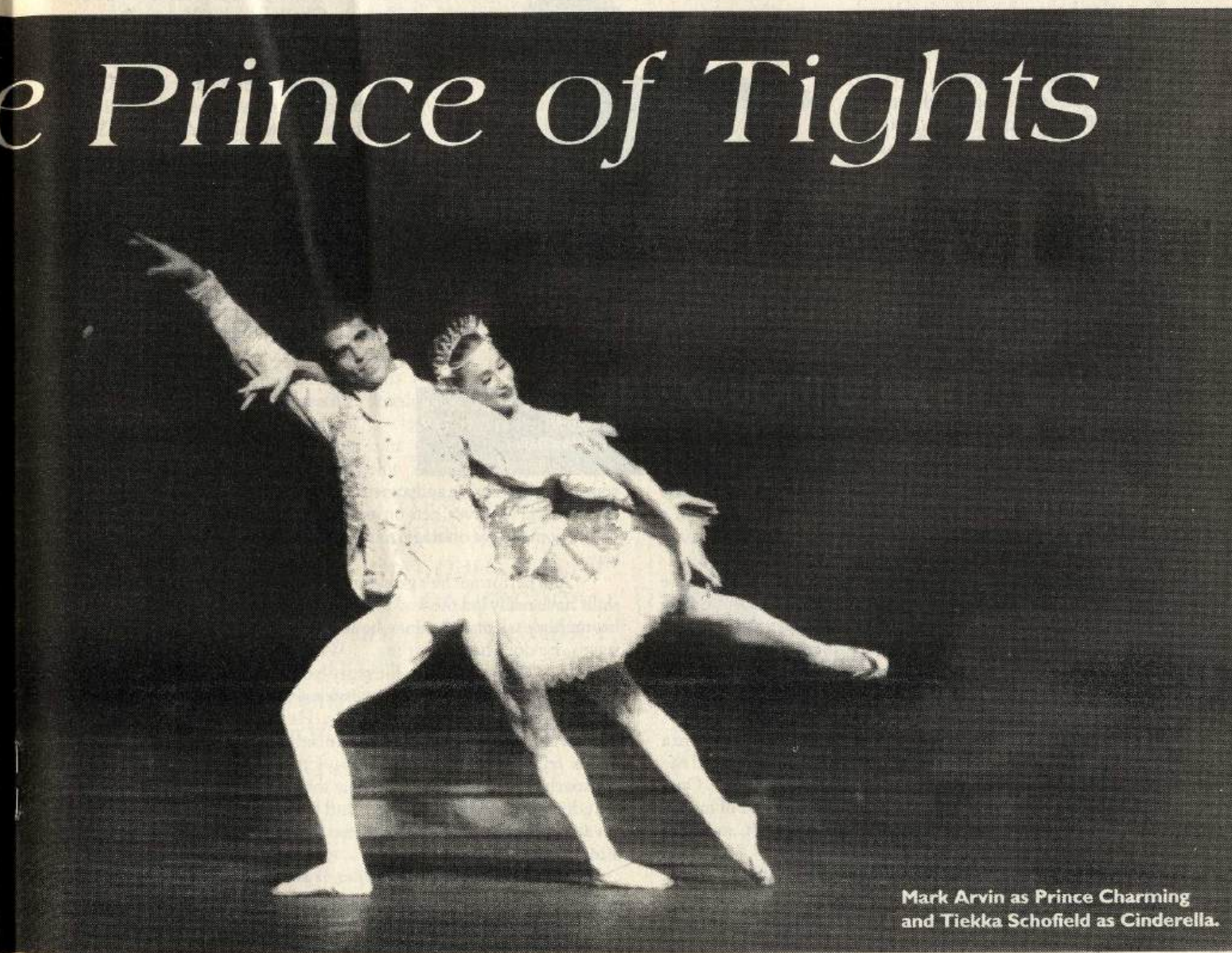


Mark Arvin

Jim Caldwell

Geoff Winingham

by
**Eric L.
Roland**



Mark Arvin as Prince Charming
and Tiekka Schofield as Cinderella.

but, through training and education, Arvin hopes to make it all easier.

"I'm a tenor in singing, but I think I'm a tenor in speaking as well. If anything, I'm a tenor and higher," he says, laughing. "I need to work on that. I need to start speaking from the chest. But, hey, if a role calls for me to speak just like I do, then better for me."

Despite his dedication to dance for most of his life, Arvin is not a neophyte to the arena of acting in theater. As a student he acted in high school and community theater productions in northern California, where his family was transplanted when he was young. He also comments that acting in ballets, although certainly more dramatic almost to the point of overacting, has afforded him a unique style of training. "In a way, I think that benefits me in acting in theater, where other people may not have the experience of having to say something without any words," he explains.

In remembering his early involvement in theater and dance, Arvin says that he was fortunate to have been able to begin acting, as well as dancing, in the more liberal California as opposed to the conservative Texas, specifically San Antonio and Austin, where he spent his formative years.

"It was just a coincidence that my family moved to California, but now I'm glad we did because I don't think I would have been able to start ballet in Texas, because the stigma was too strong," he recalls. "I started ballet out there, and by the second class I knew that this is what I wanted to do."

Arvin began ballet classes at age 16, a rather late start in comparison to many of his colleagues, some of whom were taking lessons almost as soon as they were able to walk. "I bitched at my mother after the second class, asking her: 'Why didn't you put me in this sooner?' She said that she didn't know that I would like it," Arvin recalls with a smile. "I was in gymnastics, so I had the ability to move, but never quite so easily as in dance."

Soon after graduation, he moved to New York City where dreams of being in the performing arts were being lived out by the characters on the then-popular television show *Fame*. After awhile though, Arvin found the lights of New York dimmed as the pull to Texas, where his family had returned, grew stronger, so he returned to south Texas. After dancing for several years in Austin, Arvin wanted th environment of a larger city still be near his family.

"I grew up in a very Mexican-American household, and we're a very close family," he says. "I came here to Houston and joined the Academy [School of Dance] in 1984 and the Company in 1985. One-third of my life has been with Houston Ballet and one-half of my life has been dance. I've invested a lot of time and effort into it, and it has paid off."

Few would disagree that his dedication to his talent has paid off. Over the past decade, Arvin has danced the leading roles in some of the most beloved ballets including *Cinderella*, *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. His tour-de-force solo performance as the "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" in Paul Taylor's *Company B*, which

premiered at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., earned the praise of *New York Times* critic Anna Kisselgoff. One of Arvin's greatest honors, as well as career achievements, was when the legendary Sir Kenneth MacMillan selected him to dance several leading roles.

"I always wanted to work with certain choreographers, especially Sir Kenneth MacMillan. Back in 1980 when I first started, I saw a tape of *Manon*, the ballet he did for Royal Ballet, and Anthony Dowell was dancing the role of Des Grieux," he says. "Little did I know that 14 years later I was going to get to do the same role opening night here in Houston."

Along with MacMillan, who also selected him to dance the lead male in *Gloria* and the figure of death in *Song of the Earth*, Arvin says he admires the choreography of Christopher Bruce. Included in his repertory are featured roles in Bruce's *Ghost Dances*, *Nature Dances*, *Sergeant Early's Dream*, and, quite notably, as the Bull in *Cruel Garden*. Other than these two choreographers, Arvin says he idolizes few, although he does say he wouldn't mind being able to sing like Mandy Patinkin, Broadway singer and star of TV's *Chicago Hope*.

His graceful dancing, with its balanced mix of technical skills and artistic flare, has resulted in many admirers over his 11-year career with the Houston Ballet. One of those admirers is Houston Ballet Artistic Director Ben Stevenson, who is currently directing Arvin as the lead character in rehearsals for *Peer Gynt*, the ballet season's final production as well as Arvin's final role.

"Sometimes people are very, very into technique. They're worried about whether they're squeezing this muscle or squeezing that muscle, and sometimes that gets very boring," Stevenson says. "Mark, however, gets on and does it. He does in rehearsal what you're going to see on stage, so it's satisfying to work with him in that way."

"As a performer he's grown a lot, and I think that his performing skills have really led the way for him as an artist," he continues. "He has multiple talents—he sings, he acts, he dances, he choreographs, he swims, he does baton twirling... Whether you're doing the James Cagney or Esther Williams life story, you could put him in both."

Not just admired by his professional colleagues, Arvin has made a big impression on the general public. He has unconsciously created a following, fans if you will, among Houston Ballet-goers, which many of his fellow dancers envy. He says that people he's never met approach him, letting him know that they've watched him grow from a student into a principal dancer and boasting that they're proud of his accomplishments. Many of these fans will certainly be saddened after he leaves the company.

"When people say things like, 'I started coming to the ballet because of you and now you're leaving. We're going to miss you horribly,'" he says, sadly, "it's like a double whammy—it makes me feel good, but at the same time it gets me all emotional."

"I've been really, really appreciative of the Houston audiences,



Lauren Anderson and Arvin will appear in *Peer Gynt* at the Wortham Center, June 8-18. Arvin's title role in *Peer Gynt* will be his final appearance with Houston Ballet.

Photo by Drew Donovan

especially the gay community," he continues. "I think the ballet may not know this, but they get a lot of support from the gay community. I appreciate that, and I want them to know Houston Ballet certainly does, although they're not terribly vocal about it."

Of course, Arvin feels a special kinship toward the gay community, since he himself is a part of it. He figures this part of his life is probably obvious to his audiences, realizing that, because of the American stereotypes of male ballet dancers, most people already assume he is gay. However, he easily squashes this antiquated stereotype, saying that only one-fourth of the male dancers at Houston Ballet are gay.

Arvin's good friend and fellow gay dancer, Sean Kelly, who says there is a definite image that most male dancers are gay, explains the reason for the death of this stereotype. Due to the male dancing of people like Mikhail Baryshnikov and Rudolf Nureyev, he explains, ballet has developed a more athletic image over the past 40 years. According to Kelly, men are now expected to accomplish, on a masculine level, the same technical demands and athleticism that female ballet dancers have always been performing.

Being an athletic ballet dancer has been Arvin's primary identity for the past 15 years, and being gay is just part of his makeup. He says that he never had any qualms about being anyone other than himself.

"I've never hidden anything from anyone, so I don't deny it, but I don't come running up to someone who doesn't know me and say, 'Hi, I'm gay and a ballet dancer,'" he remarks. "I am proud, and I will stick up for what I believe in, but for the most part, I'm just Mark and it's just a part of me."

He came out to himself while living in New York, and, upon returning to Austin, started to make friends in the gay community. Still naive about the "cruising laws" in the gay community, he was once taken by surprise by a male usher at a performance of a gay men's dance troupe he attended. "I thought this usher was really cute. I did pay attention to the show, but I looked at the usher more than I did the performers on stage," Arvin recalls. "Ushers usually say thank you while they're escorting you out...well, he gave me a kiss goodbye! It was the strangest thing."

Several years after the usher incident, Arvin came out to his mother, who, like many mothers of gay children, was well aware of and

"'Do you stuff? What is in that crotch?' Even straight guys ask me that. No, I don't pad; I don't put any bananas or oranges down there. That's the number one question people ask me. That's a weird one, especially when grandfathers come up to me and ask me that."

totally accepted her son's homosexuality. Along with the support of his mother and other family members, he is supported and loved by Kevin White, his "husband" of three years.

"He's a very headstrong person and doesn't fall into getting mixed up and involved in the sort of crazy life I have," he says. "He's very secure in what he believes and is very much like a pillar. I lean on

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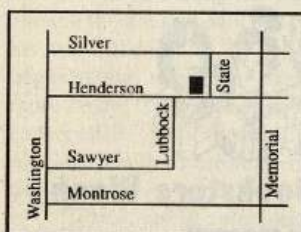
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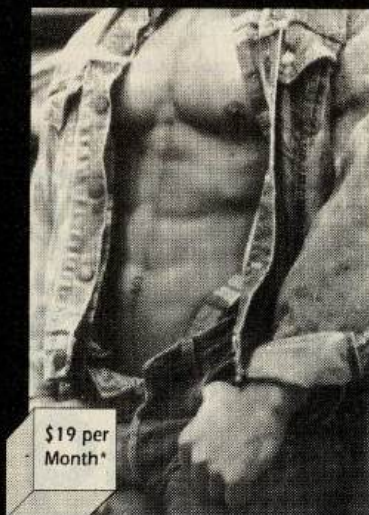
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**POWER
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Mark Arvin

Continued from previous page

him to slap me out of my drama, just like Cher in the movie *Moonstruck* when she said, 'Snap out of it!'

"I've also turned him into a ballet aficionado," he says of Kevin, who serves as secretary on the executive board of directors at Milam House. "He knew nothing of dance when I first met him. I'm proud of him."

As part of his dedication to the gay community, Arvin has participated in several benefits, mostly supporting organizations that assist people with HIV and AIDS. Most recently, he sang at the opening ceremonies of The NAMES Project's display of the AIDS Memorial Quilt. He has also participated in the annual Austin Festival of Dance, Heartstrings, and he recently choreographed a ballet for the Academy called *Songs for Heroes*, which he dedicated to those who are fighting HIV and AIDS.

After his final performance with the Houston Ballet, Arvin plans to remain in the Houston area for at least a year to continue his training in singing and acting. He has already signed on as an ensemble member in Galveston Outdoor Musicals' production of *West Side Story*, and he says he would like to get involved locally with Theater Under the Stars. His aspirations, though, go beyond musical theater in Houston with dreams of returning to New York City to perform on Broadway.

"I love Sondheim and Bob Fosse numbers like *Chicago*," he says, "and this may sound corny, but I would love a role in *Falsettos* or to play Chris in *Miss Saigon*. That is such a good role, and the music is so good!"

For now, though, he is concentrating on his performances in Houston Ballet's final two ballets of their 25th anniversary season. May 25 through June 4 in the Wortham Center, he will be one of the dancers in the lead role of the American premiere of Christopher Bruce's *Rooster*, a contemporary ballet set to eight songs by The Rolling Stones, including "Ruby Tuesday" and "Little Red Rooster." Then, June 8 through 18 at the Wortham Center, Arvin will make his final appearances with Houston Ballet in the virtuoso title role in *Peer Gynt*, Ben Stevenson's adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's epic 1867 masterwork of the same name. The ballet traces the adventures of Peer, a hot-blooded peasant boy who breaks out of the stifling confines of his provincial village to explore the wide open world.

"Houston Ballet is going to miss Mark. Houston audiences are going to miss Mark," says fellow dancer Lauren Anderson, who will be dancing the female lead opposite Arvin in *Peer Gynt*. "When he is out on stage, it's a definite difference."

"I think he's a real valuable asset to the company. He has a reputation for being one of the most dependable and for being a pretty jovial and entertaining personality, so that will be missed," says fellow dancer Kelly, with who accompanied Arvin on a three-week trip to China in 1989. "I'm excited for him though. Musical theater is really a driving passion for Mark, and so I think it's a good thing for him."

"I think it's terrible that he's leaving. I'm hanging by the neck," remarks Stevenson, who admits to having sent Arvin a letter inviting him back in hopes that he would change his mind. "I will miss him, because there are certain ballets I'm doing in the future that I sort of thought he would be good in. I certainly wish him the very best of luck in what he's doing. To be happy is extremely important."

To be happy is extremely important, and Arvin is enthusiastic about pursuing his dreams in musical theater—a career that he's confident will bring him as much happiness in the future as Houston Ballet has brought him in the past. All of his fans, I'm sure, join Ben Stevenson in wishing him the very best of luck.

STAY GOLD

by J. LuJack Tyler



J. LuJack and Bill Scott

In life, most of us as human beings don't acknowledge or pay attention to the lives of other people who affect our lives directly or indirectly. But then, when these important people die, reality and feelings of personal responsibility and obligation begin to rise to the surface. What one should have done. The things one should have expressed. Upon the death of Bill Scott, I was presented with these feelings.

Just three-and-a-half years ago, Lane Lewis presented Bill Scott with a dream of organizing and constructing a youth housing program for HIV/AIDS-affected, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered street adolescents. Bill thought that Lane's dream was an obtainable one, and the pair fought hard and long to create a service which could aid thousands of homeless youth in attaining independent living and life-management skills. The dream became a reality named the Lewis-Scott Youth Center. Later, Tracy L. Brown was hired as the organization's executive director and reincorporated the organization's name as the Houston Institute for the Protection of Youth (HIPY).

At the time all of this important work was occurring, I was street hustling and bar prostituting to support myself at age fifteen-and-a-half. I had run away from home to explore who homosexuality and I were—and are.

So many years later, I think about what my life would have been like had Bill Scott died three-and-a-half years ago and Lane's dream had died as well. It's almost a guarantee that, had these events taken place, I would not be where I am today.

Bill had beautiful white teeth, which, when he smiled, lit up the room where he stood. His charming personality and good humor allowed a person to do nothing less than fall in love with him. Bill's heart and spirit were to me as golden as the sun is when

it rises in the east and sets in the west. He was the most compassionate and understanding man I've ever known. When I was 16, for instance, I spent many nights sleeping on the back patio of the New Counseling Center. Bill knew it and confronted me about it one evening. Bill asked me not to sleep on the counseling center's patio. That particular night I didn't, but I later returned. I got the message that Bill was upset, but Bill being the kind of man he was, he understood enough to just turn the other cheek.

At ages 17 and 18, I started to build and rebuild my life, and Bill always would support the things he felt I was doing right. He would just as much track me down to encourage me to correct the things that I was doing wrong.

I've always felt that those individuals who invested their energy, money, and courage into HIPY had made an investment in my future and the future of every other young person helped by HIPY today. Angry and hurt at the fact that I feel that Bill did not live long enough for me to finish paying back on his investment, I dedicate myself to ensuring that Bill's everlasting spirit of gold continues to stay golden in my heart and shine through.

The only consistent payment that I can make at this time is to help other young people become successful in their lives and start becoming what Bill dreamed we would be: believers in ourselves and each other; contributors and caregivers to our lives and our community; independent from our sugar daddies, our abusive benefactors and our hellish lives as thrown-away homosexual teenage prostitutes.

I honor Bill Scott because he is worthy of being honored. By honoring Bill Scott we honor the best in ourselves. To restate what I wrote at the beginning, most people never fully appreciate who they know and how their lives are affected by those individuals.

I know that the course of my life was affected by Bill Scott's life for the last three years of my life. My only regret is how different my life will now be without him in it.

Thank you, Bill Scott, and stay gold.

J. LuJack Tyler is an 18-year-old former street kid who is now active in the community serving on the boards of directors of HIPY and Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus. This opinions expressed in this column are not necessarily endorsed by HIPY or HGLPC or any of its members.



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Angels' Shelley Williams

The Passionate Parts of



Theresa DiMeno

Michael Wilson

In Part 2 of OutSmart's exclusive behind-the-scenes peek of the Alley's Angels in America, Director Michael Wilson talks about sex, God, coming out, and the Perestroika that needs to happen within us all.



here have been a couple of hate calls," admits Michael Wilson. "A couple of hate letters here to the Alley."

Ah, the Age of Tolerance.

Granted, there's no great surprise that the Alley has suffered a few poison pen letters. When you show a homo-friendly, prejudice-challenging, Pulitzer- and Tony-winning play in Oiltown, you can expect some heat that even Red Adair couldn't cool down. But with just about each night sold out, the run being extended almost monthly, those complaints come from a small faction of the Houston public who are having a little trouble with *Angels*. Wilson smiles through it all anyway, almost relishing in the controversy provided by the rigid and the foolish.

"There have been people who come to the box office window to

see *Arms and the Man* upstairs, and I heard one account of someone saying, 'Here to see *Angels in America*?' And the reply, 'I am absolutely not! I will have nothing to do with that play!' But I really do believe those people are few and far between."

He brings flame to another cigarette, the smoke swirling about him like the acclaim and controversy that surrounds Tony Kushner's epic.

"I've been moved and impressed by the level of tolerance and understanding that has been demonstrated to me on a personal level, but also both in the community and across the nation. And the plays really speak to this. Even though there's a lot of voice of hate and fear and anger at times in the work, the plays have a great optimism to them. I just see an incredible change in six years—from the time I was much more reserved about who I am and [now] to how far people can go."

Naked

At times, *Angels* pushes the distant far that people can go.

From the numerous episodes of blood to erotic sex to full frontal nudity, *Angels* is no *Picnic*. It is, eerily, *Our Town*—a pantheon of characters trapped in a terrifying time, grappling with the most striking issues of the heart and the community whole. Confrontational, emotional, and charged full of relevant volatility, it speaks to you personally as it speaks to us All.

One of the uncannily unifying feathers in the play's much-lauded cap is its amazing ability to pull everyone in. Matters not whether you're gay or straight, married or single, engaged or widowed, theist or atheist, there is, trite but true, something for everyone. A play airborne on universal wings, its most common ground is loneliness, that one feeling that strips us naked and afraid. The audience's silent recognition looms over the play at nearly every scene.

No one's heart is Waterford. It's more a cracked glass vase, a pieced-together, bloodshot-eye pattern of broken glass—a distinctive vessel, attractive only in its fingerprint uniqueness that allows water to seep out through dried glue and its ability to still—after all these falls, fragments, and fixes—hold blooms.

This brokenheartedness travels like a romantic San Andreas fault throughout Kushner's play. While various characters shake with the abandonment issue, none matches the epic sadness of the 9.5-Richter-scale prophet Prior Walter. In Part One, there could still be a question if Prior is a prophet, but John Feltch makes him so intensely noble and

As willing as Feltch is to don mascara, he is equally up to the task of taking it off. And we're not talking about the Maybelline, either.

believable, he becomes not a quivering, running Jonah, but a Tremor Christ. Prior is the work's first casualty, and Feltch lives the role with terrifying abandon.

Displaying the first KS lesion to his short-time companion, Louis (played by the underrated Joseph Haj), is just the first horror Prior must face. By the end of Part One, he will be reduced to a quaking, bleeding mass of manflesh, who may or may not be God's Chosen Messenger. And Feltch walks Prior's line between martyrdom and madness with an emotionally acrobatic agility. Elongated fingers flutter away sympathy while simultaneously begging for it. His chiseled jaw held proud in the face of death, he brings a quiet and sad dignity to Prior. His confrontation with Louis is filled with animal rage fueled by very human hurt. Thin limbs barely concealed by the ever-humiliating hospital robe, he wields words of condemnation and acidic accusation as easily as he wheels his hospital chair. Yet through all the torture, Feltch, like Prior, mines the situation for wonderful humor—his Norma Desmondque, makeup-faced, nocturnal interlude with Harper provides one of the play's gutbusters. But as willing as Feltch is to don mascara, he is equally up to the task of taking it off. And we're not talking about the Maybelline, either.

As a symbol of his stripped-away mental state, Feltch is forced to, during his character's medical examination, shed his clothing. Naked in the cold spotlight, the audience does not, as one would think, gasp. Instead, all the air in the theater is sucked out, so struck with the shocking sadness of the man before them, dying a slow and virulent death.

Leave it to an actor to find the humor in it.

"It's been constant jokes about showing your weenie to Houston," laughs Feltch, rolling his eyes. "But in the context it's in, it's not about eroticism, it's about his aloneness and his vulnerability."

Nudity in the theater is nothing new. In *Hair*, it was a love-in, be-in, drugged-out frolic played for shock value. In *Equus*, nudity was a bestial psychosexual horror. But in *Angels*, it isn't nekkid, it's naked. And it's truth. And like any other of the plays' rated-R scenes, it could offend Houston audiences.

"Given that it was my first time to do that, I was certainly apprehensive. Not so much about being naked, but upsetting people. The idea that it would upset somebody made me apprehensive. More of our conservative-looking audience seem to have been very threatened and then very thrilled by [the play]. It's some kind of a liberation because it takes you on a journey. It has enough of an aspect of soap opera that it hooks people in, but it has so much more substance. It is threatening in terms of your religious, your political, your gender beliefs—everything. But it's done with such good humor and love and wit that, by the end of it, I feel that people have transcended something, that they're a better person."

Feltch feels the play has indeed changed his personhood. But as an actor, it feels very much like something else.

"I tell people it's like being a surfer and finding the perfect wave," says Feltch, waving a tsunami-sized smile. "It's an event."

Feltch rides that wave as beautifully as any Hawaiian surfer dude. And the audience marvels. But as easy as it is for the audience to side with Prior (he's dying, he's witty, he's God's chosen disciple, what's not

John Feltch as Norma Desmond?



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Michael Wilson

Continued from previous page

to like?), Joseph Haj, as the lover-turned-deserter Louis, rides the roughest seas.

"It's the most difficult role in the play," says Wilson sympathetically. "Every actor's afraid of not being liked by the audience. [Haj] dared not to be liked, and in a couple of reviews he's gotten trashed for it."

True. Both the *Chronicle* and the resting-in-peace *Post* have taken Haj to task, criticizing his performance. However, it's fascinating how even the critics have had difficulty separating their dislike for the difficult character from an honest appraisal of Haj's acting ability. Plain and simple: it may be easy to love Haj, but it ain't easy liking Louis.

Initially, Louis' only sin seems to be he's a vain intellectual, a let-me-tell-you-how-enlightened-I-am liberal. He's the guy at the cocktail party who drops multisyllabics to preen his advanced vocabulary. Listen to his astounding umpteen-page diatribe in the café scene with Belize and you get that—and more. But Louis is something more than a cappuccino-swilling pseudoscholar; he is both sexual predator and sexual victim.

In each scene with the sexually struggling Joe Pitt, Haj truly illustrates Louis' serpentine ways. He rants and raves about his own sin, whipping himself for his own transgressions. Yet a mere second later, he speedily and shockingly slips up to Joe for a quick press-the-flesh moment of powerful sexual seduction. Every quick move Haj makes causes you to gasp or cringe. But whatever Louis is, he's not a hypocrite. The torment he suffers over his decision to leave Prior is real, a delicate fire under his reflecting skin. Haj plays the range from ambivalent lover to subversive sexual predator beautifully.

"I guess, frankly, I'm disappointed to have people think he's such a schmuck," defends Haj. "I mean, I suppose he is, but what Louis goes through in these two plays, I see as a very, very complex journey. It's not that he falls out of love with his lover who's dying of AIDS. He was never out of love with Prior; he just failed him sadly and terribly. And that's never lost on Louis. He sees with absolute clarity the horror of what he's doing. He says in *Perestroika*, 'Nobody does what I did.' He hates himself."

The more he talks, the more he begins to sound like Louis. It's uncanny. And touching. Actors become one with their roles, obviously. They've lived them for weeks, given them a history even the author never dreamed of, and then transform themselves into this other person every night. To critique

the character is almost to insult the one playing the character. And to hear Haj talk about Louis, it's like hearing someone defend a little brother, or lover.

"What he does is horrible," admits Haj quietly. "But I don't think he's a horrible person."

By his first entrance with Roy Cohn, one senses something deeply wrong in the uncomfortably righteous Joe Pitt. Offended by harsh language, offended at himself, both loved and haunted by his wife, Harper, Joe Pitt is the play's Christ catalyst. Midway through Part One, he has left Harper. By the first half's end, he has awkwardly fallen into the flailing arms of Louis. Leaving Part One, you get this horrible sinking feeling that Joe's own rebuilding, his personal *Perestroika*, may not be the smooth emotional architectural transition he has awkwardly architected.

For, in Joe Pitt, playwright Tony Kushner slams the spiritual and the sexual together in one horrific psyche accident. This is probably the hardest element of the play for straight Christian America to deal with, the part they need to see the most, and the part that will keep them from purchasing their tickets. Painfully honest, desperate in their utterance, the words of Joe Pitt ring out as one grand challenge to all the perceptions and judgments the Holy Right hold.

Physically, Whalen looks the part flawlessly. He's the everybody's all-American—the doctor, the lawyer, the good son, the prom queen's date. But below the handsome posterboy physicality, Whalen churns just so. Delicately, Whalen emotionally spins like some pathetic marionette, looking up at the twisted Godstrings as they fray and twist with each motion of the tempting, sexual wind.

"To play this self-deception and the pain that I think Joe has in covering up this personal..." Whalen stops short of the word choice. "Personal choice," like "lifestyle," is another subtle trump of the religious right to lay one more guilt card on the already burgeoning hand of gay poker players. And it's not Whalen's game. "It's not a choice, but he thinks it is. The self-loathing that goes on within him is tough, and that's tough to play. It's a pleasure to try to find what's poignant about him and what's positive in him."

Whalen flashes a Colgate smile.

"I really like Joe Pitt. He's a guy who strives to be good, grappling with his sexuality. He tries to handle it in what he considers a positive way, which is hiding it, because it's a sin in what he believes, as far as Mormonism. Homosexuality is second only to murder as a crime, a sin against God. He strives to be good until he just can't anymore. Finally, he has to be true to himself."

"Joe Pitt is the one that I most easily identify with," volunteers Wilson. "Because of this dark secret that he was carrying around, how he thought he should be one of the Elect, one of the Blessed. Whatever your religious faith is when growing up, that can get in the way of someone who is gay or lesbian, because there's not much room for us in any of the religions, the organized religions. That's why we've had to organize our own churches, like the Metropolitan Church here, which does a great job."

"I also think we develop a bad taste in our mouths for religion, those of us who are gay and lesbian, because we feel burned by it at some point. And I think it's hard for us to come back. I love the religion in [the play]. It haunts me, the need for faith, a sense of growing up strongly in a faith and feeling a dislocation from it, somehow feeling that I was cut off abruptly from a faith that rightfully should belong to me. The play somehow is yearning and crying out for reconciliation of all that."

As the Valium-tripping Harper Pitt, Annalee Jeffries serves as *Angels'* great straight connection. So it's funny that she's a deluded maniac. But that is truly boiling her down to one dimension, and Harper is multi-dimensional, and not just because she's as whacked out as Barbara Gordon was.

In her hallucinations, she is an ethereal queen in her own peaceful universe. Alone in her empty apartment, she listens to the outside world that terrifies her, hearing about the depleting ozone and blowjobs from a little woman with a German accent. Yet she is the first to confront the realities of her husband's "long walks at night." When cornered by reality, she is a desperate, rabid animal. In dreams, she is her husband's harpie from hell.

Like all the cast, there is a bit of the character in the actor. Jeffries herself freely admits the similarities.

"Oh, all of it! Are you kidding?" She laughs, deep and hearty in a voice like stiff bourbon, or gravel gently covered in warm honey. Jeffries' eyes are so blue and her performance so memorable, you stare into her eyes and swear she's stoned out of her mind on the same drug as her character.

Wrong.

"So sorry. Never taken loads of Valium or anything like that," Jeffries says. "But I certainly know what that's all about, knowing how that relates to a journey of individuation. I can certainly relate this to my own experience."

The experience she can relate to now, however, is universal praise. To the critics, Jeffries, like Felch, like Wilson, like most of

the cast and crew, can do no wrong.

"I never thought it would get this kind of response. I was terrified. It was so close to the bone," she whispers.

"Harper's hard," concurs Wilson. "Annalee and I have done a lot of shows together, and I think this is one of her finest performances."

Just as Wilson identifies with the closeted Joe Pitt, he does share something with the mind-tripping, hallucinogenic Harper.

"The desire to go traveling!" Wilson laughs. "Leave you behind to worry. We all have that, don't we? Even in our relationships, sometimes we want to escape when they're too unbearable to be in. And when the play opens, that is unbearable to live in."

But in addition to her union with Joe, Harper is also bound to God, to Mormonism. And, once again, as a sunflower to light, Wilson turns his face to religion.

"I think she's trapped by [religion] because she's so defined by it. She doesn't have a definition of herself outside of it. And I guess I identify with that because of that need, an imperative sense of coming out and creating your own definition of yourself, outside of an institutional definition. Institutions are how our society exists, the building blocks, the foundations of our society, but they also can exist as prisons of sorts."

"I'm gonna tell you something," intones Jeffries, her manic, manicured hands waving emphatically. "What's so great about this show—not one person walks out. And we have such a wide range of people coming to see this. A very elderly crowd that's very suburban, and a gay crowd that's very liberal, ready to catch on to everything that's camp. It is a unifying experience. It brings the good ol' boy and the gay man right together. I mean, they are faced with some hard-core reality. There's language that people could take offense at, frontal nudity, suggestive behavior. Yet some of the characters are offended by some of the things going on, so you get both points of view on stage in front of you, so you don't feel left alone. When it's coming from a true source, it will touch a true source in all of us."

She gets that glazed look in her eyes and you'd swear it was Valium, but then you realize that it's the same look all the others get, and you can feel it coming: *Michael*.

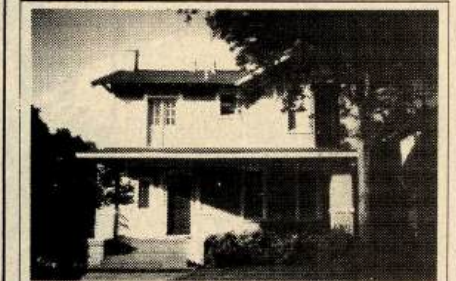
"Michael is an incredible talent. He has brilliance that he is born with. Do we have nine hours to say how I bow down before him?"

"I've done a lot of work with a lot of really great theater artists—Peter Sellers, Ann

Continued on page 69

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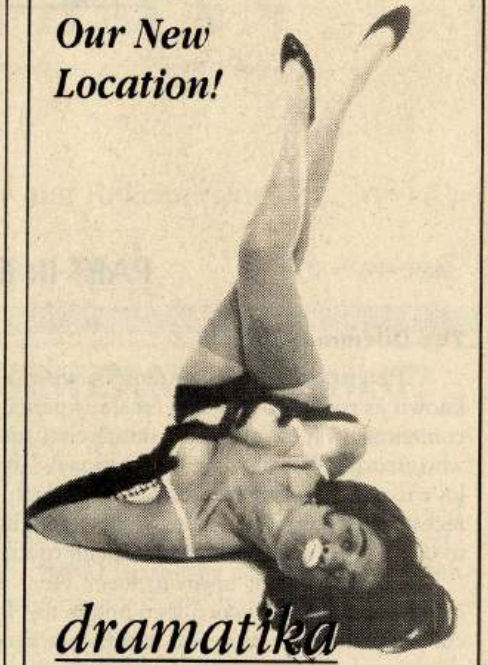
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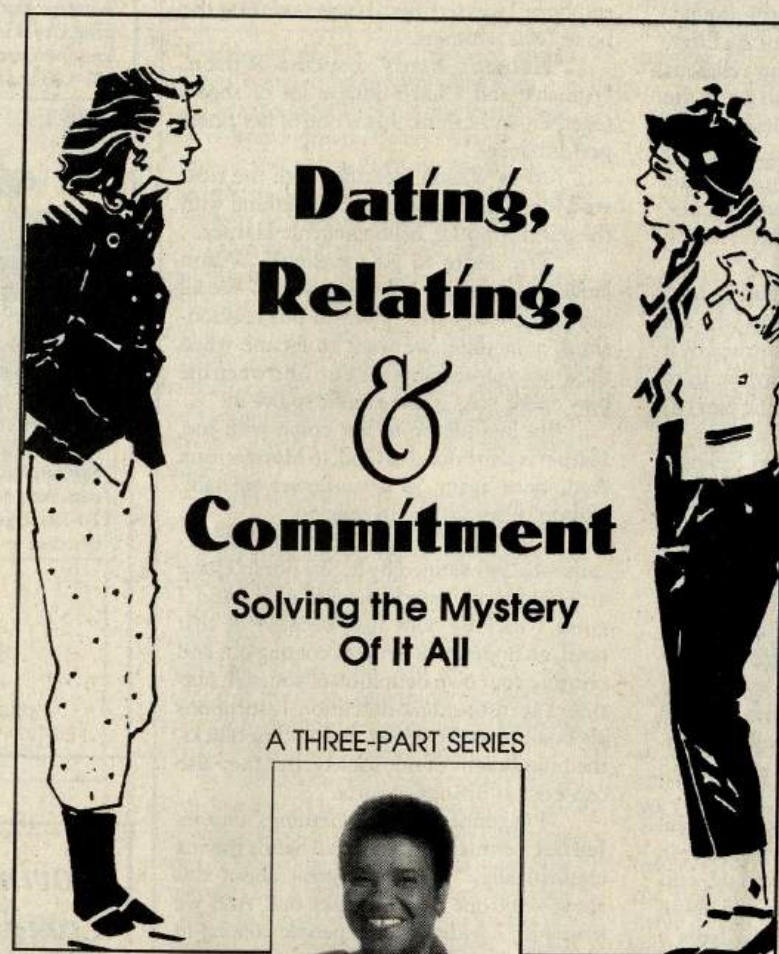
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Dating, Relating, & Commitment

Solving the Mystery
Of It All

A THREE-PART SERIES



By Joyce M. Gayles, Ph.D.

PART II: RELATING ROMANTICALLY IN THE 90s

The Dilemma:

The attraction and bonding between human beings that is known as *romantic love* can create experiences of great joy and contentment. It can also create much confusion and pain. To those who associate "love" with "the irrational," the pursuit of romantic love is a "temporary neurosis" from which one must inevitably recover and go on. To others, love is a sought-after ideal, difficult to understand and even more difficult to fully experience.

So what does it mean to love? How do we recognize the experience that our word love points to? In some non-western cultures, there are scores of words that denote love in its many shades and dimensions. Within the limitation of our own language form, talking about "love" is somewhat like explaining the rainbow or the Transco Tower to a person who is blind.

Answering the question "What is love?" is complicated by the fact that we mix our experience of love with many other types of human experience. The experience of love may be colored by feelings of respect, power dominance, dependency, lust, curiosity, etc. Most often it is complicated by our fear of it. Just as drinking water offers us many different experiences depending on whether it is mixed with tea, alcohol, lemon or cocoa, so love is most often a blended experience. Yet, just as it is possible to acquire an idea of what pure water is like, so it is possible to explore loving when it is not mixed with other human experiences.

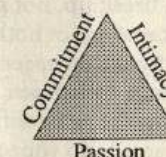
Solution: Understanding Romantic Relating

Several years ago, I ran across an article in *Psychology Today* called "The Three Faces of Love: A Three-Sided Theory of Love."

The author, Robert Trotter, identified three components of the experience we call love. The components are:

- INTIMACY—defined as: closeness, sharing, communication, and support,
- PASSION—defined as: physiological arousal and an intense desire to be united with the other,
- COMMITMENT—defined as: both a short-term decision to bond with someone and a long-term decision to maintain that bond.

The three components can be visualized as a triangle.



The triangle's area represents the amount of love, and its shape represents the style of loving. Large amounts of intimacy, passion and commitment yield a large triangle and represents a healthy and lively love relationship. The lengths of the sides yield four basic styles of loving.

A triangle with three equal sides represents what Trotter calls "consummate love." This is our romantic ideal where love is a mental-emotional-sexual bonding between two people who have high regard for the value of each other's being. A triangle with unequal sides, in which the longest leg is passion, represents an

infatuation kind of love. It's the "love at first sight" that dissipates almost as quickly as it captures you. A triangle with intimacy as its longest side is representative of a wonderful friend relationship.

Consummate or romantic love is difficult to achieve and maintain, but far from impossible. As human beings heal and grow in consciousness, the ability to have the experience of intimacy, passion and commitment is expanded.

Solution: Learning to "Be" in Romantic Love

A foundation piece in expanding your ability to experience romantic love is found in the old and familiar adage "learn to first love yourself." To borrow a quote from Nathaniel Braden (1980), happiness in romantic love can only occur when you have a vision of yourself "that contains the *rightness* of being loved, the *naturalness* of being loved, the *appropriateness* of being loved." People who know how to make themselves happy in love relationships are people who can be open to receiving love. And in order to receive love, you must love yourself. Romantic love requires an "open-heartedness" that is rooted in the ability to be both vulnerable and secure, both self-aware and sensitive to another, and in the willingness to change and be changed.

Communication is central to nurturing the intimacy and passion in a romantic relationship. One of the most powerful things you can do—in addition to working toward the ideal of *listening with empathy and speaking without blame*—is express *respect and admiration* toward your partner. Small and consistent expressions of appreciation go a long way in sparking the chemistry between

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Dating, Relating & Commitment

Continued from previous page

people. *Validate your partner.* Validation involves "putting yourself in your partner's shoes and imagining his or her emotional state." Let your partner know that you are trying to understand how he or she feels, and why, even if you don't agree. You can also show validation by acknowledging your partner's point of view, accepting appropriate responsibility and apologizing when you're clearly wrong.

Learn the art of expressing anger. Relationships are not damaged by honest expressions of anger, but your relationship can die a bit each day as a consequence of anger that is not expressed. The suppression of anger kills intimacy, kills passion. To express anger honestly—to describe what you receive and to describe how you feel about it—clears the air and opens the door to productive communication. Honest anger and fair fighting is sometimes the healthiest thing you can do for your relationship. The willingness to share your anger, pain and fear as well as your love, joy and excitement serve the growth of romantic love. Unwillingness to do so subverts its growth.

Past experiences almost always color how you see your romantic partner and influences the levels of intimacy, passion and commitment in your relationship. No matter how educated you are or how hard you try to do it differently, your experiences with your parents and past signifi-

cant others impact your current relationships. This is true of any type of relationship, but it's especially true about romantic relationships. Explore your family patterns to uncover hidden expectation and communication styles that influence your relationships. Explore your needs, hopes, values and attitudes that impact on your romantic involvement. Your self-exploration can be facilitated by reading self-help books, attending workshops on personal development and in psychotherapy.

Expanding your experience of sexuality and sensuality is essential to keeping the passion in your relationship. The profound importance of sex and sensuality lies in the intense pleasure and sense of connection it offers human beings. Learn about the full range of physical closeness from hugging, kissing, cuddling, sensual touching and gazing, to the range of playful and planned and passionate sex.

Understanding that there are stages and phases in your romantic relationship—cycles of ebb and flow, calmness and turmoil. Just as individuals do not remain constant, but evolve through stages of development, so do romantic relationships. And different stages have their own challenges and distinct gratification. In early stages, there is excitement and stimulation of newness (and passion) along with the uncertainty about whether or not the relationship will grow and last. Later, with the development of commitment, there is loss of excitement, even disappointment and disillusionment. However, there is the possibility of discovering the peace that comes when difficulties are resolved, understand-

ing is achieved, and the joy that comes from realizing that intimacy and commitment can have their own excitement.

The ultimate challenge of romantic love and its *raison d'être*, I believe, lies in its ability to move to connect with another human being and to ally yourself with the process of growth and inevitable change. Every romantic relationship, no matter how long or how brief, is a living system. And in a system, when one part changes, the other parts must change also. Couples must often break up, not because of change, but because one or both partners lack the flexibility and inner security to allow emerging change to happen. Know that if you develop the self-confidence and wisdom to be an ally to your partner's growth, then that growth is likely to be a great benefit to your relationship. By the same token, embracing your own growth and evolution supports the experience of aliveness in yourself and in your relationship.

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Braden, N. "The Psychology of Romantic Love." New York: Bantam Books, 1980.

Trotter, R. "The Three Faces of Love." In *Psychology Today*, September, 1986, 46-54.

Joyce M. Gayles, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist specializing in life transition and growth issues. She also facilitates a popular workshop on dating. For information, contact her at (713) 667-6047.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVEL:

So Many Choices, So Little Time



by Sandra B. Wilkins



OKAY, YOU GUYS AND GALS, get off your duffs and call your travel agent about "exclusive gay" travel programs. I've never scolded my readers, but the past couple of weeks I've been getting all these calls for summer vacations, and no one is requesting specific gay tours, but everyone wants a "family" vacation!

Well, just bite the bullet and sign up for a gay vacation and see what happens. Want to know what the average repeat gay vacation travel is? 78%—make that seventy-eight percent! What does that tell us? It tells us that three out of four people get what they want in vacation dollars spent...to the point that they will commit themselves to another "gay vacation" on the spot, with that particular tour operator. I know what that says to me. What does that mean to you?

I like to use this column to advise and educate readers about the marvelous opportunities for gay-specific travel, and as more and more of you want to be a part of leisure time spent with like-minded souls, then for heaven's sake, wake up and buy a gay tour! The past five years has given birth to an explosion of travel opportunities for us...and us alone. You can choose almost anything that suits your fancy, and a gay/lesbian travel company will have it neatly packaged for you.

For instance, I've been getting calls for a couple of years about Las Vegas, and until two months ago always said, "Sorry, it's a gay-friendly town, but no one exclusively markets gay packages." NOT ANY MORE!

Player Express Vacations, a gay company established in Las Vegas, now sells affordable getaway packages to our family, offering some of the most competitive prices I've ever seen for Las Vegas. They do it all, from budget to super deluxe, and have a wonderful package rate for the fabulous Luxor Las Vegas Hotel and Casino: \$260 per person for three nights, INCLUDING ROUND-TRIP AIRFARE!

The Luxor is one of Vegas' newest and most spectacular mega resorts, housed in a 30-story bronze pyramid, boasting the world's largest atrium, and of all things, a full-scale reproduction of King Tut's tomb! This deluxe property is comprised of 2.45 million square feet, with 2,526 rooms and suites. In addition to the exciting view from each

room, the resort also has one of the city's largest pools and a full-service spa.

Craig Walker, Project Coordinator for Players Express Vacations, has done a remarkable job of packaging the traditional Vegas getaway, with the wonderful twist for gay and lesbian travelers. In addition to the air and hotel arrangements, the company also provides a comprehensive gay-themed guide to Las Vegas, which includes complimentary cocktails, VIP coupons for local gay establishments, and a special map of Las Vegas highlighting areas of interest for the gay and lesbian community.

Folks who book with Craig's company also receive a nifty Las Vegas Bonus Package, including first-day-free Alamo Car rental, with a two-day minimum rental required. Additionally, oodles of two-for-one coupons are included as well as free giveaways like key chains and coffee mugs from various hotels and casinos.

"Finding a gay or lesbian club when you're on vacation can be difficult," Craig explained. "It's nice not to have to ask a cab driver or bell man where to go. Our guide helps eliminate that situation." So high rollin' Smarties, next time you think Vegas, let's book Players Express Vacations!

Charlie Rounds, marketing Director for RSVP Travel Productions, came to see me recently, and we talked at length about their company's "Cruises for Women" in 1995. RSVP has been wildly successful in providing cruise for men, and since they bought their own ship, *The Sea Spirit*, they are reaching out to the lesbian market, now bringing the fine quality and good times to the gals as well. This summer, July 8-15, is their women-only Alaskan Adventure, and it will be one marvelous trip.

You fly to Alaska's capital, Juneau, and sail the famed Inside Passage, the 1,000-mile sheltered waterway that's prime habitat for bald eagles, sea lions, porpoises, and whales. The ship will call at the distinctive seaside towns of Wrangell and Skagway, then it's on to the Russian town of Sitka, and Tracy Arm, a narrow, winding cliff-walled

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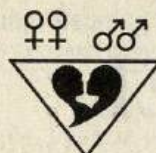
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July 28-30, 1995 • Sept. 15-17

Cost: \$400 per couple • Deposit required—Enrollment limited!!

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NEW IN HOUSTON!

Gay & Lesbian Travel

Continued from previous page

fjord that's home to the twin Sawyer Glaciers. The highlight of the trip will be sailing through the pristine fjords and incredible tidewater glaciers of Glacier Bay National Park. Cruise prices start at an affordable \$1,295 per person, and several cabin will accommodate three passengers.

Want something a bit further flung than the U.S.? Consider one of the multiple worldwide tours offered by Our Family Abroad. This fine company provides excellent, escorted tours to Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, and the U.S. A traditional tour company, what sets them apart is their dedication to "uniquely gay, completely discreet" tours for gay and lesbian travelers. Our Family Abroad contracts its tour operations through some of the mostly respected names in the business. Their tours appear no different on the outside than the many other groups touring the world. The only difference is you and your traveling companions. As soon as the tour starts, you will know why the word "family" is the most important word in their name. Discreet by design, travelers immediately notice and appreciate the uniquely gay perspective. Special welcome materials are provided, where available and applicable, including City Brief reprints from Out and About, maps keyed with the standard highlights plus the gay-specific ones, and special discount coupons and invitations from clubs, bars, restaurants, and other establishments that hold special interest to our "family."

One of the things I especially appreciate is the ability for single travelers to be "matched" with each other, too keep the cost of such a tour affordable. Single rooms are very expensive and quite small as a rule. So, both RSVP and Our Family Abroad invite you to avoid the single supplement and let them match you with a like-minded traveling companion, a very nice touch indeed.

Another plus for touring with Our Family Abroad is that their tour prices include round-trip airfare from your home city to the tour destination. In July and August they have a marvelous eight-day tour to Ireland, priced at \$1,516, and includes not only the airfare, first-class hotel accommodations, all transportation and sightseeing, but also provides a full breakfast each day, and three dinners.

If you've got a bit more time and slightly deeper pockets, check out the autumn tour of Thailand, Singapore and Hong Kong. Priced around \$3,300, air included, this tour brings you two weeks of Asian treasures. Thailand is one of the hottest spots for gay men in the world, and this tour includes incredible Bangkok, plus the beautiful beach resort of Paataya. This tour also includes two days in Singapore and four days to shop 'til you drop in Hong Kong.

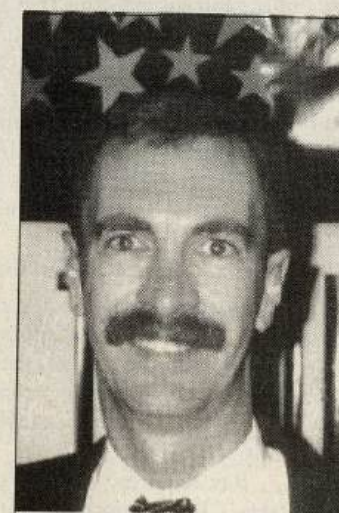
Lesbians need to mark their calendars for the annual Provincetown Women's Week, coming up October 11-16, 1995. This outstanding event draws thousands of women each year, and five-night packages start at \$895, including round-trip airfare.

Here are a few more vacation ideas to whet your appetites, all coming up for the balance of 1995: Eastern Canada Luxury Coach Tour; River Rafting Rogue River in Oregon; Sonoro Bay Mexico with Atlantis Events; New England Fall Foliage Grand Tour in September; Deluxe Christmas in San Francisco; New Year's in Rio de Janeiro...want more options? Just give your travel agent a call and we'll get you on your way, YOUR WAY, THE GAY WAY!

Sandra Wilkins, a travel professional for 17 years, specializes in arranging travel for the gay and lesbian community. You can contact her by phone at (713) 526-4471, or by pager at (713) 903-1247.

SPECTRUM '95

AN EVENT OF GAY PROPORTIONS



Alan Bourgeois
talks candidly
about his past,
his hopes,
his dreams

by Olivia Torre and Janice Stensrude

In June 1978, Houston gays and lesbians congregated for intensive discussions. Proposals and ideas from this gathering, known as Town Meeting I, matured into important institutions in our community—the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard, Montrose Counseling Center, Montrose Clinic, Gay and Lesbian Hispanic Unidos, Montrose Sports Association, and the first neighborhood safety patrol.

Fifteen months ago, Town Meeting II began to take form. Now called Spectrum '95, the event has grown to include not only an all-day Town Meeting,

but also a concert, two CD releases, a business expo, and an art exhibit.

Alan Bourgeois, the driving force behind Spectrum '95, by all accounts, is a visionary. "Knowing that I was actually gonna see this succeed," Bourgeois told *OutSmart*, "I had to devote 100% of my life to it. I gave up my car, and I hocked just about everything I own. However, if this goes according to plan, especially with the way things have been picking up, the fallout for our community is gonna be so terrific. That's the main thing."

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Spectrum '95

Continued from previous page

Bourgeois candidly discusses his past. "Growing up in L.A., I was exposed to the 'image.' It's Hollywood. You gotta present yourself in a certain way, with a certain style, and I got caught up in that. I ended up breaking the law several times," he states frankly. Doing "the same thing" after moving to Dallas, he found himself the guest of the Texas Department of Corrections for 18 months.

With time on his hands and no one to impress with his Hollywood ways, Bourgeois first read the Bible cover to cover, then Shirley MacLaine's *Out on a Limb*. "That's what got me on the road to recovery," he declares, "but it's a continuous road."

That was five years ago, and Bourgeois filed his last parole report just recently. "So I should be off parole shortly," he says with just the barest suggestion of a sigh. "I don't share [this information] all that much," he confides, "but when people start getting involved with me on a business level, I make sure they're aware of the situation...I think it's important for people to know, one, who I am, and two, that not every former criminal is an asshole."

"Just because someone's been to prison doesn't mean that they have lost whatever ability and charisma and organizational skills that they built up," comments long-time community activist Ray Hill. "You don't give that up when you go to the joint. And I am glad that Alan is not trying to be closeted about his past. If gay people know anything, it's that closets are liabilities. If Alan were trying to hide that, I would be suspicious."

Working with a board of directors and a group of dedicated volunteers, Bourgeois has planned what he calls the only event of its kind in the nation. "There have been business expos with some entertainment, but that's the extent of it," he says. "We've got the art, the speakers, the political aspect, plus the concert to celebrate who we are, and it's just not been done before."

The Spectrum '95 organizers have met with some disappointment in establishing a

support base for the event. As is too often the case for first-time events, many potential supporters are saying, "Next time." With no salaries in the budget, the primary item to suffer from the lack of support has been the promotional budget. "We can't advertise the way we want to, because the money's not there," says Bourgeois.

Ray Ramirez, co-chair of Gay Pride Week 1994 and 1995, states, "I have nothing but praise for Alan. I understand his predicament of trying to run a project professionally and ethically...I've told him personally that we can be there for a certain amount of support."

With minimal support from event sponsors, Bourgeois worries like a mother hen one moment, displays the excitement of a visionary the next, and settles temporarily into the guise of a child afraid to expect too much and be disappointed. "I know that any type of payment I'm gonna get will be at the end of all this," he says. "If I am able to make enough money to buy myself a car at the end of this, I will truly enjoy that—trust me!"

Recouping some part of his investment is not his greatest concern. Sponsorships normally cover basic expenses for such events, and with the wait-and-see attitude of many of those invited to participate, Bourgeois is concerned that ticket sales will be carrying too great a burden, perhaps shortchanging his ambition to net a healthy contribution for the seven charities chosen to benefit.

Bourgeois' worries aside, excitement for the event is building. Over 150 exhibitors have reserved display space at the business expo, estimates of expected attendance range as high as 8,000, and the chosen charities may benefit by as much as \$175,000.

There is no doubt that Spectrum '95 is one of the most exciting events to be planned for the Houston community. And, ultimately, its success is a success for the gay and lesbian community as whole.



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VIATICAL SETTLEMENT OR
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E. DONALD DEYOUNG, LIFE TODAY
FINANCIAL SERVICES, INC.

BOOK READING & SIGNING 3 PM
ROBBI SOMMERS, AUTHOR
PLEASURES, PLAYERS, KISS & TELL
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FINANCIAL PLANNING 4 PM
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GETTING
THE FACTS ON

DATING & MATING

Over the past several weeks, I've counseled several HIV-negative gay men regarding their concerns about safer sex. It seems that they've recently met a love interest who they've found out is positive. This usually brings up a lot of fear and questions regarding situations that they're not quite sure of—kissing, oral sex, sex with condoms and other issues. These fears are based on a major myth in our community: "I treat every partner as if they are HIV-positive." Most people at risk for getting infected don't actually act this way. Many gay men—as well as lesbians—still don't know enough about the sexual issues that affect them...and rarely do they seek the information.

It doesn't seem to be an issue unless there's a crisis. I commonly hear denial in the form of: "I wouldn't sleep with somebody who is HIV-positive." There is an assumption that this is not an issue for them...and they generally have dozens of excuses for assuming the people they get sexually involved with are negative.

This may make them feel better, but it is little (or no) protection. I realize it is important that two partners feel comfortable with what they're doing in those passionate moments. But when most people will not discuss sex beforehand and often leave "responsibility" for protection to their partner, they set themselves up to become infected.

These are not issues that solely affect gay men. They are issues that affect *everyone* in the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community—*regardless of age, gender or ethnicity!*

There is a lot of accurate information about protection from sexually-transmitted diseases so that no one has to live in fear of the unknown regarding HIV/AIDS. But it is not as simple as merely "rolling on a condom." Other factors such as self-esteem, internalized homophobia, communication and relationship skills play roles equally important to basic safer sex information. These are the issues examined in the Safer Sex Workshops and House Parties. These forums provide an opportunity to discuss and learn about the many different sexual and social situations to reduce or eliminate the risks that could lead to trouble (whether with an HIV-positive partner or not).

by Bart Loeser

The workshops involve small groups addressing self-esteem, dating, intimacy, alcohol, communication/negotiation skills, as well as the wide array of erotic options for fun, yet safer sex. AIDS Foundation Houston (AFH) offers three different, but related, regularly scheduled workshops: "Dating and Mating," "Intimacy and Relationship-Building" and "Self-Esteem." The next "Dating and Mating" workshop will be offered at the AFH office, 3202 Wesleyan Annex at 7 pm on June 20, 1995, and is open to everyone at no cost. There will also be an "Intimacy and Relationship-Building" workshop at 7 pm on Wednesday, June 28, 1995, at the Metropolitan Multi-Service Center, 1475 West Gray.

These free workshops are also available in a "house party" format, in which a volunteer host invites a group of friends (less than 15) to their house or other convenient location. AFH brings condoms, sex toys, games and door prizes to lead entertaining discussions on the issues. It's a great way to reach friends and others with information that can not only improve one's sex life but possibly save lives.

The house parties can be set up at any time or place by calling AFH. If you have any questions or concerns about these issues and want more information, please come to a workshop or call me at (713) 623-6796. This is a crisis for all in our community.

Bart Loeser is Education Coordinator for AIDS Foundation Houston.



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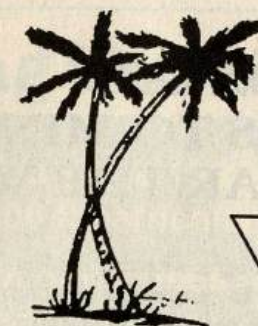
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UNDERSTANDING AND TRANSFORMING



By Patrick J. Vachon

WHAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU FIRST HEAR THE WORD CONFLICT?

For some, it might mean strife with families, friends, jobs, or partners. Yet others may relate to seemingly larger conflicts such as riots and wars. What seems to be a common thread in all conflicts are differences of opinion or perspective, as well as unwillingness, albeit temporary, to see the opposite view. De-escalation of conflict occurs when the opposing parties unite to accomplish a common goal of resolution. With this in mind, *all conflict can be viewed as an opportunity for growth*. Often, however, this re-connection occurs only after a major disagreement, altercation, argument, or war.

Generally, solutions are not reached without a couple of very important dynamics occurring—a general understanding of the other perspective and a certain amount of empathy with the opposite view. Resolutions often fail to happen because people

believe they must agree with their “adversaries” in order to resolve the conflict. Agreement is not necessary; only understanding and empathy are. Without empathy, there is usually bargaining, compromise, and sacrifice by one or both parties, which often sets the stage for future conflict.

Most attempts at reconciliation address conflict on the level of cause and rarely identify the true underlying issues. I often encourage people to integrate a phrase into their belief system that states: *I am never upset for the reason I think I am*. To be able to resolve conflict on a deeper level, it would be advantageous to understand its potential sources.

It is first helpful to identify Parts of the Self (see diagram) as defined and described in the IMAGO relationship model. These parts are often, if not generally, in

conflict with each other or with parts of other people. Various psychological models identify these basic parts of the individual. These are: a) the Intellectual or Knowledge part, b) the Feeling or Affect part, c) the Acting or Behavior part, and d) the Sensory part. These parts may or may not be in communication with each other at any given time.

The Knowledge part of the self is the logical, thinking, rational component. It is responsible for figuring out how to do things and has an instinctual desire to be able to see the whole picture or to make sense out of the world. The Feeling part connects with human emotions such as anger, sadness, love, and fear. The Acting part moves around in time and space, whereas the Sensory part is connected to the five senses.

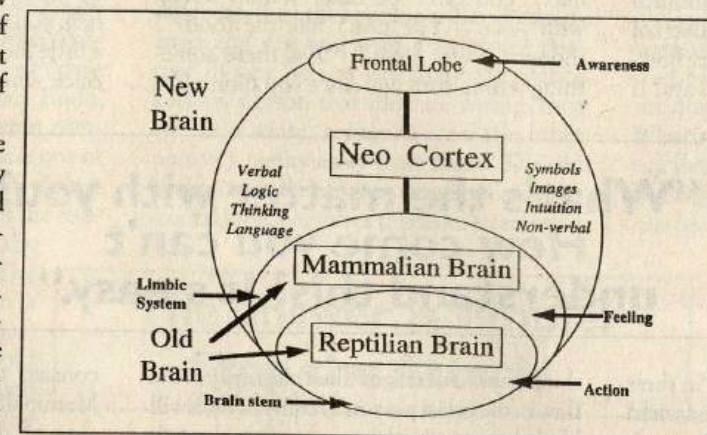
Certainly, each of us has an occa-

sional bout of internal conflict, which may be viewed as the differences of opinion between parts of the self. For instance, our rational part may be in conflict with our emotional part. In many instances, individuals have stated in my office that they feel very sad but do not know why. This often creates a lot of distress as they try to figure it out, resulting in a great deal of internal conflict.

Another scenario might be a person behaving in such a way that brings about sensory and emotional pleasure, but the behavior is in conflict with an ingrained value or belief system. This is often the case with lesbian and gay individuals in the coming-out process. The emotions, physical touch, and intellectual connection between two men or two women may feel pleasant; however, when an interjected value system is introduced into the picture, an overriding feeling of guilt and shame may appear. When this disparity occurs, people are often overcome with the emotional and

physical manifestations of internal conflict, an experience that many people call “stress.”

Imagine how complicated matters might get when two individuals in a relationship attempt to connect, each having



many different parts of themselves. Conflict might escalate when an emotional part of one person is at odds with the rational part of the other, or when one person wants to do something that doesn't make sense to the other.

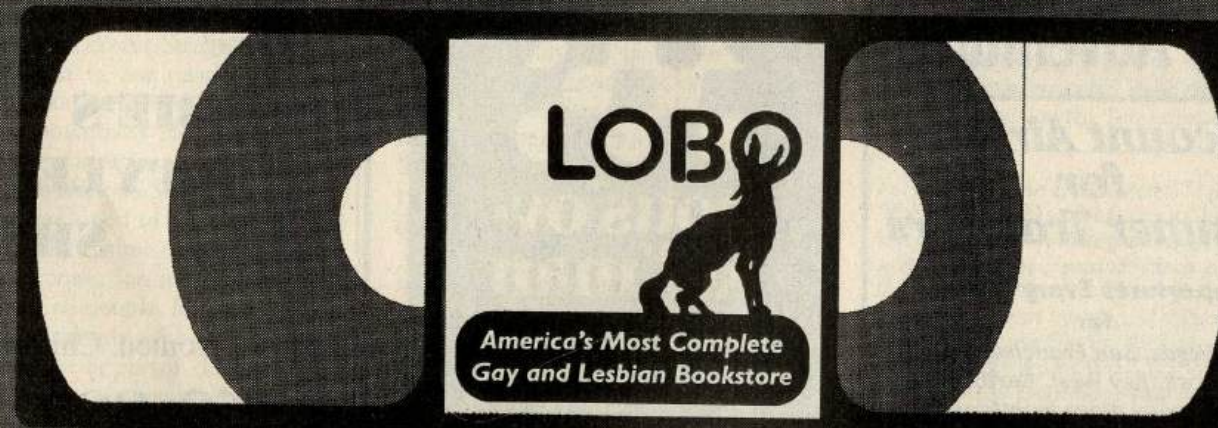
In relationships, couples often enter into conflict when one or both fail to understand the reality of the other. Instead of trying to understand the other person, one will generally attempt to convince the other that his or her reality is wrong. For example, if Mary is scared about the possibilities of advancement in her career and shares her concern with her partner, Susan, conflict may arise when Susan tries to assure Mary that there is nothing to be afraid of or attempts to tell Mary what to do to reduce her fear. In these situations, the person who is upset might benefit most from a silent, attentive audience, rather than someone trying to change their mind or fix the problem. Conflicts often result from dynamics that involve what the IMAGO model calls Emotional Symbiosis.

Unlike the traditional definition of symbiotic relationships, the IMAGO model defines symbiosis as the “belief that other

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Transforming Conflict

Continued from previous page

people share your subjective position or reality." In relationships there is a conscious or unconscious belief that other people share (or if they don't, they should) the same reality as you. From an intellectual perspective this may sound ridiculous; however, it manifests in the simplest ways. If one person is upset about something, they often become more disturbed if their partner is not upset about the same thing or at least displays a high level of emotional concern and understanding.

More often than not, there is a general need for people to have other people agree with them in their opinion. We often assume (or at least wish) that other people like or don't like the food, movies, colors, clothes, ideas, or political views that we like. People often become frustrated when someone doesn't understand something in the same way they do. In short, I want or expect you to: think the way I think, feel the way I feel, see what I see, hear what I hear, know what I know, and experience what I experience.

In a relationship, a person might expect his or her partner to clean the house a certain way and, when it's not cleaned in this "correct" way, condemn and criticize that person for his or her unclean ways, habits, or character. They might get frustrated when one person doesn't understand a computer the way they do, then challenge the person's intelligence or ability

ties with comments like: "What's the matter with you? How come you can't understand this? It's easy." If there is disagreement, instead of listening and respecting differences, one or both will likely project inferiority onto the other. This might sound like: "You can't see that? What's wrong with you?" "You don't like the food? I thought it was great." "Was there something wrong with you since you didn't like

**"What's the matter with you?
How come you can't
understand this? It's easy."**

the party?" Messages like this imply some flaw in the other person's reality, which will likely be perceived as an attack and result in some type of internal or external conflict.

When messages like this are received by a person, the brain intercepts, assesses, and generally perceives this as threatening, thus responding with a correlating response. If we are feeling attacked, we are likely to respond with some manifestation of four basic stances: *fight, flight, freeze* or *submit*. Any one of these stances might be internalized or externalized. For example, one might argue with the other person (fight) or argue internally with oneself. You might leave the situation physically (flight) or retreat into your own mind and withdraw from the situation. Or you might surrender your different view to the other by agreeing

(submit) or say nothing to avoid further conflict. The freeze response is generally a temporary immobilization, followed by one of the other survival stances.

These are all normal and adaptive responses developed millions of years ago by the survival centers in our brains. To help you understand this internal process a little more, it would be helpful to introduce what the IMAGO model calls the "Old Brain/New Brain" concept.

Essentially, and in a very basic form, the brain is divided into two main parts called the "old brain" and "new brain." Each of these main parts has two components. The old brain

consists of the Reptilian Brain and the Mammalian Brain. The New Brain consists of the neo-cortex and the frontal lobe.

The Reptilian Brain is the oldest and most primitively developed part of the brain and includes the brain stem, which is essentially responsible for action responses. It is able to accept "danger or safe" responses from the Mammalian part and then acts accordingly. This part of the brain is not able to discern that a stimulus is "sometimes dangerous," and, since this part of the brain is survival oriented, it will likely respond with some form of the life-saving responses of fight, flight, freeze or submit.

The other part of the brain is slightly more developed and is referred to as the Mammalian Brain. This is the "feeling

Transforming Conflict

Continued from previous page

center" of the brain, which includes the limbic system, and is present in all mammals. This part of the brain intercepts stimuli and creates a feeling response, communicating either "safe" feelings or "dangerous" feelings to the Reptilian Brain, which then acts on the information communicated. If the feeling response is one of safety, the result will be that of staying relaxed and peaceful. However, if the feeling response is one of danger, the response will be that of survival. The primary directive of the old brain is to survive, as well as to experience, and to express full aliveness. The old brain cannot tell differences in time and therefore does not know the difference between something that happened in 1955 and a similar occurrence in 1995. If the occurrence happened in 1955 and a danger response was received, a similar occurrence will trigger a like response in 1995. This is what happens when we "overreact" to a situation.

The new brain, which includes the neo-cortex and frontal lobe, is present in the brains of advanced mammals and humans. This includes the abilities to think, verbally communicate, and rationalize, as well as store and interpret messages and symbols. The frontal lobe permits us to be aware of what we are doing, allowing us to "separate" from our self and analyze our own thoughts, feelings, body, and behaviors.

Given the information so far, the IMAGO model suggests that there are two very important components—what the model calls the Power Struggle—that facilitate conflict in any relationship. The model suggests that on a very deep level the mind, and potentially the species, has a memory of connection and an inherent need for reunification. Second, the human brain has developed in such a way as to make survival its prime directive.

This reconnection and survival dance is done with all people, but most importantly and intensely with our partners. When a partner or person does not agree with us, see the way we see, feel the way we feel, or want what we want, we are directly confronted with our separateness from that person. As fear or terror unconsciously

arises in this disconnection, there is a desperate attempt to reconnect. We often do this by attempting to change the other person's mind to match ours, therefore accomplishing the temporary task of reconnection. Unfortunately, this doesn't work very well because, if the realities are different, the other person will feel threatened and respond with a defensive posture. If one person is trying to convince another person that they are wrong, they are, in a sense, trying to *steal* the other person's reality away from them. The old brain, unaware of what is going on in the frontal lobe, perceives this as an attempt on

**The answer is simple:
Stop the Attack!**

its life and will react to save the individual. These are not conscious decisions, but rather unconscious survival instincts.

Most, if not all, conflicts arise as a result of the need for connection and the use of symbiotic beliefs to achieve it. There is an additional symbiotic belief that gets acted out in most relationships—WE ARE ONE AND I AM THE ONE. This irrational, yet pervasive, belief can be seen as a precursor to relationship, family, community, and international conflicts. Conflicts between individuals, religions, political parties, and nations seem to result, at least in part, from a belief system where a particular view is the only one, or at least the "best" one. In an attempt to be right (survive), we then argue, defend, riot, deceive, and in some form try to kill off the perceived enemy. At "worst," we try to kill them physically, or we try to kill them emotionally, behaviorally, or psychologically. To the old brain, which is concerned only with survival, all forms of attack are life threatening. There is no difference between an attack on the mind or an attack on the body.

The answer to resolving conflict might seem quite simple: Stop the attack! If there were no attack, there would be no need to defend, and no conflict would occur. Unfortunately, most of our attack is unconscious, resulting in unconscious defense and further attack. What we must learn to do is rise above the new battlefield to our new brain. When this is accomplished,

then and only then can the issues be resolved.

When we feel threatened and become aware of our defensiveness, we must execute what I call "Reactivity Override." We must override the impulse of the old brain by utilizing the new brain. When we are aware, or made aware, of our defensiveness, we, as human beings, have the ability to rise above and become aware of what we are doing. When a person in a relationship is becoming reactive, I encourage them to ask themselves: "Is my life in this moment in danger?" If not, the survival responses can be overridden, allowing the new brain to take over and complete the task.

Once the regaining of consciousness or new-brain functioning occurs, a process called *Intentional Dialog* can occur. *Intentional Dialog* is part of the IMAGO model, which, through a structured process, assists individuals with com-

munication and identifying underlying issues. The *Dialog* process also helps individuals to truly listen, understand, and subsequently empathize with a situation or position. This communication skill is the primary tool to accomplish resolution of conflict, as well as providing an overall essential tool in other healing dynamics.

The problems that individuals focus on in any relationship are rarely about what they seem to be about. Therefore, problems in relationships cannot be solved by addressing them on the level of effect. The underlying causes are based in the past and must be identified and resolved. When the underlying issues are resolved, the problems go away. In this context, it is helpful to remember that *all conflict is growth trying to happen*.

Part two of this series will be published in next month's issue of *OutSmart* and will focus on the *Intentional Dialog*.

Patrick J. Vachon is a Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW) and Advanced Clinical Practitioner (ACP) in private practice at New Counseling Center in Houston. He is a Certified IMAGO Relationship Therapist and Workshop Presenter in training. Mr. Vachon offers 20-hour intensive *Getting the Love You Want* workshops for lesbian and gay couples. His next Houston workshops will be July 28-30 and September 15-17. Patrick J. Vachon is available for lectures, seminars, and individual/couples therapy. For more information, call (713) 529-1913, voice mail #4.

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Living With A Life-Threatening Illness



HOW TO TAKE FINANCIAL CONTROL

Part II



by Julie LaRue, LUTCF

Last month (April, 1995), I discussed the 10 general aspects to consider when taking a pro-active approach to financial planning if you or someone you love is living with a life-threatening illness. Let's review these 10 aspects:

1. Pre-planning
2. Asset planning
3. Liability management
4. Cash flow management
5. Risk management—insurance
6. Tax planning
7. Investment planning
8. Estate planning
9. Career planning
10. Post-mortem planning.

The plan for the next few months is to review each aspect and highlight important topics, strategies and considerations. By the end, you'll have a better understanding of all the different financial options, choices, and possibilities available to those with life-

threatening illnesses.

To begin, let's discuss *pre-planning*, which consists of:

- ascertaining your life expectancy,
- assessing the potential costs of your specific condition,
- gathering information such as credit reports and your Personal Earnings and Benefit Estimate Statement (Form 7005) from the Social Security Administration,
- look at your age, marital/partner status, employment, employee or business owner, and any military service,
- reversing conventional financial planning, i.e., possibly utilizing credit life insurance, shorter duration investments and altering retirement strategies,
- liquidity and accessibility planning for your investments.

Ascertaining your life expectancy helps us to establish a time line from which to work. For example, if you tested negative for the

HIV virus six months ago but now test positive, your planning time line is generally longer than someone who tested positive eight to ten years ago. It is important to note that many strategies can be maximized by having more time to work.

Assessing projected costs of your specific condition means anticipating problems, setbacks, or additional complications which could increase expenses. This helps us plan better for sudden cost increases, or spikes, that are potentially associated with a particular illness.

Your credit report and Social Security Administration Personal Earnings and Benefit Estimate Statement assists us in identifying ways to maximize your credit and determine your Social Security benefits. Your credit report tells us the status of your credit. With good credit, unsecured credit lines and higher credit card limits are possible. With poor credit, we work to legally improve it as much as possible (more on this in next month's article). Your Social Security Administration Personal Earnings and Benefit Statement is an important report because it details on a year-by-year basis what earnings were reported for you. This is important because your Social Security disability benefit will be calculated from these reported earnings. Once we know that benefit amount, we can begin investigating resources for additional income if needed. Sometimes errors occur on this report. An earnings record can be corrected at any time up to three years and three months after the year in which the wages were paid or the self-employment income was derived. Therefore, individuals should check this report every three years. [Strategy hint: If you are self-employed, you may want to consider paying higher income taxes for several years which could translate into receiving higher Social Security disability benefits. This piece of tax planning takes some very careful work on the part of your financial advisor and CPA. I would not implement this strategy without professional advice.]

Overall planning can be established with information about your age, marital/partner status, employee or business owner, and military service. Your age is important in considering retirement investment options. If you are legally married, you may qualify for higher benefits under some government entitlement programs. You may, however, also be disqualified because of assets your spouse owns. Additionally, military service may entitle you to VA benefits. All of these factors help construct the most comprehensive plan for you.

Financial planning for an individual with a life-threatening illness often involves strategies which are the reverse of conventional financial planning recommendations. Conventional recommendations usually consider plans for a longer life expectancy with lower lifetime medical expenses. An example of traditional planning is that we generally do not recommend credit disability and life insurance because of the higher costs per thousand of coverage associated with these plans. Usually, owning one's own life and disability insurance is much cheaper and preferable. Someone with a life-threatening illness, however, may not be able to qualify for these policies. By reversing the traditional plan, acquiring credit disability and life insurance, although somewhat expensive, may be the only alternative.

With life-threatening illness financial planning, we would be very careful not to give up any policies or life insurance benefits because these may be irreplaceable. Life insurance has always been considered a valuable asset for people. For someone facing a life-threatening illness, a life insurance policy could be your biggest

asset next to health insurance. As more and more HIV+ people began trying to provide money for themselves, viatical companies came into existence. Viaticating your life insurance policy simply means selling your policy to a third party, generally within the last few years of your life, for 50% to 75% of the death benefit. Therefore, you could consider your life insurance as a lump sum disability plan. [Strategy hint: Accelerating the death benefit with the company that issued your life insurance policy may provide a better benefit than viaticating. This process has many different options to consider and all alternatives should be discussed with appropriate advisors.] Stay tuned for more on viatication in months to come. Retirement plans are also subject to a reversal of conventional recommendations. We may want to consider putting as much as legally possible into qualified retirement plans while you're still working. You can generally withdraw money from your retirement plan without the usual 10% early withdrawal penalty once on disability. This provides the greatest benefit when done early on.

Accessibility and liquidity of your investments is also a part of the pre-planning aspect. In the future, you may need to rely on your investments for supplemental income. Therefore, we need to review what assets you own, how they are owned (titling of assets), beneficiary designations, and how liquid or accessible these investments are. It may be necessary to realign assets for easier access in cases of emergency. We'll look at this area more when discussing cash flow management in future months. *Financial planning for individuals with a life-threatening illness can help you maintain your quality of life, have enough money, and keep as much of your stuff (assets) as possible for as long as possible.*

Next month I'll discuss the next phase of planning and provide you with more strategies. Have a good month!

Julie LaRue, LUTCF is a financial advisor with The Acacia Group. Her practice includes financial planning for people facing a life-threatening illness. She is a Registered Representative and Investment Advisory Associate with The Advisors Group, Inc., the registered broker-dealer and investment advisor of The Acacia Group. Information is general in nature. Be sure to consult an attorney for specific legal advice. Julie can be reached at 713/888-3500.



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by Connie Moore

TIMES CHANGE. PEOPLE CHANGE. We live our lives constantly adjusting to changing circumstances. Change can produce happiness, sadness, stress, or relaxation. Change can also contribute to the need for legal work.

A large portion of our legal practice at Moore & Hunt is devoted to personal and real estate document drafting. Very often our clients arrive for their first appointment fresh on the heels of some sort of life change, whether it be the start or finish of a relationship, the death of a loved one, or the purchase or sale of real estate. Others that we talk to have endured these kinds of changes without a thought to the effect on their legal situation. Life changes can and do trigger the need for signing or changing legal documents.

When life changes come along, don't be caught unprotected. Don't just sign documents and put them in a file cabinet and forget about them.

Finally, changing residences, particularly by moving to a new state, triggers the need for legal documents. Documents such as wills and powers of attorney may or may not be valid and enforceable in the new state. The best way to insure accurate and enforceable information in legal documents after a residency change is to see an attorney licensed in that state.

There are three general life changes where generating legal documents is a wise move. First is a change in family structure. Family changes occur when people start living together, get married, have children, dissolve their relationships, or lose a family member through death. Any of these family changes can and will affect the way that property distributions are made by law upon death. One of the ways to get around these mandatory terms is to sign legal documents altering those provisions.

Likewise, a change of property ownership can mandate the need for legal documents. Whether it's a new will, new deed work, releases of liens, or joint tenancy agreements, acquisition of real estate can inspire the need for legal documents.

O U T ▼ L A W

In addition to creating new documents, it is prudent to review existing documents and options after a change in conditions. Documents that provided protection when drafted can become obsolete under different circumstances. Consider the situation of Bill and Don (not their real names). They made a commitment to each other and decided to make it legal. They bought a house in both their names. They signed powers of attorney and wills to protect each other in the event of emergency or death. They hoped to live happily ever after. They didn't.

A few years after they got their legal papers done, Don became sick. He stopped working, and his Social Security disability didn't cover his monthly living expenses. He began taking cash advances from credit cards to make ends meet. He died soon afterward, leaving an estate with little cash, a large unsecured credit card debt, and half a house that was mortgage free because of credit-life insurance. Consequently, his creditors wanted to be paid by forcing a sale of the house to get the half interest owned by his estate.

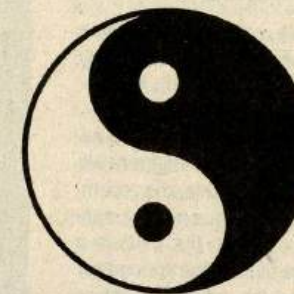
What happened here? Could this situation have been avoided? The answer is yes. Bill and Don were lulled into a false sense of security because they had signed the right documents. If they had re-evaluated their legal protection when new circumstances changed their lives, they could have avoided significant problems later.

Don't be caught unprotected. When life changes come along, ask your local professionals about any resulting legal significance. Don't just sign documents and put them in a file cabinet and forget about them. They might not provide the protection you expected if your life changes.

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. For more information regarding this article, call 713-522-4282.

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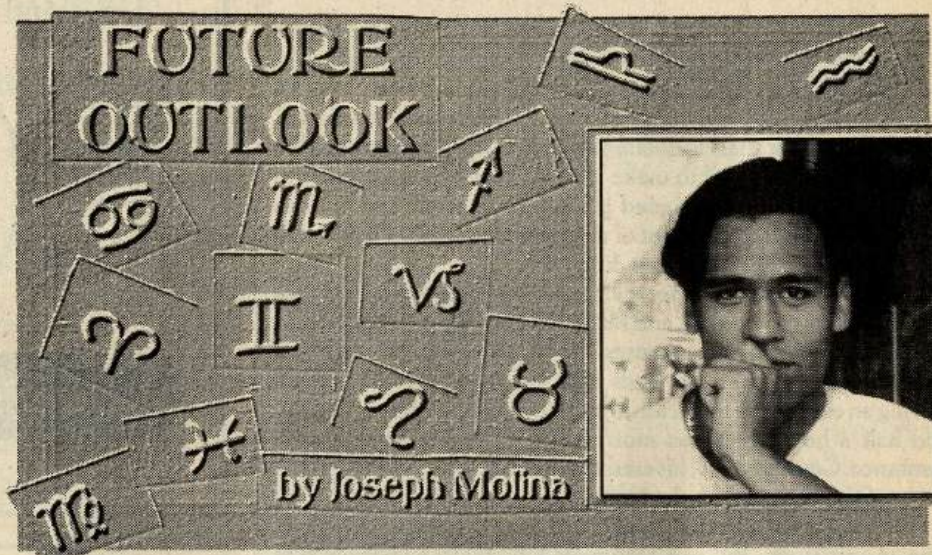
Within this age of time, our ego has become very inflated. Trying to become God (or already confident in the belief that man is God), Human-kind falls from its plateau.

The governmental offices will continue to experience defeat. Martyrs and freedom fighters will become more well-known. And for this, the governmental offices will be prepared, thus moving mankind away from defeat for a time. But there is a warning. These images are filled with the clouds of deception. Here is placed the adage "Question authority." Some will consider what is soon to take place to be unfair. Judgments and decisions by those in authority do not conform to everyone's comfort.

Like a roller coaster or bumpy hill, Mankind witnesses the transformation of Light. A thousand-fold blessings to each and every one of you. May these extremes integrate so that the world may find peace.

ARIES (3/21-4/19)

In the past few months Aries has been going through a very transformative period. You are becoming someone new. Be happy to know that the energy surrounding you is most beneficial. You're going to enjoy your home, your friends, and your loved ones. There will be a strong sense of happiness. For some, there is strong potential for strengthening weak emotional bonds. If you're married, the sex will be better and more comforting. For others, temptation will be strong. Again, if you're married and this vibration falls upon you, we'll see how true to your mate you are. Single people should get up and roar. Let the ram within you feel free! A potential partner (or at least a one-night stand) is within your vibration. Be careful not to become too attached, letting your emotions run away with you. Enjoy the experience: if it must stay, it will. But if it must go, then say goodbye.



For the creative ram in general, learn to calm that flame within and enjoy the peace of your home, your loved ones, and the life that you have chosen to live. The energy present is passionate and alive, joyfully empowering the essence of this sign.

TAURUS (4/20-5/20)

Decisions, decisions, decisions. Why is it always you who has to make all these decisions? Ahead of you is a joyous doorway that leads to the freedom of the fool. Knowing that change is coming might frighten or make Taureans feel slightly uneasy. Even though these changes could take up to six months to occur, you must be prepared. I ask you, how can you be prepared if you don't even know where you want to go? You're causing yourself much unneeded stress and it's blocking you. For you, the future is unknown—at least for now. I can see you really getting into your work and feeling good about it. Distracting yourself

with your career is the way you conveniently forget about the issues at hand. I don't suggest starting any relationships at this time, as if that would stop you. The universal blessing doesn't lend itself to relationships right now.

Pay attention to your dreams. Your lunar side is strong. Many messages and realizations will come to you. Many of these symbols will show you great truths about yourself and others. You will know inherently when it is time to move on. Let your dreams guide you, playing like a little child, to a new awareness of the self. Many bright blessings to you, my friend, along the blessed path that you follow.

GEMINI (5/21-6/20)

A much-needed rest should be had by Geminis. Maybe you should try a day at the beach, or out in the backyard worshipping the sun.

I see many of you getting that spring itch that just doesn't seem to go away. Every hot young

stud or foxy mama has your eyes plastered all over them. You're over feeling down, and you won't let anything make you feel inferior. It feels like a party, boys and girls! Single Geminis, rev your engines 'cause it's time to go! Something's on the horizon, and it's just sitting there waiting for you. On a different note, honesty is the best policy. Relationships started on sour notes will eventually develop an unconcealable odor. In life the God/dess gives us many mates, each with a special gift. You should never be afraid to let go of even the newly found, because tomorrow always brings with it new opportunities and gifts.

If married and happy, spend time together admiring the great outdoors. Play a game of volleyball. Paradise won't always stay the same. It wouldn't be natural if it did.

Enjoy and be alive. May the Goddess divinely bless you.

CANCER (6/21-7/22)

Cancer, although seemingly very empowered now, feels a push from the inside. Your attitude has become most cynical, and your bluntness is evidence of that. Maybe it's because you've been cooped up inside for too long, and now you want out. Try a little self-pampering. Bon bons? A day at the spa? A new outfit to strut your stuff in? Maybe you should just learn to lie around nude, and show the world who's emperor/empress that way.

This period's vibration is going to come and go as quickly as you turn your head. So party! I see you getting invited to various social functions. Or the fun is spontaneous—when your friends shout "Let's go!" you're the first one in the car. The key is self-control. Exercise it and enjoy yourself thoroughly. Since when have you been able to drink ten merry margaritas and then be able to talk about it in the morning?

Potentially, harmony in relationships glows a bright color of green. For some, love does not happen overnight. It takes at least two days. How

good was breakfast—really? How clean was the bathroom—really? Give yourself time to get to know someone new who enters your life. Give yourself time to examine how much you are willing to change. Remember that we don't always get exactly what we want. But then again, what did we leave out when we asked?

LEO (7/23-8/22)

Impatience will get you nowhere, and at this time you are filled with it. The things that are before you seem to be clouded. Future goals seem distant. Presently, you are creating repetitious hindrances upon your life. Know that to make things come to you more quickly, you must focus on the time that you are in NOW. Let persistence and determination fill you as you move forward orderly.

Practically, money affairs seem to be at a standstill. This is causing you to feel quite nervous. There could be a few days of restless sleep. You'll feel as though you just closed your eyes and, poof!, it's suddenly eight hours later. Perhaps you're creating more worry than is needed, but right now loans or investments would not be wise.

I also see you coming to the rescue, Wonder Woman, of a friend in need. Know that all you can do is give them comfort, love, and strength from the core of your inner being.

Lessons, Leo—that's what life's about. Lessons. Peace.

VIRGO (8/23-9/22)

Now, now, now, Oh Pure One! Keep sweet control over feeling overwhelmed. You're moving into a temporary cycle. Yes, there's hope! For all you single kids out there, whatever you do, don't go falling in love with someone who's not only not in love with you, but who also never wanted to fall in love in the first place! For Virgo in general, stop stressing! It's tea time, so sit back and relax and enjoy it while you can. Everything around you will

seem to go into a temporary forward motion. Yes! A vacation or a few extra days off might very well be in order.

If you're married, it seems as though there has been some tension. You're entering into a temporary time of relief. Even though the rapids are still there, for a moment, enjoy smooth sailing.

Once again, take care in wanting things so much. The ego will always overwhelm. But if you've obtained that great Virgo talent for grounding, then you'll be in control. Otherwise, your pride in riches and success will lead you to apathy and a time of boredom.

It would be wise with this very karmic vibration to do a great deal of inner contemplation. Be careful of all choices made, and don't base decisions on someone else's life. That's a good way to lose track of yourself.

May the infinite protection of the Angels be with you.

LIBRA (9/23-10/23)

Have you noticed that your timing over the course of the last few months hasn't been so great? Cheer up, Libra—once again, balance prevails. You're finally ready to take control and to become the one in charge. You're finally over it. For some, this could manifest as letting go of an old love, finally accepting it within. For others, it could be the present love. Now at last you are back on top of the mountain and, boy, does it feel good! Money situations seem to become much more secure, even if only in your attitude about your finances.

You're going to be very crude, very blunt. You may hear yourself saying things like, "If I feel like telling you how it is, I'm gonna!" Now is an excellent time to boost your status on the corporate ladder or expand your business. Have faith in yourself, and the whole world will give it back.



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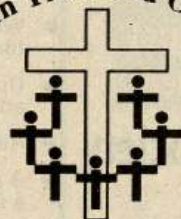
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Future Outlook

Continued from previous page

This is definitely a time of empowerment for Libra. As you spin the wheel, let it turn upward while you ride with glee. Enjoy the radiance for a change. Love and light.

SCORPIO (10-/24-11/21)

Now is a time for deep inner contemplation, time to toy with ideas about love and money. Direction is what you need now. This energy causes you to question the validity of your relationship, thus causing you to hesitate in accepting matters of the heart.

Please be sure not to doubt yourself. If you question yourself too much, you won't be able to find solid direction. Feel strong about your womanhood and bring it into balance with your manhood. Let the Goddess within be strong, so that your inner strength will shine for all to see.

For a few days the wine of life will overflow and could fill your cup. You'll have an urge to have a few drinks with the boys. Maybe you're avoiding your present emotions, trying to push them away till another day. Obviously, these issues will not resolve themselves very quickly. This anxiety is going to be present for a little longer than a month, so recognize what you have the power to change. Then change it. If change is not within your grasp, stop worrying. Within the darkness there is light, and within the light there is darkness. This creates perfect balance.

May your Shiva and Parvati sing free.

SAGITTARIUS (11/22-12/21)

In a wind of standstill and an all-encompassing fog, movement does occur. Struggling and fighting against life has caused you to become imprisoned by indecision. And for a time, it has led you nowhere. As the energy shifts, you are given

the opportunity to let movement occur. The threat will pass you by. No more feeling nervous or overwhelmed. No more letting others take advantage of you. The only thing that holds you back is indecision.

The questions present themselves: Should I move? Where else can I work and make good money? When will I get a raise? How about a



vacation? As these questions are answered, charity will be learned, and your courage will be revived. Onward you go.

Your major caution is to be careful of adding more irons to the fire than you can handle. You're almost to the limit, and it's not good to exceed that limit.

CAPRICORN (12/22-1/19)

Learning to enjoy the radiance of life can sometimes be difficult, and this is going to be one of those difficult times. Nothing is going to seem to be right. You can't sign your name, open a can of Coke or start your car. You're going to think about moving, but maybe you should just consider repainting—it could be just a shade off.

Capricorn, you're in a mood, and everyone around you is going to know it. I suggest you spend some time alone. You've been running away from something in your life, and now look what it's done to you. If you wouldn't go kicking and screaming, maybe life would carry you more easily. It's your sanity.

At the beginning of June, great realizations will occur, or perhaps you'll fall into that routine you've been resisting. This will give your life a sense of

renewal, as well as shock. But then, how would you know it? The questions you ask will soon be answered, and your new life will unfold before you.

How should you deal with all this esoteric wisdom? Truthfully, I don't know. The answers will be unique for each of you and will come at different times. When you are ready, there it will be. Blessed be.

AQUARIUS (1/20-2/18)

Well, well, well, Aquarius; I say these cards are looking fine and dandy. Put on that new red cap and let's go! What great potential! Do you want a new job, or would you rather stay put and push for a raise? Are you looking for romance? A new home? May 15 should start with a boost that should guide you through the rest of the month.

Career potential abounds. If you want a new job, go for it. Need more money? Call out to it. The world is at your feet. Let the Angels guide your way. People in business for themselves should notice a strong increase in cash flow. Up the corporate hill you go.

On a different level, some Aquarians will experience a revived interest in spiritual matters and begin a path of learning. I see you confronting your fears and learning what it means to really work for something. By releasing the imbalance and shaping it into an even form, then Aquarius should be quite at peace.

Let there be beauty and strength, power and compassion, and honor and humility within you.

DISCES (2/19-3/20)

Pisces, your head has been in the clouds and your energy's become very dissipated. Like every child, we all like to play, to live in fantasy and in daydreams. Oh, what if? is the question. And the daydreams commence from there.

The key is knowing how long to dream. When we go beyond the limit, it leads to irresponsibility.

Here is the beginning of a new cycle which will lead to a better balance between your work and your home. It's not something that you will have much say in. You're coming out of a deep Cinderella-like sleep, and activity will commence in your life again.

I see you having an urge to get in touch with old friends and could spend an evening going through old pictures and reminiscing. If you're single, an admirer from afar could make himself or herself known. A romance could begin.

So nice is the energy—light and free. Enjoy and celebrate, fill your body with glee.

Joseph Molina is a practicing psychic and has studied the sacred sciences for over 14 years. Specializing in Tarot, combined with clairvoyant insights for personal growth, Joseph also teaches and guides students in their development. He is available for private consultation. For information, call (713) 524-4411.

Michael Wilson

Continued from page 51

Bogart, Robert Woodrow," says Joseph Haj, "and this has been every bit as positive. Michael has a really, really strong visual sense and a great ability to facilitate actors. That's quite a combination in somebody who's as young as he is. The sky's the limit. I really think he's going to do great, great things in his career."

Wilson will, if he hasn't already. He's received honors from the foundations of both Princess Grace and Edward Albee. Sure, he was pleased. But, like with any artist, there's an inner thunder that rumbles more consistently than any little shower of praise or awards.

"Nothing would thrill me more than this play—through this production here at the Alley—help break down more walls," says Michael Wilson between sips of his bellini. "To make that path of empowerment... and you say 'empowerment' and people think that you're talking about militant, 60s kinda revolutionary guerilla warfare tactics or something."

He shakes his head.

"Empowerment is what it is: people feeling empowered to be who they are and to be proud, able and contributing individuals in society, in a community. It's not about wanting to take over turf that belongs to someone else. Yes, the fact that Annise Parker, if she'd got on the city council, that would mean one less seat for, say, the white male majority or something, but..."

But so fucking what?

"So fucking what, exactly! It is time that our governing boards be more reflective of their communities, whether they're gay, lesbian, black, Asian, Hispanic, whatever they are."

The passionate parts of Wilson are, in no particular order, "sex, theater, food, life, and people. All of the above." But undoubtedly it was the conservative part of him that kept him from coming out to his parents for so many years.

"I'd been a homosexual to all my friends here and in Cambridge," he recalls wistfully. "I remember my parents came and saw this production of Christmas Carol I had directed, and I had a really miserable visit with them, because I was going through problems with my [former] lover and I couldn't talk to them about any of it. And we were a very close family growing up. So I knew then that I was either going to come clean and tell them I'm gay and they continue to be involved in my life, or I was going to grow more distant from them and see them occasionally on holidays

or the obligatory times."

Wilson was to go home that Christmas, but before he could go, he penned The Letter. He informed his parents of his homosexuality and that he would understand if they didn't want him at home that Christmas. He mailed the letter to his father who called him immediately.

"There was this warm tone in his voice. I knew he wasn't going to be hateful," Wilson remembers. "But what I didn't expect was him crying over the phone. He said, first of all, he couldn't believe I'd been carrying this around all this time and, second, 'I can't believe you would think we wouldn't want you to come home.'"

The director, cast as an actor in a play with a happy ending.

Well, sort of.

"Actually, my mom had known it for awhile, as mothers do, and her whole thing was that she wished I would have never told her. That was one of her opening lines, *Why did you have to tell us?*"

"My father's whole thing was my health. He was so worried about AIDS. He doesn't understand, first of all, how two men have sex!"

Wilson laughs, and, as he glances from the table, shaking his head over the fun that kind of conversation would bring, he sees someone coming in the restaurant door who catches his eye. A tall, elegant, distinguished man with gray hair and humbling poise waves to Wilson, who returns the gesture before quickly finishing his thought.

"But since then, they've become really terrific about it. They're great with Jeff. My grandparents and aunts and uncles don't know. I haven't told them out of respect for my parents. They really don't want to deal with that, so there's still a bit of a rift there, but everyone accepts it. It's like, 'Okay, these are what my terms are, these are your terms. We can't agree here, so let's agree not to agree.'"

The tall man comes closer to the table and Wilson stands. Though at a severe height deficit, Wilson effortlessly equals the visitor's grace and poise as the two men shake hands.

"Hi, Bob, how are you?" Wilson asks. They begin talking about an upcoming dinner in this man's honor, the man being visionary artist Robert Wilson.

Houston slobbers over this guy like they do Michael. And while you could make some brief hypothesis on the connection between immense talent and being christened Wilson, just remember the Heart sisters and watch your theory go up in flames. No, these guys are in an elite league of their own. The only thing you're left with is that Michael runs in some pretty shiny circles if he's first-name pals with internationally lauded Robert, and

they're talking about their plans for the night of the honorary bash.

The two men firm up plans, bid their goodbyes, and Wilson seats himself back down at the table, poise receding, the graceful countenance on his face fading away, replaced by an almost *Alice In Wonderland* wonderment.

"He's my idol," Wilson blurts out after a pause. "I think he's absolutely brilliant. I've learned more from him about making theater than anyone. And he's really a big-hearted man. I met him in '88 and we've been really good friends since then. He came and saw this twice in the first six performances."

His guard seems down again. Not like when his defenses are lowered talking about family or politics, but in a different way. Like every artist, he needs validation. And when the validation comes from one of the most lauded artists of our time who comes to see your play twice, well, you're not doing too fucking bad.

"It was great," he swoons.

And Wilson is not a man who swoons often. ▼

Steven Foster is a freelance writer and a frequent contributor to OutSmart magazine.

There's Strength in Comedy.



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WHAT A WORLD...WHAT A WORLD...

A very, very hard rain woke me this morning. For some reason—perhaps the grayness, perhaps the wind—it looked cold. And I woke craving potato salad. But not just any potato salad: I wanted Baba Yega's potato salad in the first dining room beside the fireplace, please.



BY NANCY FORD

For those of you who just got off the bus from Decker, Baba Yega's had long been a landmark Houston "family" restaurant. Way more than just a popular eatery, Baba's was a place where hungry inner-inner loopers gathered to make and break promises, begin and end relationships, spawn ideas, spew ideals, tell lies, mold philosophies, raise funds, cut deals, challenge politics and change lives. A veritable microcosm of society it was, but with a wine list.

Baba's was, by its very name, a magical place. I read them on the back of the menu a hundred times while waiting for service, but now I don't remember the details of the legend of Baba Yega. Wasn't she a Scandinavian witch who cast spells on people and turned them into carrot sticks, dill spears and radishes?

Regardless of lore, Baba's truly was magical. I lost and found a diamond necklace at Baba's. That's magical. Fell in love over a shared plate of escargot. That's magical. Never was a bull's eye for any of the birds that lived in the trees over the patio. That's especially magical, considering I've been Target Zero for every bird with gastrointestinal problems in town ever since, ironically, I wrote that column about a bird-dung apparition of the Virgin Mary. Ironic and magical.

Perhaps it's appeal was the continuity of it all. I moved to Houston 14 years ago, and in that time Baba's was always there, for celebration and contemplation, business and pleasure, first dates and wakes. Each spring, my accountant/compatriot and I always met on the patio at Baba's at tax time. It was comforting, somehow, being embraced by the familiarity of a Fantasy on Wheat while venturing into the Land of Lost Receipts.

This is not an announcement of the re-opening of my favorite restaurant. This is not a promotional courtesy for a fund-raiser. This is not a news story—I'm not even completely sure what started the fire. Did I hear something about it being electrical? I don't know. All I know

is that going to Baba's was a lot like going home for me, and now it's gone, leaving me to my own kitchen devices.

I miss the dollop of potato salad. I miss the pickle. I miss the chips that lose their crispness in the humidity on the patio. I miss the mimosas on the weekend. I

miss the mushroom burgers. I miss my grandmother.

My grandmother's name was Baba. Don't go making any cracks about my grandmother being a Scandinavian witch—I'd hate to have to hurt you.

Baba wasn't her real name. Her real name was Susan Myrtle, but everyone called her Myrt. This was during the Depression when very few people enjoyed the luxury of using their first names. The "Baba" nickname started after I was born. The first relatively drool-free syllables I uttered were *ba-ba*. My grandmother happened to be the only other person in the room at the time, and everyone surmised from this process of elimination that I was beckoning her. From that day forward, my grandmother became Baba to all her grandchildren and grandchildren-wanna-be's. On hindsight, I was probably just asking for a beer.

It's been almost ten years now since she died. We never discussed it, but I think she knew I am a lesbian. We did discuss the difference between right and wrong, often as I watched her working in the kitchen, often making potato salad. She even more often would tell me that there was at least a little bit of good in everybody, and that it wasn't our job to judge people. That was God's job. And she thought Liberace was very talented. From this I surmise that, as long as I was happy and tried to make bigger that little bit of good that was inside of me, my being a lesbian would have been okay with her. And if someday I learned to play the piano, all the better.

If I'd had the opportunity, I would have come out to Baba on the patio at Baba's. When it reopens, maybe I will.

Carpe diem. Carpe potato salad.

Nancy Ford is a Houston-based comedian and frequent contributor to the gay and lesbian press. She performs each Thursday, 8:30 pm, at Ms. B's in Plaza 9200, 9200 Buffalo Speedway. Call 666-3464 for info.

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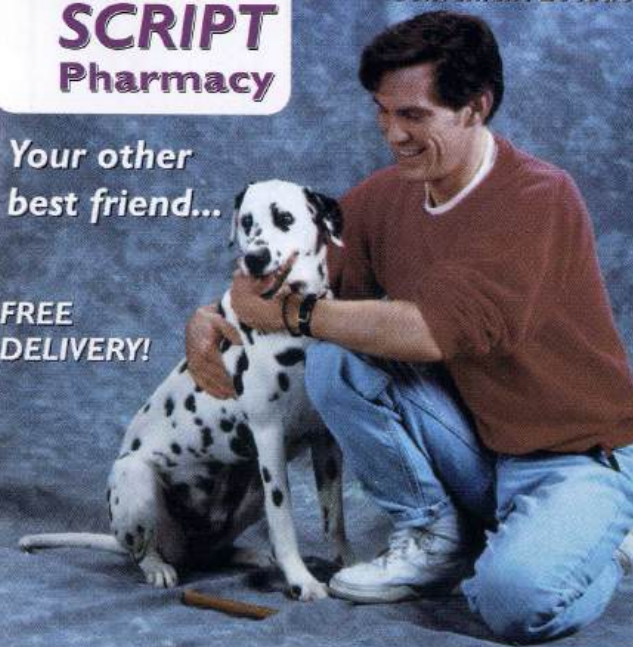
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12th International AIDS Candlelight Memorial and Mobilization

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Sunday, May 21 • 7 pm
City Hall Reflection Pool

For information call (713) 521-9862.



The Pet Patrol is a non-profit organization whose goal is to provide free veterinary care, spaying and neutering, food and home care for the pets of our friends living with AIDS. We currently provide services to more than 650 cats, dogs, birds, fish and even a pot-bellied pig.

Our goal is to keep the AIDS patient with their pet as long as possible and to provide as much care and attention for the pet as we can. Having AIDS is a time of confusion, and many people find themselves alone with no one to help them take care of their pets.

That's where The Pet Patrol comes in. We need your help to continue.

Annual Fund-raiser

VIP Reception

Silent Auction

Celebrity Auction

The Pet Patrol's 6th Annual Fund-raiser has been scheduled for Wednesday, June 14, at the Black Labrador Pub at 4100 Montrose. The event will begin at 5pm and end at 8pm. The Silent & Celebrity Auction will conclude about 7:15pm. "Happy hour" prices and "lite" buffet. "Admission" is pet food or pet supplies. Dress: cool and casual...it's an outside affair!

The VIP Reception to honor all of our hosts & underwriters will be held on Friday, June 9, at 2911 Helena (off the 100 block of Westheimer). The reception & dinner buffet will be from 7:30pm till 10:30pm. Presentation of appreciation awards will be at 9pm. Dress is casual. Open bar & plenty of food—come hungry & thirsty!

We are in the process of obtaining auction items for the event. If you know anyone we can contact concerning an item for the auction, please call us to leave their name, address & phone number—we will make the contact and send them a request letter. Some of the best items are dinners at restaurants, gift items, hotel or beach-house weekends, hair styling certificates, facials, clothes, jewelry, etc.

The following celebrities have sent us items & photos for our auction: Elizabeth Taylor, Dolly Parton, Reba McEntire, Perry Como, Antonio Sabato Jr., Brendan Fraser, Liza Minnelli, Ashford & Simpson, Shelley Winters, Ann-Margret, Barbara Bush & Millie, Nicolas Cage, Estelle Getty, Patrick Swayze, Christina Applegate, Carol Burnett, Bette Midler, Gladys Knight, Teresa Brewer, Shirley Bassey, Loni Anderson, Joan Baez, Wynonna Judd, Debbie Reynolds...

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