

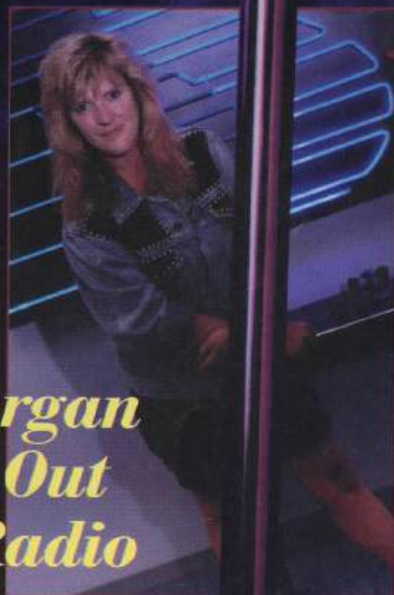
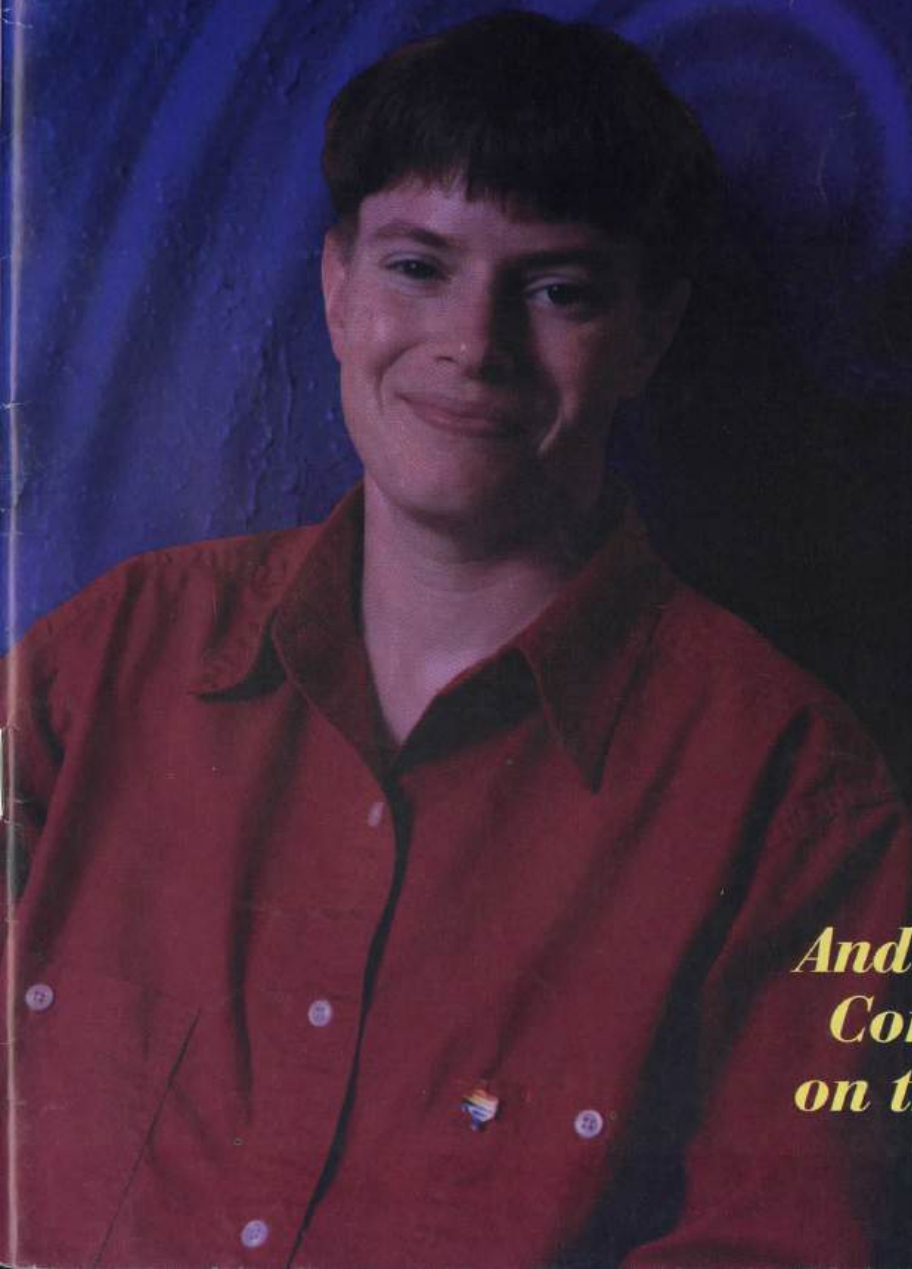
Out▼Smart

HOUSTON'S GAY & LESBIAN MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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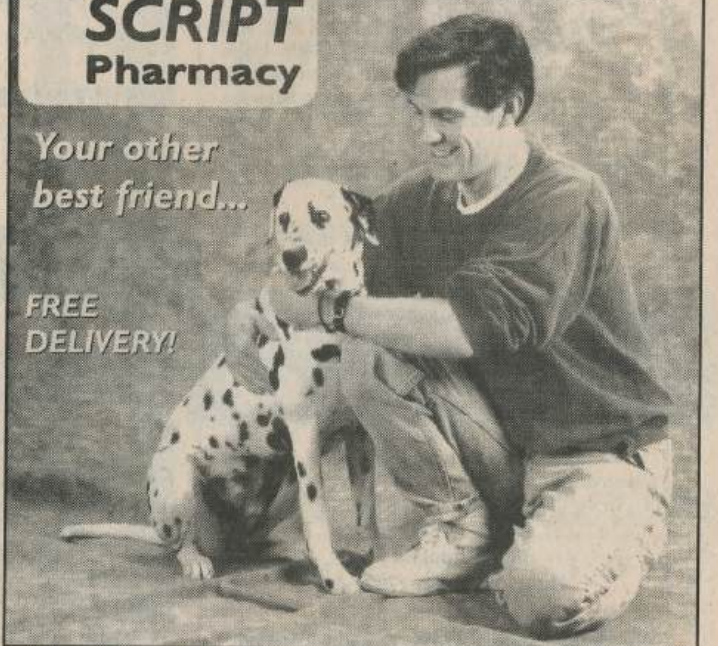
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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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

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OutSmart

HOUSTON'S GAY & LESBIAN MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Volume 2, Issue 8 September 15-October 14, 1995

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Parenting—it's not just for hets anymore. Steven Foster explores this often misunderstood faction of the gay and lesbian community.
- AVERAGE APATHETIC LESBIAN COMES OUT AND GOES POLITICAL** 38
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ANDI MORGAN PUTS THE OUT IN OUTLAW RADIO** 46
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- SUZANNE WESTENHOEFER: PLAYING THE ROLE OF A MODEL ROLE MODEL** 50
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ON THE COVER: Candace Gingrich and Andi Morgan (inset). Photos by Gabriel T. Photography. Designed by Chris Huffman.

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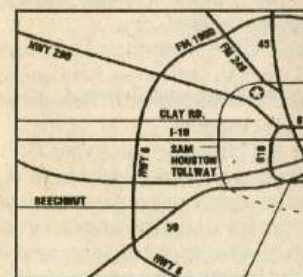
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From the Grand Slam Department

Although I support gay-owned businesses and use their services as often as I can, I would like to make a point about quality of service. Some gay businesses take their steady gay clientele for granted and forget that they are a business and are here to serve their customers. I would like to encourage anyone to not support gay businesses that give inferior service, because not only is it unfair to you, but it reflects badly on the gay community as a whole.

Case in point is Charlie's Coffee Shop. I have never in my life received good food or service there, and my last visit was so bad that it made me decide to never return and to tell as many people as possible.

...[B]eing a waitress myself, I am more than understanding about mistakes. But at my last visit, I ordered pancakes, and it took three trips and over an hour to get them right. And I don't mean they were sent back for minor imperfections. They sent me the wrong food twice.... The person in charge at Charlie's was not only adamant I should pay for the food—even though it was more than an hour late and I hadn't eaten it yet—but was extremely rude.

From what I can gather, this is not an uncommon experience at Charlie's. So why do we keep supporting this business? I want a gay-owned diner that I can be proud to take my friends to and be able to show it as a good example of how gay businesses can be of quality and are successful. Therefore, I encourage you to boycott Charlie's until they get their act together, and frequent restaurants that haven't forgotten what quality service is like.

—Cheryl M. Price
Houston TX

From the Grande Slam Department

The following letter was sent by Francisco Sanchez Jr. to Mr. Eduardo Trevino, proprietor of La Mexicana Restaurant:



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.

Dear Mr. Trevino:

I recently received a call from HGLPC [Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus] President Terri Richardson regarding a recent incident of discrimination at La Mexicana Restaurant. Specifically, an instance several weeks ago where a lesbian couple was ejected from your restaurant for showing affection that you have described as acceptable by heterosexual couples. Ms. Richardson relayed to me concerns from within the gay and lesbian community that a boycott of your restaurant might be misconstrued as an inappropriate or selective effort to target a Hispanic business. After understanding the facts of the matter, I assured Ms. Richardson that I was supportive of the community's plans to boycott your establishment and I remain confident that the HGLPC, Hispanic organizations, and individuals alike should exercise their economic influence to promote non-discriminatory

commerce practices.

I have always strongly believed that the economic empowerment of a community comes from within itself. Minority communities empower themselves by spending their money at minority businesses. Similarly, businesses have a social responsibility to be involved in the community they serve. Not only is it a character of good business, but it is also good for business. In that respect, I take great care to spend my money at businesses that demonstrate a fair sense of community responsibility.

La Mexicana is located in the heart of Montrose and is frequented by its diverse array of residents. In my experiences dining at your restaurant, I have both traditional and non-traditional families alike enjoying your fine food. It is this atmosphere that has made me a repeat customer. However much I pride myself in supporting historically underutilized businesses, I will not tolerate, condone, or perpetuate discriminatory policies with my personal income. Until this matter is fairly resolved, I will not dine at La Mexicana Restaurant and stand firm in my support of the gay and lesbian community's efforts to make La Mexicana Restaurant accountable for its discrimination of gay and lesbian families. I will urge others, straight or gay, Hispanic or not, to do the same.

I hope that you will reconsider your position and reassess the economic impact of the gay and lesbian community on your business so that I can again dine at your restaurant. There is also an effort under way to create a Discrimination-Free Zone in the Montrose area. I ask you to join this effort as well. I am available to discuss this matter at your convenience.

—Francisco Sanchez Jr.
Member, Harris County Democratic
Executive Committee Houston, TX

Lynn Lavner, Spectrum, and Money

Regarding the letter from Lynn Lavner and Spectrum 95... Number 1: Spectrum is a part of Town Meeting, Inc., a nonprofit 501(c)(6) corporation on file with the IRS and all pertinent government agencies, federal and state. Since Ms. Lavner is so hot after the "Truth," it would seem that she should and would have done some further checking and realized that Spectrum was an event put on by the nonprofit corporation and not a business in itself.

Number 2: Other performers, DV8, Susie K. and Sons & Lovers, to name a few, have agreed to a payment plan and have asked to be included in Spectrum 96 if it happens.

Number 3: If Ms. Lavner was so hot after the truth, she should have mentioned the fact that she sold Mr. Alan Bourgeois a bill of goods by assuring him that her name and her reputation in Houston would certainly sell enough tickets to cover her \$1,500 fee, the highest, by the way, agreed to for any performer. It obviously did not. In polling the audience that was present that night, there were more people present to see the local and state performers than to see Ms. Lavner. No criticism intended, since Ms. Lavner is a talented performer in her own right, but she's obviously a lot better

known in New York than she is in Houston. If I were her, I'd be a little embarrassed that the assurances that she gave to Alan were not exactly true. But that's only advertising and good salesmanship.

Number 4: If Ms. Lavner wants to know where part of the sponsorship from American Airlines went, tell her to check her ticket stub and that of her spouse (which, by the way, Spectrum agreed to get American to provide, and certainly they were under no obligation to do so for a spouse).

Number 5: The reason Ms. Lavner was told that everyone would be hurt and no one would get paid is that if Town Meeting ties up all its funds in legal battles, there wouldn't be any money to make payments to anyone, so everyone gets hurt. That's not a threat, that's just a fact. Granted that Alan Bourgeois is not a legal genius when it comes to drafting a letter, he has agreed that anyone who wants to look at the letter sent to Ms. Lavner (or any other of the letters sent to the other performers) can come by the office and do so.

Number 6: Don't hide behind the lesbian/gay rights issue on this. You are not representing all of us, thank you.

Number 7: Check the mail and see if you got a certified check. If you did and cashed it, the law says that you have agreed to a payment plan.

Number 8: We're over all the points in your letter that the previous seven points in the letter addresses.

We think you are a wonderful performer: we ain't too sure that applies to you as a person. It is obvious that you are more interested in the almighty dollar than you are about making a positive impression in the gay community. Hopefully, you will get every penny that is coming to you and so will everyone else involved in Spectrum 95, including some of the board members who lost over \$20,000 up front on this issue. If you are so afraid that Alan has bilked you out of your money, let me assure you that the only funds he received in connection with this were just to pay rent, and that isn't much considering he did this on a full-time basis. He even gave up his car so Spectrum could happen.

In closing, we'd like to say that we think it's sad to see fighting like this occur within the gay community. We're not by any means saying Alan did everything just right and that he didn't make mistakes, but we are saying that we think he's interested in making good on any funds owed to Lynn Lavner. She's obviously only interested in those funds. Pity!

—Clay Howell and Bill Lambright
Houston, TX

Money, Lynn Lavner, and Spectrum

Lynn Lavner is out to get more than just money. She is obviously out to get revenge. Her ranting and ravings about Spectrum 95 in the local press is jeopardizing every effort of Town Meeting, Inc. to pay off its debts. Hopefully, most readers will brush her off and ask, "What the hell is a Lynn Lavner anyway?" and instead focus on helping to ensure the success of the future annual Spectrum Expos.

Virtually all debts have been renegotiated and have a new payment plans in place. There are some who believe in Spectrum strongly enough to

have made personal loans to help pay off some of the debts.

The debts to myself is one of the largest that Town Meeting owes, and I can tell you that while the whole of Spectrum 95 was a financial loss, the business expo was a rousing success, especially for a first-time expo. The first year is always a learning experience, so it amazes me why some people have become obsessed with the negatives here. The negatives are obvious to everyone, most notably the board of directors. The basis of next year's expo is the positives, and all letters and comments should be directed to new ideas and participation.

Alan Bourgeois traveled to other cities while Spectrum was being planned, visiting other gay business expos, some of which were also in their first year. He noted a lot of their mistakes. The most notable was lack of attendance. The board agreed with his suggestion to expand Spectrum to include other draws such as a concert with a major star.

The end result was a very successful business expo, which is a surprise in its own right for Houston. I myself had a business booth and spoke with three or four times more people than I expected to. As president of the Houston Outdoor Group, having a booth there netted over 300 written requests for membership information out of the hundreds who stopped by our booth. And a vast majority of booths echo these results.

Spectrum's successes resulted in some businesses immediately signing up for Spectrum 96. It also resulted in new participants who were previously skeptical, but now want in.

It is imperative that Spectrum 96 move forward with a positive approach based on a format tailored to match the successes of Spectrum 95. The board and sponsors are well aware of any problems and their causes. Setting a time and place now is foremost in importance. Then as sponsors and participants sign on, the monies received will in turn be used to simultaneously help pay for the past debts and a scaled-down budget for next year.

We who are owed monies do not need Lynn Lavner casting doubt in people's minds with her

artics. If she thinks she has the support of those of us who are owed money, she needs to know that with friends like her, who needs enemies.

—D.J. Decker
Houston, TX

PUBLISHER'S NOTE:

Tired of hearing about Spectrum 95? We are. So enough already. OutSmart welcomes your comments; however, if there's a letter about Spectrum 95 that you feel a need to write, please send it elsewhere. Thank you.

To Dallas With Love

Brazos River Bottom, Leather by Boots, Mr. Bobby Lowe, and Ripcord sponsored "To Dallas With Love," a fundraiser for Dallas AIDS Food Pantry. Their contributions in supporting Houston's entertainers—Regina Dane, Houston City Limits, Shelby St. John, Jan Lee, Andrew Flores, John Benevides, Mark Press, Don Woods, David Haynes as ASL interpreter, and Don Dowden as co-emcee—allowed the "Best of Houston" cast to show our sister city what occurs weekly in Houston. Each performer was on beat, in style, and shined like a star. Their efforts raised \$1,221.50 in cash, 5,300 pounds of food (donated by Mr. International Fantasy '95 Mr. J. D. Buchert) for a total dollar value of \$3,921.50.

Thanks to the Dallas Eagle and staff for a great bar in which to perform this event, as well as to the Dallas community for your warm hospitality, to Colt 45's, Leslie Espinoza, Byron Hammonds, my neighbor Jim G., Shades of Grey Leather, for your donations, and thanks for media coverage to OutSmart magazine, Houston Voice, Dallas Voice, and This Week in Texas.

From myself, Don Dowden and Houston's cast, "Thank you, Dallas and sponsors."

—Don Gill
Houston, TX

On June 17, for the Mr. Venture-N contest, \$70 was raised for L.V.L.P.W.A. Holiday Fund, and \$130 for the Parade Committee. Thanks to entertainers Shelby St. John, Mark Press, and Andrew Flores.

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- AND
- International Gay Square Dance Month

Letters to the Editor

Continued from previous page

On July 9 at the 611 Pub, \$200 was raised for L.V.L.P.W.A. Holiday Fund and Gay and Lesbian Switchboard. Thanks to performers Shelby St. John, Andrew Flores, Regina Dane, Mark Press, Catia Lee Love, Dakota, Queen Olympus XX, John Benevides, Don Woods, and Don Dowden.

On July 16, Christmas in July Carnival was held at the Brazos River Bottom. The total for the whole day's event alone with the entertainment (directed by Regina Dane and Shelby St. John) raised \$1,256.25 for the L.V.L.P.W.A. Holiday Fund. Special thanks to co-director Lloyd Thomas, Dan Jacobson, Tim Jaye, Mike Pardon, and Don

Dowden for assisting me and Lady Victoria Lust in keeping alive the dream of the late Mr. Chris Severson. Also thanks to Soiree Aubergine for the donation of food.

Still with Christmas in July in mind, many of our local businesses sold "Holiday Thought" for \$1 each to display in their businesses. A total of \$1,189 was raised in this portion of this celebration. The Brazos River Bottom sold the most for first place. For second was a tie with 611 Pub and Ripcord. Rounding out the top sales was the Toy Box and the Out Post.

For all with the L.V.L.P.W.A. Holiday Fund, we thank you for raising a total of \$2,445.25 for Christmas in July.

—Don Gill
Houston, TX

Bless Those Damn Republicans

Some people are saying, "those damn Republicans are at it again..." And added to these political opinions are vicious criticisms about the Log Cabin Republicans (LCR). These critics equate the LCR with attitudes and opinions held by the Conservative Fundamentalist Right and ask, "How can you be part of an organization like the Republican Party that is constantly trying to take away your rights?"

Why? It's a growing organization that is working for human rights in a party that has become dominated by warped homophobic and racist "religious" fanatics. The Conservative Wrong has infiltrated the Republican Party platform and has equated itself with the Republican name.

As a nonpartisan voter, I say, "Thank God for the Log Cabin Republicans!!" They are the ones who are in the "front-lines" of war. They are taking criticism from their own party by outing themselves and putting a face to the reality of lesbians and gays everywhere. They're doing it for all of us and therefore deserve our support.

We need lesbians and gay people in ALL political parties just like we have lesbian and gay people in every part of our world.

—Fred Walters Jr.
Houston, TX

Honey, stop by the store and pick up a quart of milk, a dozen eggs, and an OutSmart...

A quick note to thank you for your support of our organization. It is encouraging us to work even harder. I picked up a copy of OutSmart at Kroger's just now and was absolutely thrilled with your generosity of time and space.

Thanks again!

—David N. Morales
Anti-Homophobia Alliance (AHA)
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OutSmart Calendar

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COMMUNITY EVENTS AND MEETINGS

SEPTEMBER

15 LATINA SPEAKOUT to celebrate Dieciseis de Septiembre, 5:30-8 pm, Helena's Bar & Grill, 1117 Missouri, 713/528-6798.

PRIDE COMMITTEE TASK FORCE, meeting to discuss how to increase the participation of the physically challenged within the community, 4 pm, Montrose Clinic, 215 Westheimer, 713/869-0982.

LESBIANS IN BUSINESS, topic: "Psychodynamics of Women in Leadership" by Kimberly A. Arlinghaus, MD, 6 pm, Innova Building, 20 Greenway Plaza, 713/529-0077.

15-16 JIMMY TURNER IN EMBRYO/ PART I, dance performance art, \$12, 8 pm, Diverseworks Art Space, 1117 East Freeway.

16 MISS CAMP AMERICA, 27th annual pageant themed "Planet Hair, A Spray in Time," The University of Houston, Cullen Performance Hall, 713/227-ARTS.

HOSPICE HOMECARE TRAINING, volunteers are needed for a variety of services, 8 am-5 pm, Hospice Homecare of Houston, ATH-Heights Hospital, 1917 Ashland, Suite 390, 713/864-2626.

CALENDAR GIRLS POKER, play for low stakes, dealer calls her own game, pot luck snacks, Gina's house, 7:30 pm, 1006 Avenue L in South Houston, 713/944-1559.

18 ORGANIC PRODUCE DINNER, featuring organic produce from six Houston community and market gardens, \$50, 6-8 pm, Boulevard Bistrot, 4319 Montrose, 713/524-6922.

GAY AND LESBIAN READERS GROUP will discuss the book *Out in the World* by Neil Miller, 7 pm, Barnes & Noble, 3003 West Holcombe, 349-0050.

19 DATING & MATING: Erotic Choices in Safer Sex Workshop explores the options of safer sex and sensuality through discussion and games, 7-9 pm, Metropolitan Multiservice Center, 1475 W. Gray, 713/623-6796.



Clockwise from top left: Gladys Knight, Barbara Mandrell, Chris Evert, and Martina Navratilova.

Tennis Anyone?

The Virginia Slims Legends Tour, a celebration of women on court and in concert, takes center court in Houston October 12-15. This unique package of stars from the tennis and music worlds features Martina Navratilova, Billie Jean King, Chris Evert, and Tracy Austin competing in two days of tennis action and performers Barbara Mandrell and Gladys Knight headlining two nights of music.

The tour, which started in Tampa, Florida, last April and has made stops in Charlotte, North Carolina, Richmond, Virginia, and Oklahoma City, is sponsored by Virginia Slims cigarettes, a division of Philip Morris USA. In each city, the National AIDS Fund has identified local AIDS organizations that will benefit from the weekend's activities. Launched in 1988, the National AIDS Fund has generated more than \$34 million to support more than 1,700 HIV/AIDS programs in 30 states across the nation. Here in Houston, the tour will benefit DIFFA, the largest source of private dollars for AIDS care in the greater Houston area.

The four-day weekend of activities gets under way on Thursday, October 12 at 8 pm with Gladys Knight and Regina Belle performing a night of R&B music at the Houston Arena Theatre. The concerts continue on Friday, October 13 at 8 pm with Barbara Mandrell and Martina McBride sharing the stage for an evening of country music also at the Arena Theatre. Tennis action will be played on Saturday, October 14 and Sunday October 15 at 1 pm at the Westside Tennis Club, 1200 Wilcrest. The players will compete in two-team doubles with six players per team on both days, as well as a special singles shoot-out between Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova on both days.

DIFFA/Houston will be hosting a "Meet the Players Party" on Saturday evening from 6-8 pm at Neiman Marcus Town & Country. The cocktail reception will feature special guests Billie Jean King, Chris Evert, Tracy Austin, and Martina Navratilova. Tickets are \$50, available by calling the DIFFA office at 713/552-9445.

Concert tickets are \$22.50 and \$29.50, available through the Arena Box Office, 7326 S.W. Freeway, or charge by phone at 713/988-1020 or at all Ticketmaster outlets. Individual tennis tickets are priced from \$25 to \$40 and can be purchased by calling the Virginia Slims Legends tournament office at 713/952-1111.

20 BUILDING HEALTHY SELF-ESTEEM, workshop exploring 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, 713/623-6796.

OUTVOTE, general meeting, 7 pm, 2700 Albany, Suite 304.

MEN'S NETWORK for gay and bisexual men, 7:15-9 pm, Montrose Counseling Center, 701 Richmond, 713/529-0037.

21 REVERSING THE TIDE: Mobilizing the Mainstream in Support of Public Education and Religious Tolerance, various speakers, 6:30-9:30 pm, St. Paul's United Methodist Church, 5501 South Main, 713/831-6580.

ABSOLUT MARTINI MASH, benefiting Milam House, \$25-\$100, 5:30-8 pm, KAD's Piano Bar & Grille, 1512 W. Alabama, 713/520-9248.

22 DR. ABRAHAM VERGHESE, author of *My Own Country: A Doctor's Story of a Town and Its People in the Age of AIDS*, will reflect on his experiences treating HIV-positive people in Johnson City, Tennessee, 1 pm, Baylor College of Medicine Cullen Auditorium, One Baylor Plaza.

22-23 BREAKING NEW GROUND, Nu Dance Showcase celebrating contemporary dance, \$12, 8 pm, DiverseWorks Art Space, 1117 East Freeway, 713/520-5530.

23 THE ADOPTION OPTION, an informational all-day seminar on the process of adoption, reservations are required, call Natalie at 713/522-4282 ext. 10.

ASSISTANCE FUND OPEN HOUSE, dedicating their new office space, 7:30-10 pm, 1116 Jackson Blvd.

JOSEPH AND THERESA BRUNELL, contemporary singer/songwriters, 8 pm, Kaldi Cafe, 250 W. 19th Street. Sponsored by San Mountain House Concerts.

24 CALENDAR GIRLS PICNIC, bring your own food and drink, 3 pm, Rothko Park, call Cheryl at 713/523-4510.

25 THE AGORA, monthly meeting, 7:30 pm, AIDS Foundation Houston, 3202 Wesleyan, 713/729-4267.

LOG CABIN REPUBLICANS of Houston general meeting, 7 pm, Sierra Grill, 4704 Montrose, 713/529-9100.

26 NAMES PROJECT VOLUNTEER MEETING, volunteers are needed all year long, 7 pm, The NAMES Project Houston, 2410 Woodhead, 713/52-NAMES.

AIDS EQUITY LEAGUE, 12 noon, Charlie's Restaurant, 1100 Westheimer, 713/871-0092.

LOVE, SEX, & INTIMACY, explores the options of safer sex and sensuality through discussion and games, 7-9 pm, Metropolitan Multiservice Center, 1475 W. Gray, 713/623-6796.

27 WOMEN'S NETWORK for lesbian and bisexual women, 7-9 pm, Montrose Counseling Center, 701 Richmond, 713/529-0037.

CRITICAL ROLE OF NUTRITION ON HIV/AIDS, symposium with nationally acclaimed panelists on nutrition management for increased appetite and weight, 6:30-9:30 pm, Sheraton Grand Hotel, 2525 W. Loop South, 713/520-2000.

28 ASSISTED SUICIDE DISCUSSION, panelists represent a cross-section of backgrounds and views, 7:30-9 pm, Jewish Community Center's Kaplan Theatre, 5601 S. Braeswood, 713/942-8966.

NUTRITION & EXERCISE, with HIV nutrition specialists and exercise physiologists, 7-9 pm, Metropolitan Multiservice Center, 1475 W. Gray, 713/623-6796.

HOSPICE HOMECARE TRAINING, volunteers are needed for a variety of services, 8 am-5 pm, Hospice Homecare of Houston, ATH-Heights Hospital, 1917 Ashland, Suite 390, 713/864-2626.

SAFER SEX FOR LESBIANS, seminar sponsored by AIDS Foundation Houston and presented by Nancy Ford, 9:30 pm, Plaza 9200, 9200 Buffalo Speedway, 713/666-3464.

29 DEAF AWARENESS MONTH OPEN HOUSE, find out what the Montrose Clinic can do for the deaf/hard of hearing community, 4-7 pm, Montrose Clinic, 215 Westheimer, 713/528-3678 TTY.

A LETTER FROM MOZART, opening concert of the Houston Harpsichord Society, benefits the children's fund for AIDS Foundation Houston, 8 pm, St. Luke's Methodist Church, 713/497-8392.

30 LYNN LAYNER, with a piano not a synthesizer, 7 pm, MCCR Houston, 1919 Decatur, 713/861-9149.

EPAH CASINO NIGHT, benefiting the Assistance Fund and Body Positive/Houston, 7:30 pm, Allen Park Inn.

COFFEE SHOP HOP, sponsored by the Calendar Girls, meet at 7:30 pm at Toopees, then hit as many coffee shops, 713/523-4428.

OCTOBER

1 P-FLAG general meeting, 2 pm, St. Francis Episcopal Church, 345 Piney Point Road. P-FLAG Houston Helpline: 713/867-9020.

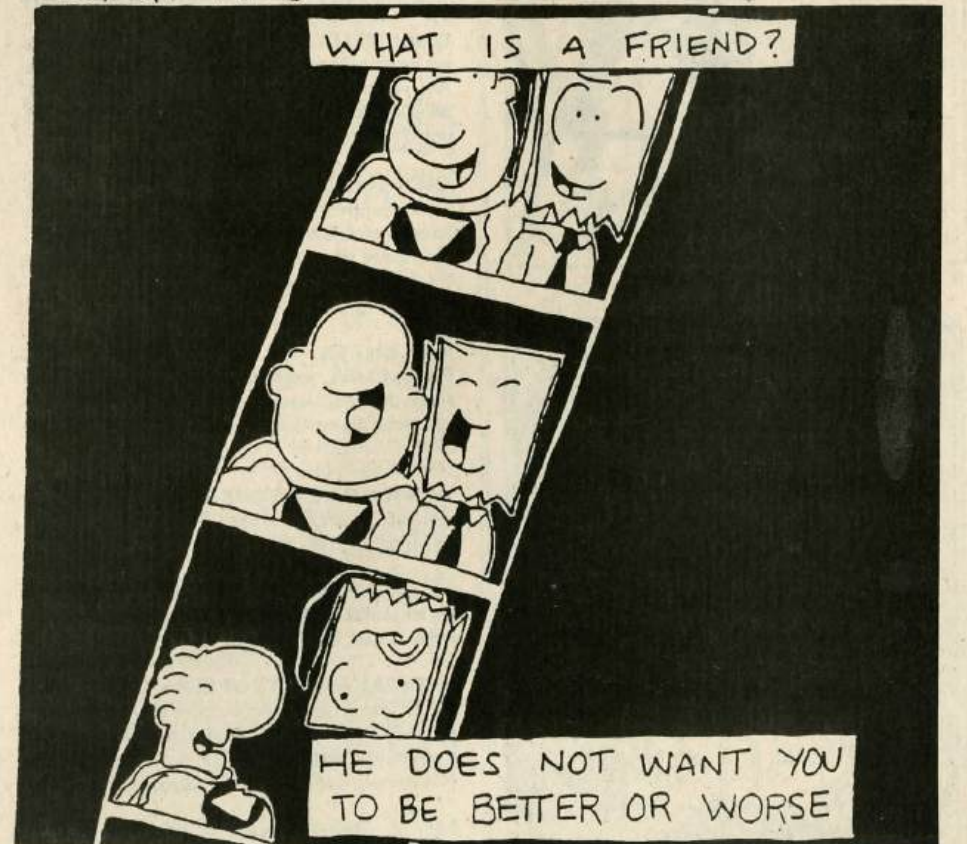
2 SASHAWALTZ & GUESTS, "Travelogue I—Twenty to Eight," contemporary dance, \$15, 8 pm, Kaplan Theatre, Jewish Community Center, 5601 South Braeswood, 713/520-5530.

3 HOSPICE HOMECARE TRAINING, volunteers are needed for a variety of services, 6-8:45 pm, Hospice Homecare of Houston, ATH-Heights Hospital, 1917 Ashland, Suite 390, 713/864-2626.

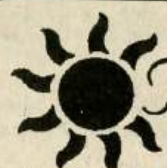
4 HOUSTON GAY & LESBIAN POLITICAL CAUCUS, 7:30 pm, 2700 Albany, 3rd floor, 713/521-1000.

MEN'S NETWORK for gay and bisexual men, 7:15-9 pm, Montrose Counseling Center, 701 Richmond, 713/529-0037.

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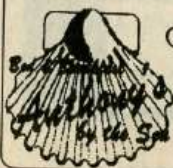
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5 HOW TO HELP WHEN IT HURTS, a panel discussion on domestic violence in the gay community, 6-8 pm, Metropolitan Multiservice Center, 1475 West Gray, 713/521-0969.

6 HOUSTON PROFESSIONAL MEN'S ASSOCIATION, monthly meeting, 7 pm, Chapultepec Mexican Restaurant, 813 Richmond, 713/866-4079.

7 DIGNITY/HOUSTON, celebration of Solidarity Sunday, 7:30 pm, Dignity Center, 1307-H Yale, 713/880-2872.

8 SOLIDARITY SUNDAY, silent protest of the Catholic Church's policy on homosexuality, wear a Rainbow Ribbon throughout the day.

10 HOUSTON GAY & LESBIAN PARENTS Pool Party. For info, call 713/980-7995.

LEGAL & FINANCIAL PLANNING, workshop for people with HIV/AIDS, 7-9 pm, Metropolitan Multiservice Center, 1475 W. Gray, 713/623-6796.

HOSPICE HOMECARE TRAINING, volunteers are needed for a variety of services, 6-8:45 pm, Hospice Homecare of Houston, ATH-Heights Hospital, 1917 Ashland, Suite 390, 713/864-2626.

HOUSTON GAY & LESBIAN PARENTS Support Group meets in the library at MCCR, 1919 Decatur from 7-8:30 pm, 713/980-7995.

AIDS EQUITY LEAGUE, 12 noon, Charlie's Restaurant, 1100 Westheimer, 713/871-0092.

11 NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON RALLY, speakers include Dianne Hardy-Garcia, Marion Coleman, Annise Parker, and others, 11:30 am-1 pm, UC Satellite Hill, University of Houston Central Campus, 713/743-7690.

OUT THERE IN HOLLYWOOD, Comedy Central's celebration of gay and lesbian comics with Jason Stuart, Lea Delaria, Rob Nash, and others. (For those who have Warner Cable and don't get Comedy Central, spend the evening writing a complaint letter to Warner.)

WELLNESS & ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES, explores wellness and the many alternatives to Western medicine, 7 pm, Metropolitan Multiservice Center, 1475 W. Gray, 713/623-6796.

WOMEN'S NETWORK for lesbian and bisexual women, 7-9 pm, Montrose Counseling Center, 701 Richmond, 713/529-0037.

12 MONTROSE ICE PICKS for lesbian/gay ice skaters, 8-10 pm, Galleria Ice Rink, admission is \$4.75 plus \$2 for skates, 713/629-1432.

MEDICAL ASPECTS OF LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS, panel discussion explains the basic understanding of HIV medical approaches, lab tests, and treatment information, 7-9 pm, Metropolitan Multiservice Center, 1475 W. Gray, 713/623-6796.

13 NATIONAL COMING OUT WEEK RALLY, hosted by PRIDE (Rice University Organization for Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals, and

Friends), speakers José Zuniga and Donna Red Wing, 11:30 am-1:30 pm, Rice University Quad, Entrance 8 or 14, parking in stadium lot, 713/666-9372.

ALLEY NIGHT FEVER, benefiting the Alley Theatre's annual operations, dress is 70s Disco or black tie, 8 pm-1 am, Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Avenue, 713/228-9341, ext. 389.

SEVERAL DANCERS CORE, "Aria for an Endangered Species—The Process," contemporary dance performance, \$12, 8 pm, DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway, 713/520-5530.

ASTRO RAINBOW ALLIANCE FOR THE DEAF, general meeting, 7:30 pm, Montrose Clinic, 215 Westheimer, call 713/869-2287 via Texas Relay 1-800-735-2988 for more information.

14 HGLPC ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER, with keynote speaker Donna Red Wing, GLAAD field director, Four Seasons Hotel, 713/521-1000.

SEXUALITY AND THE SCRIPTURES, with Rev. Ralph Lasher, 9 am-4 pm, MCCR Houston, 1919 Decatur, 713/861-9149.

MISS ANGELA'S COUNTRY DINNER, catered by Goode Company Bar-B-Que, sponsored by the Diana Foundation, Houston Polo Club, 713/639-2000.

DATING DANCE WORKSHOP, a safe one-day workshop for women who want to learn about dating, presented by Joyce Gayles, 10 am-5 pm, 713/667-6047.

15 THE HEIDI CHRONICLES, Wendy Wasserstein's Pulitzer Prize-winning Broadway play turned movie starring Jamie Lee Curtis as Heidi and Tom Hulse as her gay friend, TNT (check local listings for time).

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 713/768-4267 for an appointment.

ANTI-HOMOPHOBIA ALLIANCE, an organization dedicated to ending the irrational fear of gay and lesbian humans, uses advertising, education workshops, and effective activism based on non-violence, intelligence, and common sense to harness support from a cross-section of the population. For more information, call Dave at 713/650-6916.

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. Call Montrose Clinic at 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 713/681-9082 for meeting date, time, and place.

DELTA LAMBDA PHI is a Social Fraternity at the University of Houston that does not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation. Interested members of the University of Houston should contact 713/524-7966 for more information.

DIGNITY HOUSTON, dedicated to the welfare of gay and lesbian Catholics and their friends, meets Saturdays at 7:30 pm and Sundays 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. 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, meets Thursdays at 7:30 pm, 1414 West Clay (River Oaks Health Alliance Building). 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 MCCR, 1919 Decatur, the second Tuesday of every month from 7-8:30 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 Richard Parent at 713/743-7690.

HIV SURVIVOR SUPPORT GROUP for anyone whose life is touched by HIV. Meetings include a relaxing meditation, information about community resources, and occasional speakers. The group meets Wednesdays from 7 to 9 pm at Unity Church of Christianity, 2929 Unity Drive at Hillcroft. For further information, please call 713/782-4050.

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 provides 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.

KAD'S has live music nightly including Lori Gage, Clay Howell, Staci, and Marsha Carlton. KAD's, 1512 W. Alabama. Call 713/529-3870 for specific show times and performers through August.

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 for 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/gay health care professionals, meets monthly, providing socials, speakers, networking, and practitioner referral line. For information or a referral, call 713/523-4700.

PRIME TIMERS HOUSTON, promotes social activities for the older gay and bisexual male. Some of the activities they participate in are theater, dining out, movies, pot luck dinners, card games, and weekend daytrips. For more information, call 713/867-3903.

PROTECT (People Respecting Ourselves Through Establishing Community and Trust), an HIV-negative support group, provides a safe place to share experiences, strengths, and hopes in an effort to remain HIV negative. Tuesdays, 7-8:30 pm, Bering Church, 1440 Harold. For information, call Marty at 713/520-7870.

Q-PATROL, an organization dedicated to the prevention of hate crimes against gays and lesbians, patrols the bar areas in Montrose and are always looking for volunteers. If you have at least one Friday or Saturday night per month you can donate to the protection of gays and lesbians, please call 713/871-8519.

RAINBOW RANGLERS, a gay country and western dance club, promotes Texas-style couple dancing. They teach beginning level 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.

RICE GALA (Gay and Lesbian Alumni Association) actively seeks gay and lesbian alumni of Rice University. Contact Neal Tannahill at 713/526-6718 for more information.

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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 every Tuesday at The Ranch, Plaza 9200, 9200 Buffalo Speedway. For more information, write to P.O. Box 1502, Houston, TX 77252-1502.

SELF-HYPNOSIS FOR IMPROVING HEALTH AND ATTITUDE, hypnotherapist T. C. LeNormand of Behavioral Dynamics teaches self-hypnosis techniques for stress reduction and desired behavioral changes for a healthier, happier life, two consecutive Thursdays. Call 713/789-0713 to register.

TEAM HOUSTON FOR THE GAMES, INC. is a non-profit organization formed to educate and inform all people about gay and lesbian sports competitions and to encourage participation in the Gay Games and Cultural Festival. The next Gay Games will take place in Amsterdam, August 1-8, 1998. For more information, write to Team Houston, P.O. Box 66405, Houston, TX 77266-6405 or call 713/935-1060.

TEXAS GAY RODEO ASSOCIATION is a non-profit organization, with chapters in Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, San Antonio, and Houston, that promotes and stages an annual rodeo event as well as engaging in fundraising activities throughout the year. For more information on the Houston chapter, write to P.O. Box 130585, Houston, TX 77219 or call 713/777-1444.

GAY, LESBIAN & BISEXUAL VETERANS OF AMERICA, Houston Chapter. Location and times of meetings as announced. Write to GLBVA, P.O. Box 66706, Houston, TX 77266-6706. Phone/Fax: 713/951-9925.

TEXAS HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATION, a statewide, not-for-profit legal agency, advocates on behalf of the lesbian, gay, and HIV community and publishes the booklet *AIDS and the Law: Know Your Rights*. If you feel you have been discriminated against on the basis of sexual orientation or HIV status and need

legal advice or attorney referral, call their toll-free number, 1-800-828-6417.

WOMEN'S ACTION COALITION (WAC) is an 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 & 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) Thursdays, 9-11 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 713/949-3119.

OUT! IN HOUSTON: (TV) presented by The Agora on Public Access Cable (PAC). Showtimes are listed in local television guides under PAC channels.

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

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

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

OCTOBER 11 *Out There in Hollywood*, Comedy Central's celebration of gay and lesbian comics with Jason Stuart, Lea Delaria, Rob Nash, and others. (For those who have Warner Cable and don't get Comedy Central, spend the evening writing a complaint letter to Warner.)



Tom Hulce acting gay?

OCTOBER 15 *The Heidi Chronicles*, Wendy Wasserstein's Pulitzer Prize-winning Broadway play turned movie starring Jamie Lee Curtis as Heidi and Tom Hulce as her gay friend, TNT (check local listings for time).

THEATER

A.D. PLAYERS, Grace Theater, 2710 W. Alabama, 713/526-2721. Sept. 15-Oct. 22: *The Lilies of the Field*.

ALLEY THEATRE, 615 Texas, 713/228-8421. Through October 1: *SLAVS!*

CURTAINS THEATRE, 3722 Washington, 713/862-4548. Sept. 15-Oct. 21: *Beyond Therapy*.

GRAND OPERA HOUSE, 2020 Postoffice, Galveston, 409/765-1894. October 7: Gregory Hines.

HALLOWEEN MAGIC, Texas Medical Conference Center, 2151 Holcombe, 713/524-2374 or 713/529-6071. October 21: *Montrose Boulevard*.

HOUSTON BROADWAY SERIES, Jones Hall, 713/629-3700. Beginning October 17: *Laughter on the 23rd Floor*.

MAIN STREET THEATRE, 2540 Times Blvd., 713/524-6706. September 14-October 15: *A Perfect Ganesh*.

SKYLINE THEATRE, 1617 Fannin, 713/759-0701. Sept. 15-Oct. 21: *LUV*.

NEW HEIGHTS THEATRE, 339 West 19th, 713/869-8927. Through October 8: *A... My Name Is Still Alice*.

RADIO MUSIC THEATRE, 2623 Colquitt, 713/522-7722. Through November 18: *Fertles and Friends!*

RIVER CAFE, 3615 Montrose, 713/529-0088. Through November 11: *The Bohemian Murder Mystery*.

THEATRE SUBURBIA, 1410 W. 43rd, 682-3525. September 15-October 14: *Three the Hard Way*.

THEATRE UNDER THE STARS, Music Hall, 622-TUTS. September 21-October 8: *42nd Street*.

O U T ▼ S M A R T

MONTROSE BOULEVARD:

A QUEER REMAKE OF AN OLD CLASSIC

by Eric L. Roland

Norma Desmond was a faded film star from the 1920s who lived in her Hollywood mansion alone with her devoted butler, Max. That was Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard*. Norma Desperate is a delusional sex kitten and drug refugee from the 1960s who is ensconced in her Montrose mansion attended by her devoted butler, Max. This is Halloween Magic's *Montrose Boulevard*.

Spoofing the 1950 film classic and the revised Broadway musical, *Montrose Boulevard* is a zany, irreverent new musical staged by Halloween Magic, a local organization that has been spoofing popular musicals for the past three years. Always performed just before Halloween, the shows' proceeds benefit local AIDS service organizations; this year's benefactors are Body Positive/Houston, the Bering Community Service Foundation, and the HIV/AIDS Education and Services of the American Red Cross/Houston Chapter.

The musical opens on a stormy night to find the once legendary film star Norma Desperate in her Montrose mansion, the decor of which seems to have been trapped in a 1960s time warp. Because of her sex kitten personality, Norma enjoys being stroked and being the center of attention. So, into her life parade a bizarre array of characters, each seeming to have ulterior motives for their interest in Norma. Suddenly, a huge clap of thunder is heard, the lights go out in the midst of much screaming and hysterics, and, when the lights come back on, Norma is seen holding a smoking gun in her hand standing over the dead body of Dirk Rambone.

"At the end of the first act, she stands there with a smoking gun, an ascot, a candlestick, and a knife. All eyes turn to Norma Desperate," says scriptwriter Gary Rod, who was with Col. Mustard in the billiard room with a rope at the time the lights went out. "The second act is going to be total mayhem and the audience's focus is going to be split everywhere!"

Indeed, the second act places Norma on trial for the murder of Dirk in a most obvious skewering of the media circus surrounding the O.J. Simpson murder trial.



She's ready for her closeup, Mr. DeMille! Jimmy Phillips stars as Norma Desperate. photo by Jann Whaley

The second act also features the return of several favorite characters from past installments of Halloween Magic, including the Hispanic spitfire, Venezuela Maria Concepcion, and Wanda June Smathers, the country girl-made-good determined to prove herself as a high-powered attorney.

"Our biggest challenge in writing the script for *Montrose Boulevard* was: What do you do with a 1930s aging star from *Sunset Boulevard*, and how do you make her relevant to what's going on today in the 1990s," observes Rod, who co-wrote the script along with John Tucker and Shana Ross. "We knew that the hot topic of the year was the effect of the O.J. trial on our judicial system. We all get to watch this trial every day, and see what little role justice actually plays in the process."

"We like to think that what makes

Halloween Magic unique is that it pushes the envelope with regards to disrespect, and we use Halloween to take that liberty," continues Rod. "We writers wanted to have printed on the invitation this year the words: No material suitable for children under 13. We are an equal opportunity offender!"

To achieve the maximum level of comedic disrespect, the writers also reworded the lyrics for all of the songs used in the production. These include parodies of Madonna's "Hanky Panky" and Barry Manilow's "Copacabana," as well as a reworking of "With One Look," the ballad from the musical version of *Sunset Boulevard*.

With a comedic script, a great cast, and the motivation to pull it off, Halloween Magic hopes that *Montrose Boulevard* will be even more successful than last year's *The Phantom of Montrose*. According to Rod, they raised \$44,000 last year and are targeting \$80,000 for this year's show.

Every year the creators of Halloween Magic dedicate the show to a local person who strived to make a difference in the gay and lesbian community. *Montrose Boulevard* is dedicated to the memory of David Hemmer, a longtime employee of the discotheque Rich's, who gave generously of his time and support to numerous Houston area charities.

Halloween Magic's 1995 production of *Montrose Boulevard* will be staged at the Texas Medical Conference Center (formerly the Shamrock Ballroom), located at 2151 Holcombe on Saturday, October 21 at 7 pm. General admission tickets are \$35, and table sales are also available. Tickets may be purchased by calling Body Positive at 713/524-2374 or the Bering Care Center at 713/529-6071. In addition to the show, the evening will feature a cocktail hour, a buffet dinner, silent and live auctions, and a party with the cast immediately following the performance.



Brent Shockley (Dirk Rambone) and Jimmy Phillips (Norma Desperate) photo by Jann Whaley

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Does Yoko Ono (seen here before husband John Lennon's death in 1980) see it as a problem when people don't come out?

Yoko Ono

(The Advocate, 5/2/95, Charles Isherwood)
"She lived for years with a part of her heart exposed to worldwide criticism and knows the pain of being publicly vilified for personal matters. She feels protective of gays and lesbians who are not ready to go public: 'I don't see it as a problem when people don't come out. I understand their situation so well, knowing the way they can be attacked when they come out and what it feels like to be attacked that way. It's still something that takes courage to do, and if someone doesn't have that courage, it's understandable.'"



Should Catherine Deneuve (seen here with David Bowie in 1983's *The Hunger*) go out?

Chastity Bono

(The Advocate, 4/18/95, Judy Wieder)
"There was no k.d. lang. There was no Melissa Etheridge. There was no Janis Ian. No one was out then," says Chastity Bono, remembering the January 2, 1990, issue of *Star* that outed her as a lesbian years before lang, Etheridge, or Ian challenged public opinion by coming out themselves in *The Advocate*.
"I was the first famous lesbian to be outed. I'm not talking about rumors or innuendos, I mean outing...."
"I was never very courageous about this kind of thing. But I think my story may mean a lot to others who are struggling to come out. Today, being in the closet is in my way. I have things to do, and I have to be out to do them."

Sarah Jessica Parker

(The Advocate, 8/25/92, Mark Miller)
Miller: But what about an actress who wants to keep her sexuality private? Does she have a responsibility to come out?
Parker: I think it's her prerogative to keep it private. I don't have to reveal to you that I'm a heterosexual. You don't have a right to ask, and I'm not forced to reveal that to you. But because I am heterosexual, obviously it's easier for me. I understand that.

Have you ever wanted to have a lesbian experience?

No. It's really weird, because I feel like I've not evolved because I haven't. Part of me thinks I would be really more interesting and very multidimensional if I were interested in having a lesbian relationship. But I like having sex with a man, and I don't want to give it up. [Laughs] I don't want to confuse anyone I'm dating.

You must be gay!

Kinda, in a way.

And you like sex with men!

I'm gay! I'm basically a homosexual man. I love clothes. I love good, fine fabrics. I work out. I'm concerned about my looks. I'm vain.

Catherine Deneuve

(The Advocate, 7/25/95, Judy Wieder)

Wieder: Do you know what the word *closeted* means?

Deneuve: To close?

Oh, that's interesting. Well, sort of. It's when people know they are gay, but they don't want other people to know...

Oh, yes, yes. I understand, but in my opinion they should not be pushed. I know here in America you are very strong about publicly pushing women to openly say that they are gay, but I don't agree. I think that is wrong. I think it is very shocking....

I think that when you have a public life, you still have the right to have a private life. And some people have been talked about before they have decided they are ready themselves. They have been pushed before they are ready to...to go out?

Come out.

Yes, come out. To me that is not right.



Why does Chastity Bono (seen here at five years old with her mom, Cher) have to *now* be out?

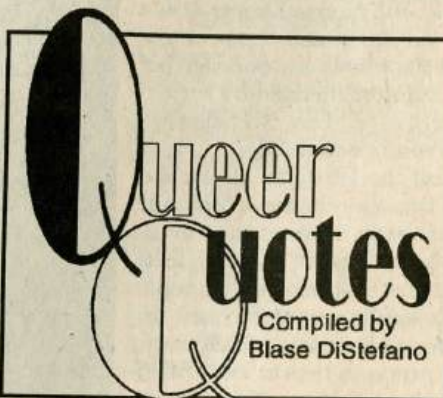
Melissa Etheridge & Janis Ian

(The Advocate, 6/13/95)

Ian: How do you explain to someone how much *better* they are going feel when they come out?

Etheridge: You can't. You can't.

You can say, "Look, you can't be in two places at once." How many gay women and men do you know who are a little crazy from it? How do you tell those people, "You're going to like this part"? I've had such an amazing time. It's undeniable how everything has grown and taken off. I can say to people, "Look what happened."



Greg Louganis

(Out, 4/95, Michael Goff)

"Between '84 and '88 I got a slew of these little postcards saying, 'Too bad you can't be a role model for gay youth because you are not out enough.' I'm not in favor of outing anybody. We all move at our own pace.... I mean, who named you god?"



Does Lily Tomlin understand outing? But, more importantly, should Ernestine come out?

Lily Tomlin

(Details, 10/91, Lance Loud)

Loud: ...What are your feelings about outing?

Tomlin: Well, I understand outing. I understand the desire of radical activists to out someone—particularly in light of how right-wing our culture has gotten. I can also see the other side—it's a bit fascistic. And I don't know how much coming out really means to anybody. In the industry, most people are out in terms of private society, so the people who would be most significant for the movement are entertainers who come out publicly. But no matter what anybody says, the list I see over and over again of [show business] people who could be outed is not terribly long.

Will Ernestine ever come out?

[Laughs] Do you think Ernestine is gay?

I don't know, but she'd look very convincing in black leather.

[In an Ernestine snort] I'm bisexual!

Maybe she could quit the phone company and start her career as a dominatrix. That's good. You know, I should have Ernestine come out. That would be great.



Has director Oliver Stone (seen here in a publicity photo for 1986's *Platoon*) ever had sex with a man?

Oliver Stone

(The Advocate, 4/7/92, Jeff Yarbrough)

Yarbrough: Have you ever had a homosexual experience?

Stone: Oh, God! [Laughs] Can you please just write "Oliver laughed"? I can't tell you that. I'll be in deep shit—

With whom?

With the government. If I admit to that, then they'll really be on my ass! They're trying to nail me—well, I guess I've already done everything wrong in my life in their opinion.

Then why would it matter?

[Laughs] Maybe you're right!

You won't deny having had a homosexual experience.

I won't deny it.

So you have had sex with a man.

I won't flatly deny that.

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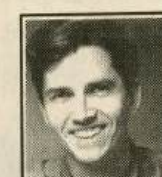
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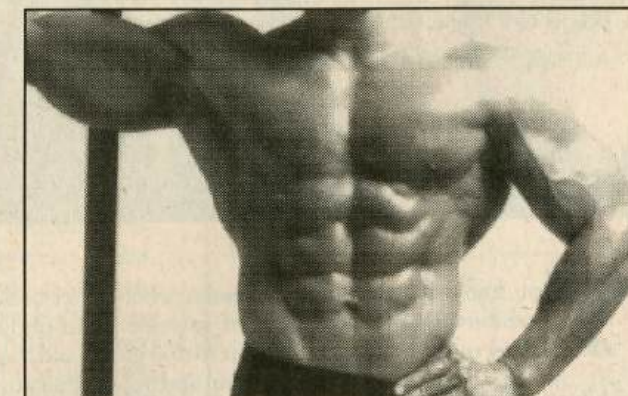
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Dole to Gays: DROP DEAD



You know it's the political season when office-seekers exhibit unmistakable signs of extreme schizophrenia. They run to and fro, saying *this* to that group and *that* to this group, asking everybody for a handout and hoping that no one will discover whom they slept with last week. When they're on the right coast, they solemnly pronounce that the sun must rise in the east; when they visit the left coast, they just as solemnly declare that it must rise in the west. They are, almost without exception, in both major political parties, nincompoops.



by
Dale Carpenter

Bob Dole, the Republican senate majority leader, is running for Chief Nincompoop. Earlier this summer, his campaign solicited a donation from the national leadership of the Log Cabin Republicans, a civil rights organization working to change the Republican Party's hostility toward gays. The Dole campaign

also invited Log Cabin's leaders to a series of fundraising events. As a result, Log Cabin's leaders naively supposed that this invitation to give money to Dole meant that they were invited to give money to Dole. They were evidently unacquainted with the metaphysical mysteries of presidential politics, according to which black is white, good is bad, and nothing you say counts if you're crossing your fingers behind your back. So the *ingenues* sent Dole \$1,000.

Everything went swimmingly until a columnist revealed the donation in a piece for a Detroit newspaper. Suddenly, Dole's campaign strategists pronounced themselves shocked, shocked to find a check from a gay organization in their coffers. They said that they could not accept money from a group whose views, on everything from gays in the military to a federal civil rights bill covering sexual orientation, were so profoundly opposed to the front-running nincompoop's. Confronted with the solicitation letters that the campaign had sent to Log Cabin Executive Director Rich Tafel, Dole's spokesperson was heard to say, without smiling: "That communication was not authorized."

I suppose there is someone in Christendom who believes that.

The conventional wisdom is that Dole returned the money to shore up his credentials with the anti-gay religious conservatives in the Republican Party, whose support is widely assumed to be essential to securing the party's nomination for president. He may even have solicited the check so that he could then publicly repudiate it, but he's not that clever. More likely, he felt the pressure that many politicians feel to back away from gays as if we carry leprosy. But before we huff and puff over Dole's hypocrisy, let's put the incident in perspective. As a bow to perceived political expediency, Dole's return of the gay money is different only in degree, not in kind, from the actions of our present Chief Nincompoop, Bill Clinton. Clinton, you will remember, took millions of dollars and countless volunteer hours from gay people during his campaign under the pretense of being sympathetic to our plight. Then, when he felt the slightest heat, he abandoned us on gays in the military, and accepted a "compromise" that has left gay soldiers even worse off than before. Then

there is his Justice Department's craven silence on the Colorado referendum case, the most important gay civil rights case ever to reach the Supreme Court. Other examples of Clinton's shameless treachery abound. In a sense, Dole's behavior is more honorable than Clinton's: at least he returned the gay money. Clinton grabbed our money and then winked and nodded his way right into the White House. For that reason, the unseemly we-told-you-so gloating over this incident by some on the gay left is especially ironic.

But even as a political strategy, Dole's swami to the religious right is questionable. He risks looking as unprincipled as Bill Clinton, whom no one sensible fully trusts anymore. Dole has lost the active support of many moderates in the party, and has irretrievably lost the support of gay Republicans. More than the surrender of a measly \$1,000, Dole has effectively stanchied the flow of tens of thousands of

dollars of private gay donations to his campaign. But here's even worse news for Dole's Machiavellian advisers: the One Christian Nation crowd will never believe you're really one of them. You just don't have that messianic glaze over your eyes.

So we know where Dole stands, or rather, cringes. Whatever his personal feelings, and I believe that in his heart he is a decent man, he has made the political judgment that gays are untouchable. He will continue to bow and scrape before the religious right on this and other issues. I believe his political calculus is wrong, even about the Republican electorate (which is more moderate on social issues than many assume), certainly about the general population. But there is no reason to believe that his political calculation will change if he ever reaches office. Hence, gay Republicans who flirted with the idea of supporting him should now desist.

One question remains: why send Dole any money to begin with? After all, the record was already rife with instances of Dole's cowardice on gay issues. He has

repeatedly voted against gay interests in the senate. He did manage to sputter a few kind words for gays earlier this year in an interview with the *New York Times Magazine*, saying that gays "obviously" should have civil rights and that there should be "no discrimination" against us. But before the ink had dried on those utterances, nincompoopdom overcame him. He wrote to the conservative *Washington Times* that he opposed what he called the "special interest gay agenda" with its surprising demand for "no discrimination" in the military and its startling plea for "no discrimination" in employment.

Despite these clear examples of Dole's political judgment about gays, Log Cabin's national leadership thought it saw an opening to Dole when the senator's campaign asked for money. Frankly, Tafel and company also wanted to assure reauthorization of the Ryan White Act, which pro-

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Dole to Gays: Drop Dead

Continued from previous page

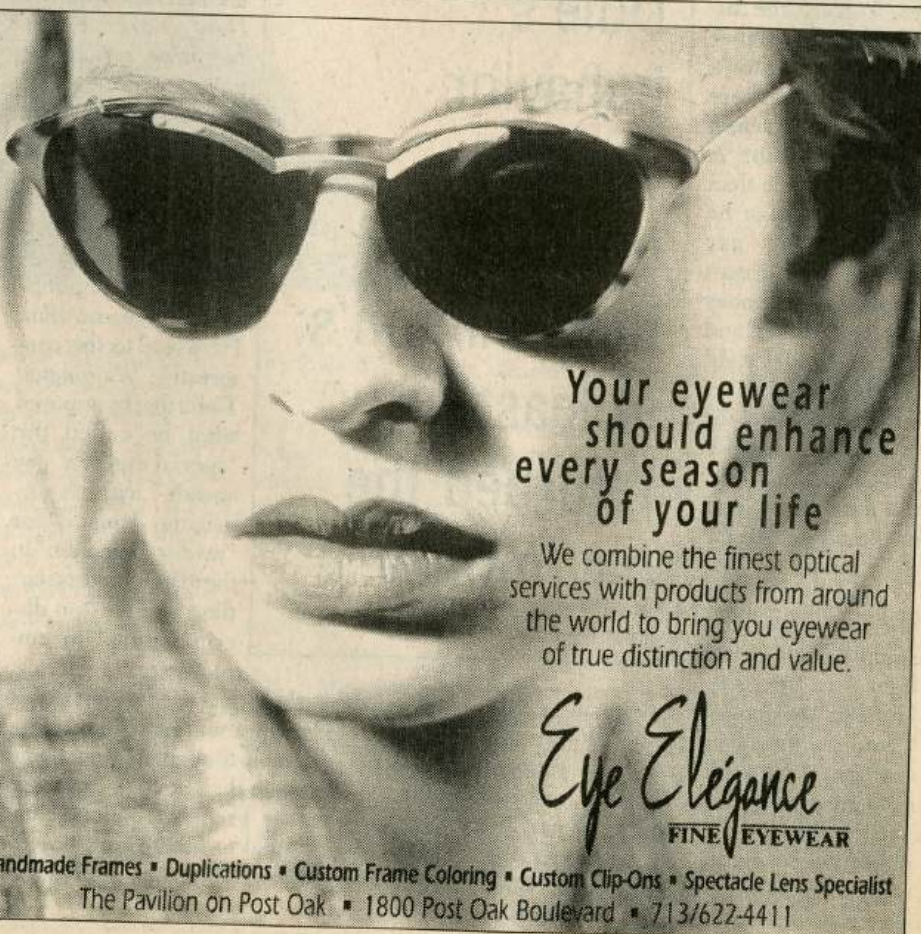
vides desperately needed federal money to AIDS support programs. They knew that, as majority leader, Dole held the key to an early vote on the act, before it expired. (As it happened, Dole allowed the early vote and it passed easily, with increased funding.) And whatever else you may think of his record, Dole has certainly been more moderate on social issues than some of the other Republican contenders like Patrick Buchanan, Bob Dornan, or Alan Keyes, the drooling anti-gay canines of the pack. At least a President Dole would not sit behind his desk in the Oval Office sticking needles in gay dolls and dreaming up innovative schemes to torment us as any of those three would. Of course, there's always Arlen Specter, who actually sent a representative to the Log Cabin national convention. But it would be charitable to say that Specter's a long-shot for the nomination. So the group felt it was left with Dole.

Nevertheless, it must be said that Log Cabin's national leadership erred in giving the money to Dole. It had another choice: Don't give money to any of the current

Republican presidential contenders. I understand the impulse to be a "player" in national politics, but this may be a year in which the choices are just unpalatable. For the time being, the fledgling gay Republican movement may have to focus instead on local and state races where we can have an impact—as Log Cabin did in helping to elect the most pro-gay governor in the country, Republican William Weld of Massachusetts, and our own local gay-friendly Republican, Judge Cynthia Crowe. In this instance, Tafel's was an error of the head, not of the heart.

In the meantime, Dole's lamentable and ultimately foolish decision to return Log Cabin's money has reminded everyone how truly far we must go before candidates in both parties come to believe that it is wiser to keep our money—and to kindly return theirs.

Dale Carpenter, a lawyer in Houston, is the state president of Log Cabin Republicans of Texas and serves on the board of directors of the Houston Gay & Lesbian Political Caucus. The opinions expressed in this column are his own and do not necessarily reflect the views of Log Cabin, the HGLPC, or OutSmart magazine.



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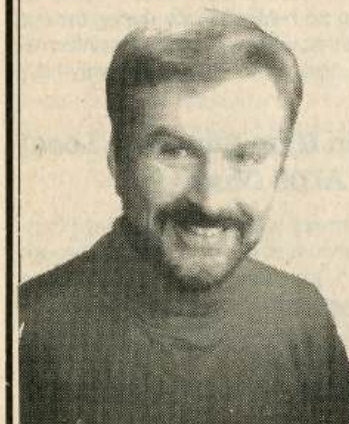
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OUT-HERE

Donna Red Wing to Speak at HGLPC 20th Anniversary Event

Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus, the oldest lesbian and gay civil rights organization in Texas, will celebrate its 20th anniversary with their annual awards dinner on Saturday, October 14, at the Four Seasons Hotel in downtown Houston. Giving the keynote address will be Donna Red Wing, national field director for the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), a national organization dedicated to cultural advocacy and to improving fairness, accuracy, and inclusiveness in news coverage and media portrayals of gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals. Reservations for HGLPC's 20th Anniversary Dinner can be made directly with the caucus by calling 713/521-1000.

HGLPC Investigates After Restaurant Ejects Lesbian Couple

Recently, La Mexicana Restaurant, located at the corner of Montrose and Fairview, allegedly ejected a lesbian couple after one partner kissed the other. Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus (HGLPC), after launching an investigation into the matter as part of the Discrimination Free Zone project, confirmed the incident with Eduardo Treviño, owner of the restaurant, who felt that public displays of affection were not appropriate for his establishment. When asked whether he would have thrown out a straight couple for the same behavior, Treviño replied that that was different.

WARNING: U.S. Senator Jesse Helms Will Seek Re-election Next Year

The Hatcher Center for Human Rights, a small North Carolina organization founded by political activist Eddie Hatcher, has begun a campaign to educate the people of North Carolina about the real Jesse Helms. With the swing votes of the fundamentally religious voters of North Carolina, Jesse Helms will again serve six more years in the U. S. Senate. The center plans several educational events, including countless radio ads targeting the rural North Carolina areas, and are selling T-shirts that show a cartoon picture of Helms that read "JESSE HELMS—THE ANTI-CHRIST." The shirts are available for \$10 each. To learn how you can help get Helms out of office or to purchase T-shirts, call 910/582-5076.



Scott Kennedy



Kevin Maye

Comedians Scott Kennedy and Kevin Maye Return to Houston

Nationally touring, all-gay, stand-up comedians Scott Kennedy and Kevin Maye will return to Houston for a two-night engagement at the Laff Stop on October 17 and 18 at 8 pm. Hosting the show will be Bob Smith, who was the first openly gay comic on *The Tonight Show* and has had his own HBO special. Organizers of the event are calling it Gaylapalooza since the main stage will feature these three male comics while the smaller stage in the lounge will showcase male dancers and female impersonators. Tickets are \$12 in advance, \$15 the day of the show and are available at the Laff Stop, 1952 W. Gray, or by calling 713/524-2333.

First Annual Mr. Life Today Pageant to Be Held

Hosted by Matt Locklin and Jessica Van Shelton, the first annual Mr. Life Today 1995 "PWA Man of Distinction" Pageant will be held September 24 at 7:30 pm at Gentry, 2303 Richmond. Celebrity judges will be looking for excellence in four categories: presentation/formal wear, sportswear, Q & A based on PWA community participation, and entertainment. First place, first runner-up, and second runner-up will receive coronation and gift certificate prize packages. Participation does not indicate HIV status, and there is no HIV status requirement. For an application or pageant information, call 713/902-2231.

Catholics in Support of Gay Rights to Celebrate Solidarity

Dignity/USA, an organization for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered Catholics and their friends, has called on Catholics who disagree

with official Church teaching on homosexuality to join in a visible protest on Sunday, October 8, 1995. Dignity has named that day, which coincides with a planned papal visit to Baltimore, MD, "Solidarity Sunday," and is asking supporters to wear a Rainbow Ribbon throughout the day. Locally, Dignity/Houston, located at 1307-H Yale in the Heights, will celebrate solidarity at their Saturday evening Mass on October 7 at 7:30 pm.

Lambda Rollerskating Club Loses Use of Skating Rink

For over a year, the local Lambda Rollerskating Club has been holding their skate nights on the first, third, and fifth Wednesdays of the month at the Dairy Ashford Rollerskating Rink. However, due to the popularity and subsequent scheduling of in-line skating and roller hockey, the rink can no longer offer their facility for any private skating sessions. The owners of the rink stated that they would recommend Lambda Rollerskating Club to any rink in Houston and are currently working with them to find another facility. The club will continue to hold outdoor skates in Memorial Park, the next of which will be held on September 17 at 11 am. For more information on the Lambda Rollerskating Club, call 713/933-5818.

DiverseWorks Director Resigns, Becomes AIDS Advocate

Michael Peranteau, who has been working at DiverseWorks for the past eleven-and-a-half years, has resigned as its executive director. Diagnosed 18 months ago with the HIV virus, Peranteau, who is still in good health, feels that the stress of day-to-day activities involved in running DiverseWorks could prove detrimental to his condition. While continuing to work with DiverseWorks on a limited basis, Peranteau also plans to volunteer with The Center for AIDS: Hope and Remembrance Project, an organization he helped create during the last five months that will provide the latest information about treatment for people with HIV/AIDS.

Houston Gym Supports Local AIDS Charities

Houston's newest weight-training facility, Houston Gym, celebrates its grand opening through October 15. Join during this period and ten percent of your membership purchase will be donated to the AIDS charity of your choice. Located at 233 Birdsall, Houston Gym is owned and operated by personal trainers Johnnie West

and John Langman, who have over 25 years of combined experience in the fitness industry. Houston Gym is a smaller, more personalized training center that offers programs for every fitness level and budget. For information, call 713/880-9191.



The River Wild, Part Deux: The Lone Star Women's Music Festival Returns

What do you get when you combine women, camping, women, music, women, art, women, water, and women, women, women? The Lone Star Women's Music Festival (LSWMF), of course! For those novices who are still a little moist behind the ears, the LSWMF (or, as some call it, *Camp No-Wanna-Weenie*) has become an annual autumn adventure, rain or shine, for women since 1988. A deluge of as many as 900 women from all over the U.S. storm the Texas hill country for this wet 'n' wild weekend of music, workshops, comedy, and camping along the Guadalupe River. Bands from Austin's hip dyke music scene, plus regional favorites and performers from the national women's music circuit, wash participants with a steady stream of entertainment. Among this year's performers are Monica Grant, Lourdes Perez, The FREDs!, Nancy Scott, Crazy, Painted Faces, Velvet Hammer, Odette, and comedian Nancy Ford. Talented and even not-so-talented women are encouraged to go with the flow on the open mic stage, a non-stop forum of music, poetry, and performance art. For more information, call (512) 929-0002.

AIDS Memorial Bracelets Available to Remember Their Names

Through a company in Austin, sterling silver bracelets, engraved with a red ribbon and the name, birth date and departure date of the person being sponsored, are available for \$30. For every bracelet sold directly by AIDS Memorial Bracelet (AMB), a \$3 donation is made to AmFAR. AMB is also set up to help any nonprofit AIDS charity in bringing in additional funds for their organization. By taking orders themselves, the nonprofit organization keeps \$3 per unit sold and then sends the orders to AMB to be filled. If you are interested in taking or placing orders, contact AMB, 2002-A Guadalupe St., #145, Austin, TX 78705 or call 1-800-248-8146.

Texas Renaissance Festival Gears Up for 21st Anniversary

Running weekends from September 30 through November 12, the Texas Renaissance Festival,

the largest theme park of its kind in the country, allows visitors to travel back in time to a merry 16th century English village. The festival offers food and drink, including turkey legs and sweet mead wine, pageantry and spectacle, with full-contact jousting, chariot races, and sword fights, as well as shopping for jewelry, pottery, clothing, and other handmade crafts. New highlights to this year's festival include the beheading of Queen Anne Boleyn, a high-wire act, and a high-flying, 65-foot dragon. General admission tickets are \$12.95 for adults, \$6.95 for children ages 5-12, \$10.95 for seniors. The Texas Renaissance Festival is located along FM 1774 midway between Plantersville and Magnolia, about 50 miles northwest of Houston. For more information, call 1-800-458-3435.

MCCR Offers Sign Language Classes

Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection (MCCR) is currently offering sign language classes as part of Deaf Awareness Month. The classes are being taught by Marco Segovia, who attended the Texas School for the Deaf in Austin. The classes started on September 13 and continue on Wednesdays, September 20 and 27 from 7:30-9:30 pm and on Tuesdays, October 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31 from 7-9:30 pm. Registration is \$10 per person. For more information, call Segovia at 680-9979 via Relay Texas at 1-800-735-2988.

Task Force Formed to Help Physically Challenged Participate in Pride Parade

The Pride Committee of Houston has established a task force whose responsibility is to increase the participation of people who are physically challenged within our community. Their goal is to provide a comfortable and accessible setting for those individuals who wish to observe the Pride Week Parade. The task force, chaired by C. Patrick McIlvain, is

asking for information from all groups, businesses, or service organizations who already offer some type of special arrangements for the physically challenged. Contact McIlvain at 713/869-0982 for more details.

Editor Seeks Personal Stories on First Exposures to Gay Icons

Alistair Williamson, a contributing editor to *The Harvard Gay & Lesbian Review* and former Director of Alyson Publications, is accepting submissions for an anthology of essays in which gay men talk about their first exposure to so-called "gay icons." *The First Time I Saw Bette Davis* will be a collection of true, first-person stories by men from around the country and the world that will trace the origins of the influence of gay icons on their lives as gay men. The book is tentatively scheduled for publication in 1997. Deadline for submissions is November 30, 1995. For guidelines, send stamped, self-addressed envelope to Bette Davis Guidelines, c/o Alistair Williamson, 26 Alpha Road, Boston, MA 02124.

Gay and Lesbian Domestic Violence to Be Discussed by Panel

The Bar Association for Human Rights of Greater Houston is sponsoring a panel discussion on domestic violence in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community on Thursday, October 5 from 6-8 pm at the Multiservice Center at 1475 West Gray. On the panel will be Mende Snodgrass, a local therapist, Blanca Balderas, a member of the Houston Police Department's family violence unit, Connie Moore, a lawyer, and Mary Sean O'Reilly, a former judge now working in Harris County family courts. There is no cost for this event, but participation is limited due to room size. For more information, call David Elliot at 713/521-0969.

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Pink Triangle Proven Link to Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals

A new discovery is expected to increase awareness of the persecution suffered by thousands of homosexuals in Nazi Germany. A prisoner armband, imprinted with a pink triangle and the prisoner number 1896, was discovered among the personal effects of concentration camp survivor Josef Kohout, a man arrested by the Nazis in 1939. Though historians had been able to verify that the pink triangle was used by Nazis to mark homosexual prisoners—just as the Star of David was used to mark prisoners of Jewish descent—they were unable, until now, to match the symbol with a particular prisoner's story. Dr. Klaus Müller, a historian and consultant for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., hopes that the publication of this finding in the *New York Times* will encourage more survivors, or their descendants, to come forward with their stories. The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum is now immersed in a \$1.5 million campaign to locate homosexual survivors of the Nazi concentration camps and document their experiences.

Vermont State Official Comes Out

MONTPELIER, Vt. — Ed Flanagan, Vermont's state auditor, has come out during an interview with the *Burlington (Vermont) Free Press*. Flanagan has held the auditor's post for more than two years, turning the usually do-nothing post into a high-profile office that's criticized many of the state's top politicians for what Flanagan sees as a failure of some state officials to serve the public interest adequately. Flanagan said he had decided to take the step of going completely public after marching in this year's gay pride parade in Burlington and because of what he sees as growing anti-gay bias nationally. "I think public

Holy Swinging Lesbian Trapeze Artists!



EDINBURGH, Scotland — The Edinburgh International Fringe Festival, which bills itself as the largest arts festival in the world, has a reputation for outlandish acts among its 14,000 performances by groups from 700 troupes from 32 countries. But among the groups—that includes Alien Sex, Ian Cognito, Jeffrey Dahmer Is Unwell, and Strange Fruit Stageworks—the performers causing the greatest stir seem to be the Club Swing-Appetite, a lesbian trapeze troupe from Australia. Club Swing-Appetite was given the festival's "Moira" award—named after arch-conservative Edinburgh Councilor Moira Knox—who called the lesbian circus act a "dirty-minded disgrace." The trapeze-flying lesbians immediately included Knox's remarks in their advertising fliers and have been drawing record crowds to watch the act that they describe as "a feast of food, sex and orgasmic trapeze."

bigotry creates a moral obligation to respond publicly," Flanagan said.

Mail Order Firm, Shocking Gray, Shuts Down

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — According to the *Columbia, S.C.*, gay newsmagazine *In Unison*, the Texas-based mail-order firm Shocking Gray has shut down and intends to go into bankruptcy. In *Unison* quoted Ed Rhuebart, a New York buyer for the mail-order catalog firm, who said Shocking Gray had laid off its workers, discontinued processing telephone orders and locked its offices. GayNet News Service confirmed that the catalog company's toll-free telephone number used by customers to order the firm's upscale and distinctly gay-oriented merchandise had been disconnected with no forwarding number. Rhuebart is quoted as telling *In Unison* that "Shocking Gray, the catalog, was doing fine. Shocking Gray, the company, was not."

A Gingrich Objects to Georgia County's Anti-Gay Resolution

MARIETTA, Ga. — Candace Gingrich, the lesbian half-sister of House Speaker Newt Gingrich, was one of several speakers who addressed the Cobb County (Georgia) Commission to object to a resolution unanimously adopted by the commissioners two years ago that condemned the "gay lifestyle" as "incompatible" with community standards. Cobb County, which is in the heart of Rep. Gingrich's congressional district, lost out as the locale for the summer 1996 Olympic volleyball preliminaries as a result of the 1993 resolution. Gingrich was joined in objecting to the resolution by Shannon Byrne, the openly lesbian daughter of the chairman of the Cobb County Commission, Bill Byrne.

Gay Republicans Rebuffed by Dole at Opening of Convention

CINCINNATI — In an effort to find "common ground," the gays and lesbians of the Log Cabin Republicans began their sixth national convention in Cincinnati, the object of calls for a national boycott by many rights activists because of the city's passage of an anti-gay ballot measure in 1993. Instead, the gay GOPers got a sharp rebuff from leading Republican presidential contender, Sen. Bob Dole of Kansas. In announcing the location of this year's convention, Abner Mason, president of the Log Cabin Federation, said, "We are looking for common ground. A boycott is not going to accomplish what gay activists are looking for—greater awareness of gay individuals in America." But as the convention opened on August 25, Sen. Dole's presidential campaign office announced that it was returning a \$1,000 contribution from the Log Cabin Republicans. A spokesperson from Dole's presidential campaign said it was the GOP senator's policy not to accept money "from political groups that have

an agenda that is not in line with Senator Dole's position on the issues." Rich Tafel, executive director of the gay Republican organization, said the group was "extremely disappointed" by the Dole campaign move.

National Coming Out Day Founder Dies

TESUQUE, N.M. — Psychologist Robert H. Eichberg, co-founder of National Coming Out Day in 1988, has died of AIDS-related complications at age 50. Eichberg also wrote *Coming Out: An Act of Love*, which describes how people reveal their homosexuality. "His whole life's work was about bridging the gap between gay and nongay communities, allowing people to discover who they are and really encouraging them to go out and do something with that knowledge," said Lynn Shepodd, president of the Santa Fe Lesbian, Gay, and Bi Pride Committee. Eichberg's activism started two decades ago when he established a political action committee for gay and women's rights in Los Angeles. National Coming Out Day is celebrated each year on October 11.

Latvian Lesbians Exchange Vows

RIGA, Latvia — A Latvian-German lesbian couple got symbolically—if not legally—married August 12 by exchanging vows of commitment and rings in the Latvian capital city. It is believed to be the first openly gay or lesbian wedding ceremony in the Baltic nations. After the ceremony, the two women—Astra Indricane and Birgit Bohvinger—went to lay a flower wreath at Freedom Monument, a long-standing tradition among Latvian newlyweds. The Latvian Association for Sexual Equality decided to register homosexual marriages back in 1990 by issuing special certificates, but until now no volunteers had come forward.

Kentucky Bars Boycott Beer Distributor

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — According to a report in *The Letter*, a Kentucky lesbian and gay paper, nine local gay bars and restaurants have begun a boycott of several popular beers because of what activists there called the "right-wing activities" of Donna Shedd, whose husband David is president of River City Distributing Inc. River City Distributing was targeted for the boycott because of Mrs. Shedd's involvement in Kentucky's Eagle Forum, the anti-gay group headed by Phyllis Schlafly. Activists also noted that Mrs. Shedd served on the state Republican Party's executive committee when last year it unanimously passed a resolution in favor of recriminalizing homosexuality in Kentucky. In addition to the popular bars and restaurants involved in the protest, the boycott is also being supported by Kentucky's Fairness Campaign, the Pro-Choice Coalition, the Metropolitan Community Church, and the Louisville chapter of Parents-Friends of Lesbians and Gays (P-FLAG). Organizers say the boycott could cost the distribution company as much as \$15,000 per week in lost sales.

This Male Calendar Is Definitely Trash

HARTFORD, Conn. — Just a brief item for those who like their men... er... "trashy." Like similar calendars in the past that have featured studly policemen and firefighters, the "G-Men of Connecticut" that's due out in September will spotlight 12 hunky men. But the 12 monthly bucks in this calendar are a slightly different kind of public servant—they're 12 of Connecticut's hunkiest trash collectors.

Dutch Gov't Subsidizing Gay Games 1998

AMSTERDAM — The Dutch gay newspaper, *De Gay Krant*, reports that the country's Ministry of Health, Welfare & Sport has announced a grant of \$62,500 to the Gay Games slated to be held in Amsterdam in 1998. The Dutch government regularly subsidizes organizers who work to bring large-scale sporting events to the country. A ministry spokesperson said the government hopes that "more than before, attention will be given to sport for homosexuals, which in turn will promote sporting participation in general." The paper quoted Marc Janssens, an organizer with the Gay Games in Amsterdam, as saying the group hoped to raise some \$625,000 to mount to international sporting competition.

Israel Refused to Give Man His Partner's Death Benefits

JERUSALEM — The Israeli Ministry of Justice has announced that a national court has rejected the claim of Adir Steiner, 29, who had petitioned the courts to receive the death benefits of his longtime companion, a deceased army colonel, after the Defense Ministry refused to extend the benefits to him. The court ruling, quoted by the ministry, said that Steiner and Col. Doron Maisel, who died of cancer in 1991 while in the Israeli army, did "not constitute a nuclear family" and that Steiner was therefore ineligible for Maisel's death benefits. The two men had been partners for eight years before Maisel died.

Zimbabwe Pres. Mugabe Scheduled to Speak in Milwaukee

MILWAUKEE — Robert Mugabe, the autocrat who has ruled Zimbabwe as a virtual private fiefdom since the country gained its independence 15 years ago and who has recently outraged human rights activists with remarks comparing homosexuals to

"pigs and dogs," is scheduled to be the keynote speaker at the second annual International Workshop on Trade & Business between Africa and the U.S., slated for October 25 & 26 in Milwaukee. Mugabe himself is slated to give a keynote address at a workshop banquet on October 25 at Milwaukee's Ramada Airport Convention Center, and activists in the Great Lakes area from Cincinnati to Chicago have begun organizing protests at the site. Among the other notables slated to attend the workshop are Andrew Young, former Ambassador to the United Nations during the Carter administration and currently chairman of the South African Development Fund, Robert Nathan of the U.S. Agency for International Development, and U.S. Commerce Secretary Ron Brown. The workshop, which is aimed at bringing together large corporations, venture capitalists, industrialists, and government officials from southern Africa, is being mounted by International Business & Commerce Inc. in Milwaukee and is being cosponsored by the Metropolitan Milwaukee Assn. of Commerce, the African American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Milwaukee, the University of Wisconsin, the Marquette University Center for International Studies, the U.S.-African Chamber of Commerce, the Corporate Council on Africa, and the County of Milwaukee. During his 15-year rule of Zimbabwe, Mugabe has frequently railed against whites, Jews, stockbrokers, and intellectuals. In early August, Mugabe's government barred the Gays & Lesbians of Zimbabwe from running a



Lily in Closet (seen here in 1984's *All of Me*).

'Celluloid Closet' Ready for Premiere

SAN FRANCISCO — The *Celluloid Closet*, the star-studded and long-awaited documentary by San Francisco filmmakers Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman, will have its world premiere September 6 at the Venice Film Festival, followed by North American showings at the Toronto International Film Festival and the New York Film Festival. *The Celluloid Closet* was produced by HBO and is expected to have a theatrical release in addition to its cable airing. Friedman said from Massachusetts, where he and Epstein are vacationing. The film also has been "unofficially invited" to the Sundance Film Festival next January, he added. Based on a 1981 book by the late film historian, writer, and media activist Vito Russo, *The Celluloid Closet* illustrates the history of gay imagery in Hollywood films and features clips from more than 100 Hollywood movies. Tom Hanks, Whoopi Goldberg, Susan Sarandon, Tony Curtis, Farley Granger, and Shirley MacLaine, each of whom has played gay or lesbian characters, are among the actors who appear in filmed interviews. The film is narrated by Lily Tomlin using a script authored by Armistead Maupin.

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Out In Our World

Continued from previous page

literature booth at an international book fair in Harare, the nation's capital. In a speech, he called gays "sodomists and sexual perverts" and later said gays were "worse than dogs and pigs."

Anti-Gay Violence in Washington Schools Reported

SEATTLE — Among some 27 anti-gay incidents in Washington state schools during the past five years, eight boys and girls reported that they had been gang-raped by fellow school-mates in a survey prepared by the Safe Schools Coalition. Two girls, ages 13 and 14, reported they had been forced to have sex with each other under football bleachers and had then been raped by each of the boys. In some of the assaults, the students reported they had been urinated on or vomited on by their attackers. Three of the anti-gay incidents reportedly took place in elementary schools in the state. State schools superintendent Judith Billings said she would review the coalition's findings.

Congressional Hearings Set on 'Homosexual Agenda' in Schools

WASHINGTON — The Human Rights Campaign Fund is urging gay and lesbian Americans to complain to members of Congress over a decision by Rep. Peter Hoekstra (R-Mich.) of the oversight & investigations subcommittee of the House Education Committee to convene hearings on school programs that deal with sexual orientation. The hearings, which are slated to begin on September 12, were scheduled as a result of lobbying efforts by Lou Sheldon, head of the anti-gay Traditional Values Coalition, who charges that sex education courses promote a "homosexual agenda" in the nation's public schools and are used to "recruit" children.

Italian Protest Called Over Verona Council Action

VERONA, Italy — Verona may have been the setting for Shakespeare's "star-crossed lovers" Romeo and Juliet, but the city councilors have given a cold shoulder to gay and lesbian lovers. The Verona City Council, at the promptings of the right wing and of conservative Catholic leaders, has approved a resolution rejecting a European Parliament statement opposing discrimination against homosexuals. The anti-gay resolution adopted by the Verona council states in part: "Apart from individual moral and religious beliefs, homosexuality contradicts Natural Law itself. The application of the above-mentioned [European Parliament] resolution, among other things, would have a negative effect upon the psychological development of young people who, in such promiscuous heterosexual and homosexual families, would see the failing of one of the basic foundations of the family, that is: the stable union of a man and a

woman." The Verona resolution has no legal impact, but it has become the focus of Italian activists who have called for a demonstration against the Verona City Council on September 30 by activists and gay and lesbian travelers throughout the country.

Veterans Affairs Dept. Bars Bias

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs has issued a policy statement prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation within the agency. The Veterans Affairs policy states that the department "does not condone nor tolerate discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation in any of its personnel policies, practices, and operations."

Episcopal Bishop to Be Tried for 1990 Ordination

NEW YORK — In a highly unusual move, the Episcopal Church in America has announced that retired Bishop Walter Righter of Iowa will face a trial by nine bishops on ecclesiastical charges that he ordained an openly gay man in 1990. Righter ordained Barry Stopfel as an Episcopal deacon while Righter was serving as an assistant bishop in New Jersey. Stopfel was later ordained as a priest by Newark Bishop Shelby Spong. In spite of attempts by Episcopal Church leaders to avoid a church trial, several conservative bishops got the required approval of 75 of the church's 297 bishops to force Righter to stand trial. Righter, who currently lives in New Hampshire, called the move "outrageous."

Lutherans Tired of Sex: No Statement

MINNEAPOLIS — After years of emotional and often divisive debate, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has decided to indefinitely postpone work on a policy statement on sexuality because of its inability to reach any consensus on questions such as the ordination of gays and lesbians or the blessing of same-sex marriages. The 5.2-million member denomination's Church Council has now decided to just put off any statement on sexuality in 1997 because of "substantive differences" within the church. The council said many members of the church were simply "tired of the issue" which its members have wrangled with for several years without resolution.

Michigan Resort Town Nixes Rights Protections

SAUGATUCK, Mich. — The town council of the tiny Lake Michigan resort community of Saugatuck, southwest of Grand Rapids, has unanimously rejected a measure that would have barred discrimination based on sexual orientation. The refusal to adopt the local legislation incensed many activists because the lakefront town of just under 2,000 people is a popular resort with gays and lesbians. The issue

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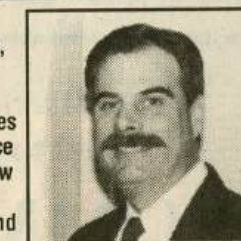


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Out In Our World

Continued from previous page

arose after an innkeeper in nearby Douglas, Michigan, across the Kalamazoo River from Saugatuck, refused to rent a room to two gay men. The town council in Douglas then promptly adopted an anti-bias measure by 7-0, and raised the issue in nearby Saugatuck.

Homophobia Continues to Spew in Zimbabwe

HARARE, Zimbabwe — Joining in on the weeks of bashing of gays and lesbians by Zimbabwean officials, Handsome Gwindi, a leader of the country's Association of Traditional Healers, has called homosexuals "devils or witches." Talking to reporters in the capital city, Gwindi said he agrees with Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe, who earlier in August called homosexuals "worse than dogs and pigs." "Our president is quite right," Gwindi said. "In our culture we don't like that. Homosexuals are seen as devils or witches. It is a foreign thing. It encourages evil. It should be punished." Activists in the country say the virulence of Mugabe's continuing attacks against homosexuals has driven many gays and lesbians into hiding and that others have reported increasing attacks. Frances Lynd of Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe told local reporters that one young woman who recently came out to her family as a lesbian was locked up by her father and repeatedly raped by a prospective suitor.

Bombay Blood Center Wracked by Charges

BOMBAY — India's blood bank system is the latest globally to come under fire for mishandling blood that was infected with HIV. The charges are that a Bombay blood bank run by the India Red Cross Society provided HIV-infected blood to area hospitals between 1992 and 1994. The scandal has caused alarm because the IRCS is supposed to set national blood safety standards in the country. The now-closed center provides about a third of Bombay's annual requirements for blood, and is one of the 16 testing sites that constitute the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO), which was established with an \$87 million grant from the World Bank. The matter was discovered when an IRCS official examined the blood bank's records, which indicated that HIV-infected blood had been delivered to at least 10 city hospitals. There are also suggestions that blood bank employees have been selling tainted blood on the black market, rather than discarding it.

British Activists Protest Islamic Group

LONDON — British rights activists with the group OutRage disrupted an August 13 rally at London's Trafalgar Square by Hizb ut Tahrir, an Islamic fundamentalist organization that advocates the killing of homosexuals and Jews. Twenty gay men and lesbians were taken away by police as they protested the Islamic rally and disrupted speakers from the group. John Jackson of OutRage said, "Our protest was lesbian and gay self-defense against Islamic fundamentalists who endorse the killing by Iran of an estimated 4,000 homosexuals since 1980, and who threaten and intimidate gay students on college campuses in Britain."

Gay Godparent Flap Erupts in U.K.

LONDON — Simon Lawley, a 39-year-old man who was told he could not be his nephew's godfather because he is gay, has called on the Archbishop of Canterbury to make a ruling on the issue that has outraged gays and church activists in England. Lawley wrote to The Rev. Dr. George Carey about the treatment of his family and himself at St. Peter's Church in Farnborough, west of London. Church of England guidelines on godparents stipulate only that they must be Christians. Lawley was asked by his sister, Lizzie Toms, if he would be a godparent to her son Freddie who was born in January. She asked the Rev. Beryl Phillips, one of St. Peter's curates, about it but was told her gay brother would not be an acceptable godfather. St. Peter's officials stood behind their exclusion of Lawley, saying, "This church proclaims that God loves all people but that he also sets boundaries on our behavior. The Church is always being clobbered for not taking a moral stand. Now we are making our policy clear and being clobbered anyway."

\$25 Million Suit Filed in 'Jenny Jones' Killing

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. — The family of Scott Amedure, who was killed after appearing on the TV talk program, The Jenny Jones Show, have filed a \$25 million lawsuit against the syndicated show. Amedure was one of several guests who told other guests on the show that they had secret crushes on them, but in Amedure's case, the object of his crush was Jonathan Schmitz, who said he was heterosexual. Schmitz is currently being held on charges of killing Amedure, and claims he was led to believe the person with a secret crush on him was a woman, not a man. Geoffrey Fieger, the lawyer representing Amedure's family, said, "Jenny Jones is as negligent as Schmitz in creating the scenario in which Scott was gunned down." The suit claims, among other things, that Amedure and other guests were given alcohol before the program to lower their inhibitions.

N.H. School Board Bans Discussing Homosexuality

MERRIMACK, N.H. — Led by newly elected far-right conservatives, the Merrimack school board has narrowly approved by a 3-2 vote a proposal that would prohibit teachers and counselors from discussing homosexuality in a neutral light. The ban would prohibit any neutral discussion of homosexuality in the schools, bar instructional materials that discuss homosexuality from a neutral viewpoint, and prohibit suicide prevention counseling (or even referrals to counseling) for gay and lesbian students.

Austrian Cardinal Quits Amid Molest Charges

VIENNA — Austria's Roman Catholic primate, Cardinal Hans Hermann Groer, has announced that he will step down from his post in September. Groer's retirement comes amid perhaps the greatest crisis the church in the predominately Catholic country has ever faced. Groer has refused to comment at all about accusations made earlier this year that he had sex with a male student at a boarding school some 20 years ago. Josef Hartmann, who is now 37, said he had gone public with the accusations after Cardinal Groer said that men who abuse young boys could never enter heaven. Groer remained silent on the charges, and since then rights activists have also named several other leading Catholic clergy in the country whom they say are closeted homosexuals.

Hawaii Bias Commission Named

HONOLULU — Hawaii Gov. Ben Cayetano has named the commissioners who will study sexual orientation discrimination resulting from same-sex couples not being permitted to legally marry in the state. The panel will make recommendations on legislation next year to overcome the bias against same-sex couples, although most rights activists in the state insist the solution is for the state to simply allow gays and lesbians to marry. The commissioners are: Tom Gill, former Lt. Governor and Congressman; K. Gomes, American Friends Service Committee (Quakers); R. Stauffer, AFSC; M. Britt, Hawaii State Teachers Assn.; N. Kreidman, anti-violence activist; J. Hochberg, attorney with the anti-gay Rutherford Foundation; Marie Sheldon, attorney.

Economics of Legal Same-Sex Marriages

HONOLULU — A study published in the Law Review of the University of Southern California by Jennifer G. Brown, a law professor at Connecticut's Quinnipiac College School of Law, estimates that legalizing same-sex marriages in the state could generate as much as a \$4 billion in additional tourism dollars during the first five years of legal marriages being in effect. Brown also estimated that any loss in tourism from anti-gay conservatives boycotting the state would be more than offset by the boom in gay and lesbian couples flocking to the state to legally marry. Interestingly, Brown considered only three other states likely to beat Hawaii to legalizing same-sex marriages: Nevada, New Mexico, and Vermont—all states with large tourism industries.

Man Charges TV Station Owner With Sexual Harassment

SAN FRANCISCO — An ex-employee at an independent television station, KOFY-TV (channel 20), has filed a lawsuit charging the station's

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Out in Our World

Continued from previous page

owner Jim Gabbert with sexual harassment and creating a hostile work environment. Roger Mele, 27, who worked coordinating commercials for nearly four years at the station, said Gabbert, 58, made lewd and suggestive remarks to him on and off the job. The suit also charges that Gabbert promised Mele salary increases and other prerequisites in exchange for sex, grabbed Mele's crotch in public, repeatedly asked Mele to marry him, offered Mele a new Jeep if he could "have his way" with him, promised Mele expensive trips in an attempt to induce him to have sex, stared at his crotch during meetings, and continuously and repeatedly discussed explicit sexual incidents in the workplace. The suit seeks \$1 million in lost salary, emotional distress, and punitive damages. KOFY attorney Joe Schwachter adamantly denied Mele's accusations and suggested Mele was trying to cash in on an incident last year in which a man accused Gabbert of drugging and raping him. That man later recanted his story and pleaded guilty of making threats against the station owner. "I have done some investigation of Mr. Mele's allegations and have found them to be totally false," Schwachter said. "The only victim here is Mr. Gabbert."

British Study: Sex Education Doesn't Encourage Early Sex

LONDON — A major study published in the British Medical Journal refutes charges that sex education in public schools encourages early sexual experimentation by teens. The study, which surveyed the sexual habits and lifestyles of some 19,000 people between 16 and 59 years of age, found that the average young person in Britain is likely to have had their first sexual experience by the age of 17—just four years earlier than their grandparents' generation 40 years ago. The study also found that young people who said they had learned the

sexual facts of life in the classroom rather than from friends were less likely to have had sex before age 16, the age of consent in the U.K., and were also more likely to have used contraception when they did have intercourse for the first time. One of the concerns of the Social & Community Planning Research which began the study six years ago was to get a clearer picture of the potential spread of HIV in Britain. The report says, however, that sex education classes are not the main source of information for most people—the majority still gained their sexual knowledge from friends, although this pattern was becoming less strong among younger people. Despite the assumed sexual understanding among young people, two-thirds of all those interviewed considered themselves ill-informed about sexual matters at the time of first intercourse, and a third of the women and half the men would have liked more information from school.

Stiff Sentence in Brutal Killing

WICHITA, Kan. — Outraged by the level of violence in the brutal killing of a gay man by his roommate, Sedgwick County (Kansas) District Judge Richard Ballinger sentenced Aaron Beers, 45, to 29 years and 8 months in prison—twice the recommended penalty under state guidelines for a second-degree murder conviction. Beers had been charged with first-degree murder, but a jury convicted him earlier this year of intentional second-degree murder in the March 9 beating death of Kevin Shea, 28. Prosecutors presented evidence during the trial indicating that Beers had stomped and kicked Shea for more than a half hour, drinking beer and talking on the phone during the brutal killing. Judge Ballinger said clinical evidence presented during the trial convinced him to hand down the double sentence. Coroner's reports indicated that all of Shea's ribs had been broken and that several of his internal organs—including Shea's heart—had been ripped from the severity of the attack. Beers had not been charged with a hate crime in connection with the killing, but Judge Ballinger said, "This comes about as close to a hate crime as you can get."

Canadian Lesbians Win Insemination Bias Complaint

VANCOUVER, Canada — Vancouver gynecologist Gerald Korn has been ordered to pay \$3,000 in fines plus damages to a lesbian couple for refusing to artificially inseminate one of the women because they are lesbians. Dr. Tracy Potter and her partner, attorney Sandra Benson, filed a complaint with the British Columbia human rights council after Korn refused insemination services because of the couple's sexual orientation. Korn had originally claimed he had refused his services because he didn't want to get involved in any possible child custody disputes if the couple later separated. But the council ruled that he had refused to give the couple the kinds of services routinely available to heterosexuals solely because they are lesbians.

D'Amato Attacks Colin Powell Over Military Ban

NEW YORK — Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-NY), one of the few Senate Republicans to back President Clinton's efforts to end the military's anti-gay ban, has now criticized Gen. Colin Powell for his opposition to ending the ban. In an interview in the Washington Times, D'Amato called Powell a "disappointment" and said the former head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff applied a double standard in wanting to retain the ban on homosexuals in the armed forces. "He was a young black second lieutenant who had not attended West Point and yet rose through the ranks to become head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff," D'Amato told the Times. "But now he wants to deny gays the same equal rights that enable him to succeed. I thought he would have had a certain sensitivity and say we judge people on the basis of their ability."

Lesbian Sunday School Teacher Forced to Resign for Views

GLASGOW, Scotland — Lesley Craise, an openly lesbian Sunday school teacher, has been forced to leave the Presbyterian Church of Scotland after telling teenagers in her Bible classes that God didn't have to be viewed as a male. Craise's supporters said she was being forced out of the church because of the homophobic views of some members of her congregation. Two other Sunday school teachers in the church have also resigned in protest.



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Unzipped

Reviewed by Eric L. Roland



Designer Isaac Mizrahi (center) and models (l-r) Naomi Campbell and Linda Evangelista.

Flamboyance hasn't worked this well for someone's career since Liberace. But Isaac Mizrahi doesn't wear flamboyant clothes like Lee—he makes them. In the documentary, *Unzipped*, you'll see plenty of Mizrahi's colorfully outrageous clothes as well as his colorfully outrageous personality.

Directed by fashion photographer and Mizrahi's former lover, Douglas Kieve, and brilliantly filmed by Ellen Kuras, the film is an intimate portrait of Mizrahi in the months prior to his 1994 fall collection. Seen auditioning models, talking fabrics, working on sketches, and gossiping madly about everyone he meets (his brief tete-a-tete with Eartha Kitt is particularly entertaining), Mizrahi is caught on camera on his good days and bad ones.

However, Mizrahi's day-to-day life is not what invigorates this film. Instead, what makes this one of the most fascinating documentaries since *Paris Is Burning*, is the insight we get into Mizrahi's vivid imagination. The inspiration for his designs range from a Ouija board to the wallpaper in the men's room of a Parisian café to the halogen-lit lime green grass at Shea Stadium. But what inspires him most, particularly for his fall collection, are movies and television shows that are set in a climate where fur is more than a fashion statement. Mizrahi, who quips that Jackie Kennedy and Mary Tyler Moore shaped fashion in this country, watches *Nanook of the North*, *The Flintstones*, and Loretta Young in *The Call of the Wild* to develop ideas for his fake-fur-fueled Eskimo chic collection.

Intensifying along the way, the documentary climaxes with the actual fashion show, which includes a bevy of supermodels, like Naomi Campbell, Cindy Crawford, and Kate Moss, and an audience dotted with super personalities, like Roseanne, Sandra Bernhard, Liza Minnelli, and Richard Gere. Linda Evangelista, one of the super runway walkers, amusingly whines throughout the show about the lack of high heels, the intrusion of the camera while she's undressing, and anything else she can think to bitch about. Through the mix of black and white and color cinematography and the use of a hand-held camera, the film captures the exhilaration, on stage as well as off, of a high-powered, designer fashion show.

*To Wong Foo,
Thanks for Everything!*
Julie Newmar

Reviewed by Eric L. Roland

To Patrick, Wesley, John, and Beeban, thanks for the great movie! *The Gay Community*. It's not often that we can go to a movie cineplex in middle America (as opposed to an art theater in an urban jungle), see a film set in Nebraska with three straight male actors and a straight female director, and come out of the theater thinking this was one of the best gay

movies we've seen all year.

If you haven't heard by now, *To Wong Foo* is about three drag queens—Vida Boheme,



Three straight men play three gay men who are drag queens: (l-r) Chi Chi (John Leguizamo), Noxema (Wesley Snipes), and Vida (Patrick Swayze).

Noxema Jackson, and Chi Chi Rodriguez, played by Patrick Swayze, Wesley Snipes, and John Leguizamo respectively—who set out on a cross country trip (NY to LA) only to get stalled

in small-town middle America. Their piss-yellow 1969 Cadillac convertible breaks down in Snyderville, Nebraska, where the handful of residents are only somewhat welcoming of three "career girls" with uptown wardrobes. With only a few days to make a sad place happy, the girls make friends, play dress up, and slowly begin to educate "middle America."

Directed by Beeban Kidron, the film is truly a fantasy, and as fantasies go, it has a predictable, happy ending. However, the lack of overall reality is neutralized by the reality of several important sub-topics, including self-esteem, discrimination, and domestic violence. For instance, Miss Vida, who has a heart of gold

and a right hook to match, rescues a frequently-abused local woman (played by the actress-who-couldn't-act-poorly-if-she-tried, Stockard Channing) and pursues a knockout match with the woman's husband.

The movie is full of wonderful, memorable lines and is a comedic joy ride from beginning to end. All three actors do a superb job playing the roles of gay men who pretend to be women, but Patrick Swayze's performance is a notch above the rest. Hopefully, this movie's theme of enlightenment and tolerance will also become this movie's gift to those folks in mid-America and beyond. Then we'll all be able to sit back and enjoy life a little more. ▼



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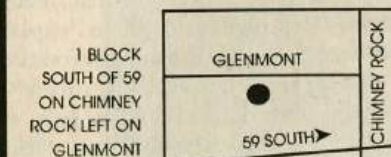
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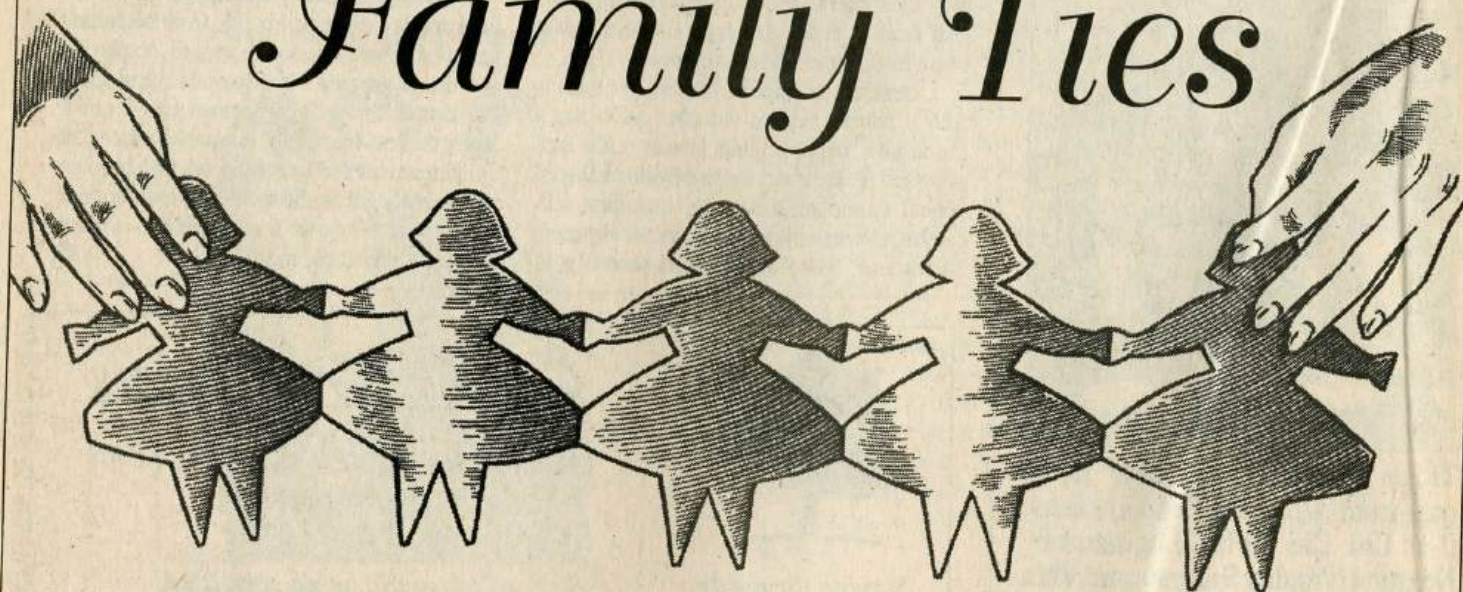
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Family Ties



The pro-gay '90s have brought many triumphs in gay and lesbian parentage. Sadly, culturally, there is one consistent, oft-forgotten casualty — homosexuals who already have children from previous heterosexual relationships. Now rarely mentioned in gay rhetoric, these gay and lesbian phantoms haunt the dark hallways of homo-culture and the straight courts.

The shag is a musty swarm of curly polyester worms, the color of rotten oranges with the illusory consistency of quicksand. Beaten armchairs and battered sofas of the ancient Presbyterian church are mummified in dusty ribbons of dull gold, vomit yellow, pea-green, and ochre, wrapping springs abused from years of heavy, holy asses seated upon them. Dim walls and dying, sputtering fluorescents cast a depressing hue over the room.

It's a strange throwback.

Years ago when quiet conservatives bustled throughout the denominational church, this furniture, this room, was vibrantly contemporary. At that time, homosexuality was a barely discussed, quiet sin. Nowadays, vainglorious non-denominational cathedrals that look like they were designed by Hollywood mall architects host regular exorcisms of homosexuals, their Neil-Diamond-meets-Joseph-McCarthy preachers dunking the faithful neo-faggots in baptisms glowing with God-given neon water, beneath spotlights bought cheap after U2's Zooropa

tour. Strange how the dying denominational sanctuaries are now ministering to the fundamentally forgotten.

And here in this room, a stained glass Jesus carries a tired lamb. Occasionally, he lights up, brought to GE life by the flash of a raging rainstorm over the satanically dark Houston sky.

In this dire setting sit nine men, aged mid-thirty to mid-fifty, all gay fathers here for their weekly meeting.

"When you first come out, you go through a slut phase," explains Norman, a 53-year old man, to no one in particular. "I think my slut phase may be..." "Prolonged?" teases Jack, another father, younger than Norman. Jack is more handsome physically, dark hair, stern, serious, somewhat sexy features, but he wears a more emotionally weathered countenance than the older Norman.

"My God! It's not just a phase," screams Norman in feigned shock.

The men laugh in good-natured humor.

by Steven Foster

The conversation turns to another father, Jerry, talking about a weekend away with his partner.

"We just came back from New Orleans, staying in a little B&B that was just a queen's delight," Jerry bubbles. "Velvet headboard with dragons with necklaces around their scaly throats, blue and silver-streaked walls that glowed in the dark. And, honey, I bought me the most beautiful boa."

"What's a boa?" asks Jack innocently.

Jerry's eyes widen at Jack. "You're not gay!"

Again, the men burst into laughter.

This is the beginning time, full of teasing, telling, and laughing. This meeting of gay fathers resembles an Ab Fab hen party meets well-mannered Robert Bly sweatlodge. Though they giggle and tease now, moments later in this hour-plus meeting, these men will choke back (successfully and unsuccessfully) both rage and sadness while spilling tales of runaway daughters, vindictive ex-wives, tortuous lawsuits, spousal pay-offs, and adultery.

As recently as three years prior, most of these fathers were butchering it up around the barbecue pit on weekends in straight suburbia. Now the smoke from the grill has long dissipated and, happily, the honesty of their sexuality has caught fire.

Sadly, they, like many other gay fathers and lesbian mothers, have been burned — and not solely by their family, but their new community "family" as well.

"The group is a place where we can share our common problems," says Mark, the youngest member of the group. "One of which is the fact that we're not really accepted in either world. A lot of gay people have a real problem with people who are parents. I've experienced *I'm a superior homosexual because I've always been out*. So in that way we don't sometimes fit in with the gay culture or the gay 'lifestyle.' And, of course, there are problems with the straight community accepting gays in general — gay parents even more."

Dave walks out in the rainstorm, locking the door to the church with care and turning to the rain with none.

"Some day there won't be any of us," Dave proclaims. "There won't be any gays having children and then coming out. They'll be out already." He turns the lock with the key. Water dribbles down the doorframe, along the wood of the door, over the already-weathered deadbolt.

"We'll be extinct," he says, almost happily.

Dave is the leader of the group. He is, gay-speaking, wiser than his years. He talks like he has been out forever when, in fact, he only began dealing with his sexuality three years ago.

"My divorce was a non-gay thing," recalls Dave, speaking of his divorce some 25 years prior. "My ex-wife was trying to find herself and she decided she would let me have my daughter."

A single parent, the worst thing Dave had to deal with was "finding transportation for her to school," so gay life was nonexistent in his mind.

"It came about two ways. One, I started working out," he pauses insinuatingly. "You know...straight gym." Once confessed, he laughs heartily.

"I came in contact with a guy or two at the gym. That sort of spurred me on. I never had any kind of relation, dating or anything, just saw this guy."

He pauses.

"Actually, had mutual masturbation across each other in the shower."

This anonymous sexual episode notwithstanding, Dave's gay life was virtually nonexistent.

"Finally I read an article in the paper about AIDS patients and it said if you *live before* you die, you win. I wasn't living, I was existing. I wasn't doing anything. I was staying home. I didn't know anybody who was gay."

After this epiphany, Dave, a successful geologist with a major international energy firm, dug into the gay life with the same dedication with which he pursued his career.

"I joined the gay fathers group, MCCR, had a conference with the pastor, went to a safe sex seminar at the AIDS Foundation. I was gonna make up for lost time," remembers Dave.

Through all this, Dave raised his daughter for nearly 20 years.

"I got custody in the divorce," Dave says matter-of-factly. "My ex-wife was doing a kind of '70s thing and finding herself."

Being a single father came naturally for Dave, and, fortunately for him, coming out to his daughter wasn't that much more difficult. The long-since-past divorce, custody of his daughter, and his ex-wife's recent passing from cancer, Dave didn't have to go



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Family Ties

Continued from previous page

through many of the messy, traumatic anxieties that many gay and lesbian parents must deal with. Yet while he had a somewhat easier row to hoe than others, he still found it difficult telling his daughter.

"The group kept asking me, *Did you tell her yet? Did you tell her yet?*" Dave sighs. "On one of the occasions when someone from the group called and asked me if I'd told her, she was actually listening on the phone. So when I told her, she told me she already knew."

"Being gay, for what I've seen, doesn't change the relationship with your child. If you have a good relationship with your child before, then you tell your child, you still have a good relationship."

"Sometimes people get divorced because they've decided to come out. So they come out, get a divorce, and life changes substantially from then on," explains attorney Connie Moore from her bright, sunny office. Charming, friendly, personable, and wise, Moore has made a name for herself in Houston defending lesbian and gay parents. A sweet smile and musically chiming jewelry give her an animated, sparkling countenance, but get her started talking about law and she's a polished smooth-talker jousting jurisprudence.

"Then, a lot of times, you find people who have been in marriages, have been divorced, and after the divorce, have come

out or gotten into a gay or lesbian relationship and..." Moore levels a gaze. "Occasionally, their ex-spouse will get in an uproar, afraid the lifestyle is endangering the child. They may try to change custody based on this new lifestyle-changing circumstances... because they don't like the new lifestyle."

"So now we live our lives like any straight couple would. We kiss in front of the children and when they ask about things, we say, 'I love John like Mommy loves [her new husband] Alan.'"

Mark exhales, barely masking frustration over his ex-wife's displeasure with his new lifestyle.

"She kinda vented on me tonight. *Why did you marry me? Why did you do this? We shouldn't have had kids!* All this, and I'm like, I'm sorry! I can't disagree with you that it happened!" Frustrated, he stops, inhales, and, breathes.

"She was doing her carrying-the-cross bit because she was married to a gay man."

Like many spouses left by a gay or lesbian mate, Mark's wife was bitter and angry.

Another left-behind spouse explains it this way.

"There is nothing more humiliating," Diana practically yells. "That's exactly how I felt. Humiliated."

Mark's ex-wife felt much the same way, and frustrations truly came to bear when Mark became involved in a serious relationship.

"I wanted to be open with my relationship with John in front of the kids," Mark says. "Whenever the kids came to visit, he would stay in the guest room and finally I got tired of that because it was very awkward. It wasn't fair to him, and it made me feel like I was lying. And I didn't feel like I had anything to be ashamed of." His voice rises in defiance and anger before calming to a slow, measured tone.

"So now we live our lives like any straight couple would. We kiss in front of the children and when they ask about things, we say *I love John like Mommy loves [her new husband] Alan.*"

It was never a consideration for Mark's ex-wife to take him to court, so things are, basically, fairly fine for Mark and his children.

Not every gay or lesbian is so lucky.

"I had been given full temporary custody when we separated," Kim recalls. "But he put two and two together, figured it out, took me to court immediately to change the orders for him to have temporary custody on the grounds that I was a lesbian."

The custody battle raged on for four years and the recent memory still stings.

"He said it was about the kids, but it was never really about the kids. It was about his anger...and the fact that he didn't want me to have any of our community property. My ex-husband belongs to a family who's pretty well known in this city and they have a lot of money."

At the time, Kim's children were 10 and 11. They wanted to stay with their mother, but the simple fact that the husband wanted custody forced the children to be put through the trial and have a court-appointed attorney. Kim had stayed at home with the children all their lives, so with her attorney fees, half the children's legal counsel fees, and the numerous psychological evaluations the courts often force families to go through, Kim found herself in more than just emotional straits. Often Kim rolled one question in her head: Where will I get the money to keep my kids?

But Kim was resourceful and lucky. Setting up a foundation

Continued on page 71

Feng Shui

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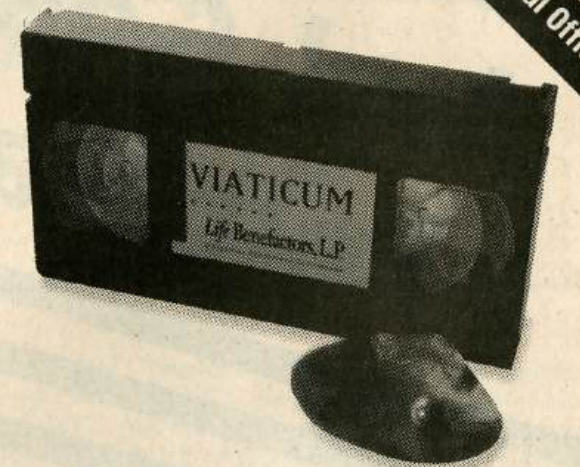
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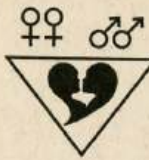
by Blase DiStefano

Exactly 76 years earlier than Candace Gingrich was born (June 2, 1966), gossip columnist Hedda Hopper—who was as famous for her gossip as she was for the hats she wore—was born (June 2, 1890). And the *same* year that Gingrich was born, Hopper died! Coincidence? Yeah, for sure, but a great piece of trivia for trivia's sake.

Candace Gingrich is not famous for gossip or hats; however, she and I did gossip (a little), and her hair does make an attractive substitute for a hat. Professionally dressed, she met me at the *OutSmart* offices at 8:00 a.m. sharp. She had already had a much earlier interview at a local TV station and would have another one at 9:00 a.m. around the corner at KLOL radio. After the earlier one and before our interview, Gingrich and her driver had stopped for breakfast at a local restaurant because "we saw all those pink triangles."

Her schedule is apparently hectic, with interviews starting in the wee hours of the morning and ending in the afternoon—similar to her early childhood schedule, moving on the average of every other year. Because her father was in the military, she lived in Pennsylvania, California, Panama, and Kansas. "But when I was eight, my dad retired," she

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Candace Gingrich

Continued from previous page

says, "and we all moved back and settled in Harrisburg [Pennsylvania]." Her two sisters (one 16 years older, the other 18 years older) had already settled there. Her half brother, Newt Gingrich, now speaker of the House, had already gone out on his own (he's 23 years older than Candace). So, in a sense, Gingrich was an only child, because her sisters had been with her for only the first few years of her life.

Gingrich calls Newt her brother because half brother "only became an issue when he became speaker of the House. We've never said 'half' or 'step,'" she says, "because he was literally the first child in the family. So when the other children came along after that, we didn't even know, and when we did find out, he was already our brother."

While growing up, Gingrich was becoming somewhat aware of her lesbianism. "I had clues," she confesses, "but nowhere to go with the clues—being in Girl Scout camp at age 11 and finding one of the girls cute, going to field hockey camp and thinking the captain is attractive, but knowing I could never say anything." In high school and college, she was closer to realizing her homosexuality. She knew that a lot of her friends who were teachers were also lesbians, "but it's not like we talked about it either. I think they still felt, because of their positions and jobs," she says, "that they couldn't talk about it to anyone." What turned things around for Gingrich was joining the rugby team in her third year of college. "There were some women on the team who were out and proud, and they were comfortable," she admits, "and it just took being with them and being in that atmosphere for me to realize that that was that thing I was on the verge of for so long."

But there was an incident that happened within the rugby team that was the turning point in her life. The president of the team, a straight woman named Stacy, challenged the captain of the team, a lesbian named Sherry. Stacy wanted control of the team and felt she should be leading the team; she said that there were lesbians on the team who held hands and kissed at parties. "This was an incident where we had to support our captain," says Gingrich. "We rallied behind Sherry. We were committed because we weren't gonna put up with that. And I think that really had an effect on finalizing my realization that it was okay, so okay that nobody's gonna deny my right to be who I am." The story had a happy ending for Sherry also. It was decided that Stacy was the one with the problem, and that if she couldn't deal with lesbian teammates, she should exit the team. And if that wasn't enough, Gingrich declares, "Stacy was embezzling our funds along with the captain of the men's team!"

Gingrich is now national spokesperson for the Human Rights Campaign Fund's (HRCF) National Coming Out Project. She is presently on a nationwide tour, according to a HRCF press release, to promote "the values of honesty and openness about being lesbian or gay, and urging people to get involved in the effort to educate Congress about the problem of discrimination and lack of equal rights for gay and lesbian Americans."

"The tour has been incredible," Gingrich says. "I'm meeting a lot of gays and lesbians who don't realize what we're denied. I tell them, 'You can be fired just for being gay.' And they say, 'No. No, this is America. That doesn't happen here.' To know that I'm educating them as well as the general population, who doesn't realize that, I think it's making a difference." Gingrich is aware that thousands of people hear and/or read what she says—"No, it's not special rights we want, it's equal rights." She only hopes that "that wipes out a good bit of the propaganda that the radical right

has been trying to spread."

Gingrich will be involved in our nation's upcoming Coming Out Day on October 11, 1995. Last year there were over 300 events across the country; many more are expected this year. She will also be appearing in Dallas on October 8 because, Gingrich reveals, "the local groups have contracted with the state fair people to have a gay day on Sunday at the Texas State Fair." Gay Day at the Texas State Fair!

From statewide events to nationwide television, Gingrich is on the move. I began the interview by talking to her about one of her mother's comments about her in a recent profile of Gingrich on NBC-TV.

DiStefano: On *PrimeTime Live*, your mother was asked, "Do you ever look at Candy and say, 'How in the world could a liberal Democrat, lesbian daughter come out of this conservative Republican family?" She said, "That Democrat, though, that's the part that slayed me." [Laughter from both.] **That was such a wonderful answer. It sounds like she accepts your homosexuality.**

Gingrich: She does. I think to some extent there's a lot that she still doesn't understand, because truly when she was growing



Candace Gingrich: as American as the stars and stripes (pictured here with Blase DiStefano).

up, it wasn't talked about or seen in the media, but it was still there. So, yeah, pretty much from day one, anything else that they knew about me, it was like, "Okay, everyone, Candace is a lesbian"—fact, poof. "So, if we're having family dinner, Candace will be bringing a woman with her." I've never encountered any difficulties with them. It's only the Democrat part she has a problem with.

Was it the same with your father?

My dad's a Reagan Democrat, so as far as the Democrat part goes, he doesn't have anything ill to say about me, because he was a Democrat up until 1980

or so. And we never talked about my being lesbian. In my eyes, I see it as a typical father/daughter relationship. We did stuff together—we went fishing, we watched football—but it's not like if I had a problem I would talk to him about it.

And that's why P-FLAG is so great. Parents go through their own coming out process—"Do we tell our friends, do we not tell our friends?" "Is it our fault, isn't our fault?" With that kind of stuff, P-FLAG has really made a difference. In every city I've gone to so far, whether it's Columbia, South Carolina, or Baton Rouge, Louisiana, P-FLAG parents are always there, and they're always so happy that I'm doing what I'm doing.

Coming out seems to be a pretty slow process sometimes.

It is. Well, when you get messages from age zero that gays are bad, evil, and wrong, it's a self-fulfilling prophecy that some people can't help but believe it themselves.

There are a lot of parents nowadays who are really cool about all this, though many people say they don't think it's getting better for gays.

I think it definitely is. It's a matter of education and helping. I know when I had that initial discussion with my mom, the things she said to me were echoing the prevailing stereotypes and myths: What did your father and I do wrong? She actually said that. It just



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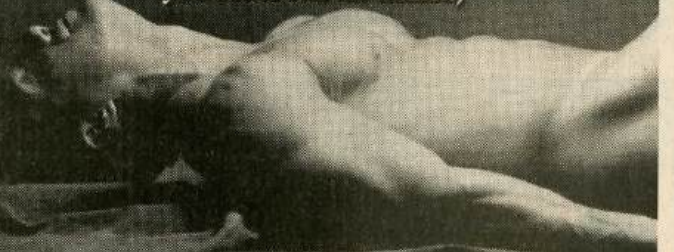
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Candace Gingrich

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takes time, so we can get them to understand that there's nothing wrong.

Did religion play a part in any of this?

Not that I was aware of. My mom still goes to church every Sunday, and I used to when I was growing up, but I'm not a religious person. I just remember going to church—that was what we did. It was Sunday, you go to church.

Not being religious, are you in the least bit spiritual?

I believe in myself. But I guess I'm borderline agnostic. Probably more toward the atheist side if anything. But that's just me. I kinda think that if there's a higher being, they're either really mean or they don't give a crap, or they'd be doing something by now.

Are your friends religious?

The majority of my friends are kind of non-denominational. I know they have their own beliefs, and some of them do go to church, but most of us don't, but that's a very large generalization about my friends. For a lot of them, it's not any kind of shunning of the church. It's not "I don't go to church because they don't accept me," it's just a lot of them don't go anymore. If anything, I probably have more friends who are into a Zen philosophy on things.

Were you out before your brother's popularity?

Well, you'll have to explain that. A lot of people would argue as to whether he's popular or not.

[Laughs] Maybe I should have used a different word.

Do you mean since he was in office or since he became speaker?

Speaker.

Oh, okay. I was out in the community somewhat, pretty much out to my family, out to my friends, out at work. But I didn't really take it any further than that. I never went to any protests, I never lobbied, I never did anything that would put me out there.

By your brother doing this, I imagine it's really been good for you in the sense that being an out lesbian has pushed you to become more political.

It's a wonderful thing. I'm very happy about it, Blase. I'm so happy. Sometimes that's how I open when I do my town hall and talk about my story. I was just an average apathetic lesbian. There was some degree of not wanting to piss my family off that I was very aware of. They never said to me, "Keep quiet, we don't want people knowing you're a lesbian," but I still felt that.

Plus, I was apathetic, I wasn't worried at all as far as any more rights being taken away. I had seen things happen in the 103rd Congress, challenges to things that I was concerned about and then saw them either upheld or not passed, like Sen. Jesse Helms' [R-N.C.] amendments. That all changed in November [1994] because the Democrats weren't in power anymore, so to speak.

And anytime you get Helms being the chair of any committee, I don't think it's good for us. So it was kind of twofold: that really opened my eyes, and because of that my brother became speaker, and if my brother hadn't become speaker, the reporter would never have come and asked me if I was gay, and I would never have had a chance to do what I'm doing.

It was similar to the Anita Bryant ruckus in the 70s—because of her homophobia, hundreds of gay people here in Houston got together to march in protest of her visit here. It's almost like, "Thank you for being so homophobic."

Seriously, I almost wanted to thank Jesse Helms for saying that crap about a need for more money for a disease that people

O U T ▼ S M A R T

brought upon themselves for their deliberate disgusting behavior [the Ryan White bill]. Thank you, Jesse, thank you very much. Jesse, who's the bill named after? So, it was like thank you for being a jerk, and thank you for showing everyone else that you're a jerk—we already knew that.

Because there are all these jerks, it helps us to actually push forward.

It's a sad dance to be dancing.

The radical right has done a good job, haven't they?

It's frightening. I still don't think that I could sit here comfortably and say, "I'm an inspiration to people." But I think people do see themselves in me. A lot of people think that someone else is gonna take care of things for them—"I don't need to get involved; these other people are doing it." When people realize that just sending one letter to their member of congress, in the congressperson's eyes, he or she sees a thousand constituents in that one letter, it really makes a difference.

It's really important that we keep an open dialogue with the people that are making laws for us. Anybody that's making decisions that affect your life, you need to be talking to them. When we had Harrisburg Pride, where I'm from originally, I told the crowd, "Look, you have two senators in this state [Pennsylvania]. Senator Arlen Specter is a Republican candidate for president, and no matter what your thoughts are of him, he's got a 70 percent voting record on gay issues. He voted the right way on everything on Ryan White. Our other senator,

Senator Rick Santorum, voted with Jesse Helms up until the very end. Do you like that? Do you like having a senator represent you that way? If not, write a couple of lines. "Dear Senator, I don't appreciate your voting with Mr. Helms. He's a bigoted, prejudiced man, and I would appreciate it if you wouldn't side with him anymore. Your constituent."

People forget—and politicians forget sometimes too—that they're working for us. We're their bosses.

Are there any statistics that show how many people might come out on any given Coming Out Day?

I don't think so. I think HRCF formulated the project so that people would think about and realize how important it is to come out every day or at least think about it. We do actually come out every day—when you meet someone new, do they know, should we tell them, that kind of stuff. And it really helps to come out to people. When you put a face to discrimination, it's not just, "Oh, gay people can lose their jobs." It's like, "Bob, my neighbor, can lose his job," or Jill at the gas station or whatever.

And then you'll tell some friends, and they'll say, "Well, I knew, but I was just waiting for you to talk to me about it." When I came out, I went back home to my friends and told them, and they basically said, "Well, it's about time."

Now let's play pretend. Let's make believe that the next president has to be a woman, and it's your choice. Who would she be?

Last time I was asked that question, I said Ann Richards [former governor of Texas].

Is your answer any different now?

If I have to pick a woman and put her in office, she doesn't

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Candace Gingrich

Continued from previous page

necessarily have to be a politician. I think Alice Walker [Pulitzer Prize-winner and author of *The Color Purple*] would make a really good president. She probably wouldn't enjoy it, but she would be good.

There was a period some time ago when I thought Barbara Jordan [former U.S. representative] would make a great president.

The woman I was discussing this with (when I said Ann Richards) also said Barbara Jordan. I thought that was a really good answer. So, we could have an Ann Richards/Alice Walker ticket.

Well, let's pretend the vice president has to be a male politician.

Well, I think that Al Gore would make a very good vice president; I think he already makes a very good vice president. And in some ways, he's been more attentive to the gay community than the president has. I think he's a very compassionate and caring guy.

Do you think that because he's the vice president, he has the luxury to be more compassionate? If you're the president, you have to be more cautious.

That's possible, but from all that I've heard, that's pretty much the way he was before he became vice president. But you're right, becoming president, I'm sure changes a lot of stuff...

Can you imagine!? You really have to be a politician. When you're president, all you think about must be...

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Yeah, he has. But the problem is that although the majority of the country is for equal rights, the radical right people have so much damn power that they control people. It's very scary.

Speaking of controlling people, I guess we really haven't touched on your brother that much.

It was going so good, Blase. We didn't have to talk about him at all, but nooooo.

My God, I have to get at least one quote!

I don't know if he wears boxers or briefs. I really don't.

Oh, what a bummer. You really don't know?

No, I don't.

And God knows, he's not gonna tell us.

For some reason, I think he wears boxers, but I'm not sure.

This is kind of interesting, because when President Clinton was asked that question on MTV, he said boxers. I asked Todd Haynes, a director I recently interviewed, if he wore boxers, briefs, or nothing, and he said something like, "That depends, is that during the day or at night?"

Much better than Newt's response when he was asked [also on MTV]. He does that all the time, and that bothers me.

Do you know what that might be about? Is there no sense of humor about the situation or did he feel that...

I think that sometimes he just doesn't have a sense of humor about things. In the past six months or so, or since he's become speaker, I can't even count anymore how many times he's said to reporters, "That's a stupid question. That's a dumb question. You should be ashamed. You should be embarrassed." Saying those things to reporters...

...even when it's not about boxers or briefs. In effect, it probably is a stupid question, but it's a fun question.

The press is the press. You have fun with them, they have fun with you. It's MTV, Newt. It's not Lawrence Welk, it's not The 700 Club, it's MTV.

I recently heard someone say that maybe the reason Newt didn't want to answer that question is because he wears ladies' lace panties.

Maybe something from Victoria's Secret. Believe me, if I knew that, the whole world would know!

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She's the one on the show who's the lesbian.

Andi Morgan is a home girl. 32. Blonde. Buoyant. Grew up in Friendswood. Andi is, by the way, her drag name, which she has found to be much more 90s commercially viable and enchantingly androgynous than her birth name Shari Johnson. She answers to both, but that's as close to leading a double life as she cares to get.

She attended U of H and Alvin Community College, where she majored in TV. "I wanted to produce and direct, because I always thought that would be so neat. That's the power seat." Like Mary Tyler Moore? "I tried the hat-flip thing, but it didn't work."

Interview by Nancy Ford

YOU CAN SAY THAT ON THE RADIO

"When people who find out that I work for 101, especially with Stevens & Pruitt, it's like, 'Oh, wow....' And it's nothing like that. These guys are not homophobic. They're trying to understand. They do their show, and their show is successful because it's the kind of show it is. And, yes, it's on the edge, but because it's on the edge is why we can talk about gay issues."

Maybe that's why they call it "outlaw radio."

Those gay issues have been addressed in the form of live interviews with Candace Gingrich, Gay Comedy Jam's Scott Kennedy and Kevin Maye, the Lesbian Ladies of Laughter, and a host of other gay/lesbian newsmakers. But it wasn't until Andi was inspired to "protect her territory," so to speak, that she directly addressed her own gay issue on the air.

Less than a month after Andi had started working at KLOL, actor and former *Saturday Night Live*-er Julia Sweeney was in town promoting her movie, *It's Pat*. "She had been [interviewed on their show] a day or two before. You know, Stevens & Pruitt are going to joke with [people they interview]."

"Anyway, the show went really good, they thought. Then she went over to one of the gay publications and just slammed them! She called them homophobic and dirty. She slammed them about how they didn't understand the gay community, and all this stuff."

"So that morning I came to work, and I heard them griping about this article that came out slamming them, so I called in on the hot line and said, 'Guys, I have something to say about this. Y'all aren't homophobic. I work for you.' And it just went from there."

"The guys [Stevens & Pruitt] knew I was gay. I just wasn't out on the air...yet. Actually, I was discussing it with my immediate boss, 'cause I thought it would add to the show. That way I could be real; I could really talk about my life. And I don't think there were any other lesbians out on any of the major stations."

For obvious reasons, Andi is now an often-featured favorite on KLOL's *Woman-to-Woman* segment, a kind of lesbian (or, lesbian wanna-be) *Love Connection*. The setup is simple: Woman A calls the studio, saying she's attracted to Woman B. Stevens & Pruitt call Woman B at work or at home or on the mobile phone as she's dropping her youngest at KinderCare, and connect her with Woman A. Then just sit back and watch the mayhem! Andi recognizes that this kind of forum can work for or against the positive visibility she strives to bring to the program. "They had two lesbians on one time, and they were just so defensive! They

Following a flip in her declared major that *did* work, Andi began her professional pursuit of power—air power—on the southwest Texas radio waves in 1983 as sidekick to Magical Matt Allen and Chris Kelly at KRBE. Shortly thereafter, during a stint while working as a disc jockey and program director at Z107, she found her closet becoming stuffier and stuffier. "It was a pain, 'cause I always had to change all the pronouns."

In a move that could only be described as jumping from the frying pan into the fire, Andi began working "for a Christian network, across the country, coast to coast, from New York to Los Angeles. They never knew, but I was out at that point."

Ironically as it sounds, she had had a taste of being out at the Christian network, as she found herself not the only silent "family member" at a facility that should be more noted for its "family values." Yes, indeed, we are everywhere. Evidently, a taste was all she needed when Shadow Broadcasting hired her as operations manager, providing news, sports, weather, and traffic updates for 18 radio stations. This placed her in front of the microphone in the KLOL studios, across the desk from Mark Stevens & Jim Pruitt in the summer of 1994—one year after Melissa Etheridge had come out to the national press in Washington, DC. Timing is everything.

New job, new bosses, new personalities, new precedences, new asses to kiss, new pronouns to change. Would she or wouldn't she?

Andi Morgan comes out to the world over 100,000 watts.



Out in Outlaw Radio

Having come out to her family, it made no sense to Andi to continue the charade at her job. After all, weren't her listeners also part of her extended family? "The more I found out about myself, the more I found out you're not helping anybody by staying in the closet. I decided, I'm just not going to do that anymore. It's frustrating as hell. I'm tired of it."

Yeah, yeah, yeah. We've heard it all before. But there's a big difference between being out to some members of your family, being out to some people at work, and actually coming out to the world over 100,000 watts.

were talking about not liking men and the typical stuff. I had to come on afterwards and clean up the mess. There really are lesbian stereotypes out here, but I really don't think that's the majority at all. I think it's the minute minority. I'm tired of being stereotyped."

"The important part is, I'm a woman—one, I'm a disc jockey—two, and I just happen to be a lesbian. I think it's more important to show [straight listeners] that, 'You know what? I'm just like you.'"

At press time, the powers-that-be at KLOL were making the

Photographs by Gabriel T. Photography



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Andi Morgan

Continued from previous page

decision whether or not to give Andi her own show which she would dee jay, produce, and not change her pronouns. "There's a station in Chicago called The Bear. On the weekends they have lesbian deejays, and it's one of the top-rated shows." As far as she knows, she'd be the only out lesbian dee jay south of the Mason-Dixon line, the key word being *out*.

She counts on two hands the number of associates in her profession whom she strongly speculates to be "family"—prominent and easily recognizable faces in the media. Why has she come out and they haven't?

"I know there are more than a few lesbian disc jockeys in this city who just don't say anything about it. They aren't out—I don't think—to their employers. Houston may be a big city, but in terms of the gay/lesbian community, it's a small town. It's nearly impossible to go out and stay in at the same time." Once, while dancing at Plaza 9200, she bumped—literally—into a fellow radio-phile. "There was [somebody from another local station]. Neither one of us had told the other. We both suspected though. I don't know. We have to figure out the right vocabulary. You know, you can't just walk up to someone and say, 'Hey, are you gay?'"

PRIDE AND PROPRIETY: IT'S A FAMILY THING

Andi is definitely a "family" kind of person. She speaks of her own family—the biological one—with pride and love that comes from unconditional acceptance. "My mother didn't know anything about being gay. There's no way she could have counseled me. The only thing they knew was *Liberace*.

"My mom's real religious. Spiritual. She hates that word 'religious.' She's 'spirit-filled,' okay? She's a *real* Christian. They're real involved in the church. They go to a Catholic church, but it's not a problem at all. She had questions. My mom did the right thing—she asked questions. She wanted to understand; she wanted literature, she wanted books. First thing I did was to send my mom and dad to that seminar—P-FLAG's 'Healing the Hurt.' It changed my mom's whole attitude. Then she started picking up on all this stuff; she went to see *Philadelphia* and started crying. She started relating."

It is this kind of support that has been instrumental in giving Andi the confidence to not compromise herself or her values on the air. And it's this unwillingness to compromise those values when she ponders the negative and positive impact of growing gay visibility.

"I thought the Gay Pride Parade was great. I bring my family to these events. I go to their stuff. I go see [her nephew] play soccer. I go and show my support. When my community has something, [my family members] come. The Pride Parade was great, and I thought it was a great idea, having the stage out on Lovett." As one of the original organizers of the Houston's enormously popular annual summer extravaganza, Freedom Fest,

KLOL's Mark Stevens (of Stevens & Pruitt) remembers the day Andi came out on the air:

"It was a cool happening, to have a lesbian come out on our show. It was a surprise. We had no idea what she was going to say. We were talking about lesbianism and here comes Andi. She starts talking about her tastes [he laughs in that voyeuristic yet coy manner that radio gods are famous for] and her desires and her preferences. So we kind of celebrated that for weeks. It was the talk of the show. People were saying, 'Cool!'—most people. I don't think we got any adverse [reaction]. I think the people who listen to Stevens & Pruitt understand.

"We're trying to give our audience the message—don't be homophobic. It's nice to be able to have close gay friends on the show. We joke on everybody—heterosexuals, bisexuals. A lot of people take that sometimes as being anti-this or anti-that. We're not anti-anything. We bust everybody."

Andi has a deep understanding and appreciation of this kind of event, and the potentially unifying effect it can have on any community. "I tell you what, I have never heard [Sheila Jackson Lee] talk that way. I was impressed. She's not gay, but she understands human rights. She made me have goose bumps.

"Then they had the music." Slowly Andi begins to fidget in her seat at the Montrose restaurant where we've met for lunch and conversation. She's not quite sure how to broach the following topic, but evidently, it is important enough an issue for her to pursue.

"I think that the organizers need to understand that we have our families there. We might have a 12-year-old or a 6-year-old in the crowd. If you're going to have something like Fem 2 Fem where they're taking their clothes off and embarrassing the community, I think you need to tell the community not to bring their families. They're just going to get the stereotype."

She takes a drag off her cigarette that she's toying with more than smoking; she inhales, thinks, exhales, the process as distasteful to her as the topic of conversation. "I'm not the only one who wants to bring their families. You fight against this every single day, this stereotypical stuff. The vast majority of heterosexuals don't understand that [gay men and lesbians] have the same feelings that they feel for their husbands or wives or boyfriends or girlfriends. Then they see this blatant display of crap. I left before it was over. I was sick."

She puts the cigarette out. She's calmer now. "I'm not blaming the committee; I'm not sure the committee knew that was going to happen. But I'll tell you this, I blame someone for not stopping it."

Powerful words? Perhaps. They sound like words Mary Richards might say if she ever came out to Mr. Grant. By coming out—and living out—unapologetically, unconditionally in this most public arena of commercial radio, Andi Morgan illuminates and educates her thousands of listeners—gay or straight, liberal or Aryan. She's holding her own on these previously hetero-dominated airwaves, smashing stereotypes and rewriting the unwritten rules of rock radio. Even at that ungodly hour of the morning, she pretty much turns the world on with her smile. You might even say she can take a nothing day, and suddenly make it all seem worthwhile. If you doubt that, wake up early, turn on your radio and just listen. ▼

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

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Suzanne Westenhoefer performed her first stand-up, standout comedy routine in July, 1990, with a three-minute open mic comedy bit in NYC, which she now describes as "hideous." Half a decade and much better material later, besides starring in her own HBO special, Westenhoefer has enjoyed major television exposure on ABC's Day One, Evening at the Improv, VH-1's Buster's Comedy Hour, Caroline's Comedy Hour, Out There on Comedy Central, and a host of other appearances.

Westenhoefer is one of those modern-day role models that lesbians and gay men over 20 years of age lament never having had while growing up. She's a lesbian comic who doesn't change her pronouns—never did. She's a human visual aid, having given seminars on gay/lesbian visibility to high-school sex education classes before radical right-influenced state legislatures, like New Hampshire's, began prohibiting any sort of positive image of sexuality other than the hetero flavor. As *lesbo comics* go, she's a next-generation Kate, more prime-time friendly than Lea, and more, well... let's just leave Ellen out of this discussion altogether.

On Tuesday, October 3, Lone Star Entertainment brings Suzanne Westenhoefer's one-woman show, Nothing in My Closet But My Clothes to Houston's Laff Stop, 1952-A West Gray for two performances, officially kicking off a number of activities spotlighting October's annual National Coming Out Week.

Prior to coming to Houston, she talked to us from her home in Columbus, Ohio, where she took time to talk seriously about how important it is to her to be known as one of the funniest lesbians on the planet.

Lesbian comedian.

I have corrected people when they say, "She's a comedian." I say "Lesbian comedian." I know what I am. Somebody calling you something doesn't make you something, but the reason that I try to say it as often as possible and make sure it's a part of what is out there printed



LESBIAN COMIC SUZANNE WESTENHOEFER PLAYING THE ROLE OF A MODEL ROLE MODEL

BY NANCY FORD

about me, is about being a visible role model lesbian for people who grew up like I did, and who are still growing up like that, who don't know who they are. They need role models. They need to know.

Not a lesbian?

When I knew that I was a lesbian I was about 20, 21 years old, in college in northwestern Pennsylvania. I didn't know in high school. I had some inklings. I looked like a straight girl. I didn't play sports. I had a boyfriend who I cared about deeply. Having no role models, except for women who were involved in sports, I just assumed that I wasn't [a lesbian]. Isn't that awful?

No pictures of lesbians.

What I remember most about it was making the assumption that I thought I knew what a lesbian was. I wasn't *not* aware that I had sexual or romantic feelings toward women. I *certainly* knew that. But you know, if you think there are no pictures of lesbians in your books, there's nothing to show you.

It's a Jungle Out There.

What did sort of tip me off—a little tiny alarm getting set off—was, I was between the ages of 16 and 17, and I was working in a mall at the great big Woolworth's department store at the candy counter. I met this guy; he was older—like 21. He would come in and visit me at the Woolworth's and just talk to me. He was very sweet; there was never anything sexual. Then one day he comes in with this letter and a book, and he says "This book is going to mean so much to you someday, I promise you." Guess what the book was? *Rubyfruit Jungle*. I'm praying he shows up at one of my shows someday. I want to ask him, "What did you know?" Was he a gay guy, too? Did he see it in me?

See what the guy at the candy counter saw in Suzanne before she gets to be too big a deal to play Houston. Call the Laff Stop at 524-2333 for reservations.

Buffalo. Christmas Eve. 1960. Gay tidings: Gay Bob, a beautiful bouncing baby boy, is born to the Smiths. (The "Buffalo" is the city, not the animal; the "Smiths" are the parents, not the band; and the "Gay" is both the feeling and the orientation.)

The Smiths may be the only lucky people to have witnessed Bob's unrefined humor for most of his 34 years, but we can behold his honed humor for two nights in October at Houston's Laff Stop.

Smith has the distinction of being the first openly gay comedian to appear on *The Tonight Show* and have his own HBO comedy special. He was also the head writer and one of the performers on Comedy Central's *Out There*, and Smith wrote the comic monologues for a screenplay about a gay stand-up comic based on Paul Monette's book, *Halfway Home*, for Steven Spielberg's company, Amblin. Bob's recent book, *Growing Up Gay*, published by Walt Disney's Hyperion, received great reviews and immediately sold out its first printing. According to the press release, *Growing Up Gay* is "even going to be published in Italian! Talk about Homo L'uomo!"

Smith's other TV appearances include A&E's *Evening at the Improv* and Tom Snyder's late-night talk show. He also writes a humor column for *Men's Style Magazine*, is working on a screenplay about a gay son in a Mafia family, and is writing his own book to be published by Bantam in 1996.

This is one really busy guy; however, not too busy to do a phone interview while on vacation in Provincetown.

Is Bob Smith your real name?

Yeah. But I changed it from John Doe.

[Laughs] If you had to change your name, what would you change it to?

John Doe. Actually, I like my name.

Are you in a relationship?

Yes. His name is Tom.

For how long?

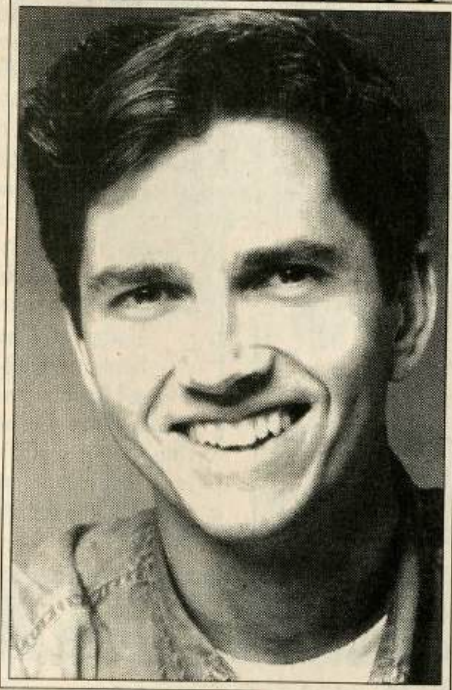
We're going on seven years.

Where did y'all meet?

In New York. We were both cater-waiters.

Congratulations on being together for seven years. When's your anniversary?

HE'S OUT HE'S FUN HE'S GAY BOB



Interview With Comedian
Bob Smith
by Blase DiStefano

Valentine's Day. That was when we had our first date.

Assuming you have to travel around a lot, have you both adjusted to it?

We've kind of adjusted to it, but it kinda stinks. Usually, I'm not away for that long, but this Saturday [Sept. 9], I'm going to Australia until October 1.

Have you performed there before?

Twice. Tom came one time for the Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. This time I'm doing a show with an Australian lesbian comedian. If it goes well, I could go back every year and work. It's a wonderful place.

Is the Mardi Gras very big?

The Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras is so big, they actually televise it for an hour on that Sunday night, and they cover it like the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. It was so popular the first year for an hour that this year they did two hours. It's really a neat country.

I had a friend who would go there every chance he got. The law required that he leave after six months, but he would return as soon as the law allowed.

They now have a law there that if you have an Australian boyfriend, you can acknowledge your relationship to the government, and they will treat it like they would treat a couple.

They seem to be somewhat advanced.

Everybody thinks they're 20 years behind the times, but in a lot of ways, they're very hip.

Speaking of hip, was the Gay Bob doll modeled after you?

[Pauses, laughs] No. [Pauses] I'm even more plastic.

Where would you take Newt Gingrich on a date?

"Newt, I don't think I can make the date. I'm not feeling well."

What do you think of outing?

I'm not in favor of it. If someone was really evil and homophobic, I guess it would be fair. I read this book review of a biography of Vincente Minnelli, and the biographer said that Vincente Minnelli was gay, and that was the big news in the biography! I thought like, "Duh, he married Judy and created Liza."

[Laughs] How could he not be gay.

Yeah, what a big shock!

When and how did you come out to your parents?

Comedian Bob Smith*Continued from previous page*

On Thanksgiving, I said, "Mom, would you please pass the gravy to a homosexual?" She passed it to my father. And a terrible scene followed.

[Laughs] Okay, now for real.

I came out to them after college, right around Christmas. My mother went into shock right away and said, "You should talk to a priest." And I felt like saying, "Mom, the priest is gay."

[Laughs] Really, did she have a difficult time with it?

Initially. But, there was a big article on me in the *Buffalo News*—I'm from Buffalo—and she showed it to everyone. And she asked people to watch my HBO special, and she was telling people about my appearance on *The Tonight Show*.

How was it being out on *The Tonight Show*?

Obviously, I was very nervous—I mean I was gonna be on *The Tonight Show*, and I was gonna talk about being gay, which no one had done before. What helped was that the big guest was Garth Brooks. When I stepped out from behind that curtain, a quarter or third of that audience was wearing cowboy hats, 'cause they were all Garth Brooks fans. I thought, "Yeah, this is my dream audience." But they were great. What was fun too was that they showed Jay [Leno] and Garth Brooks laughing at my jokes. It was really fun.

Garth Brooks is pro-gay, and I think his sister is a lesbian, so...

Oh, he was really friendly. At one point, someone from the audience brought a little T-shirt up for his daughter, and he asked

me, "Bob, have you ever considered having kids?" I said that I had thought about it but I didn't know if I was going to. He goes, [imitating Garth Brooks] "Well, it's the greatest thing in the world." I thought that was cool of him to not assume that gay people wouldn't want kids.

He was just treating you like he would have anybody else. That was very nice. I know that you've been on *Howard Stern* several times. What do you think of him?

Howard can go berserk. I don't endorse everything Howard has said or done by far, but when we [with two other gay male comedians] first went on, it was more like a dare kind of thing—I hate that idea that gay people are victims and afraid of doing something. Then I went on last year by myself and covered the Gay Games for him. You just have to be very assertive. If he says something really stupid, you say, "Howard, that's stupid." He would ask stuff like, "Bob, do you think I'm attractive?" "No way, Howard, not with that hair."

The first time we went on, he had Andrew Dice Clay call in—it was a setup—and Andrew said something like, "I'm making this movie, Howard, and it's got a really great cast. It's got Wayne Newton and Priscilla Presley." And we started laughing. We're like, "Oh, yeah, they sound great. I hear they're gonna do Shakespeare in the Park." Howard started laughing at Andrew Dice Clay like he got the joke. And Andrew Dice Clay got off the phone so quickly, it was unbelievable.

So it had already been set up for Clay to call in?

Since there were these gay comics, I guess he thought there might be some controversy. Instead, it spun around, and we knocked out Andrew Dice Clay.

Has Clay changed his tune?

Yes, I think he's stopped doing any homophobic material. He got a lot of grief from that and rightfully so.

Not to veer too far from the subject of Andrew Dice Clay, what are your feelings on gun control?

I not only think there should be a seven-day waiting period to buy handguns, I think most people need a seven-day waiting period to buy anything.

[Laughs] What is your take on religion?

I was raised Roman Catholic. According to the Catholic Church, they say it's okay to be homosexual as long as you don't practice homosexuality. And I say it's okay to be Catholic as long as you don't practice Catholicism.

[Laughs] What about Bill Clinton?

Some things he's done good; some things I'm not too happy about. However, none of the Republicans seem more appealing to me. It's not just the gay issue—people think you vote for one thing—I'm really involved in environmental issues. I think dismantling all the environmental laws is a crime. I'm certainly not going to vote for Bob Dole who returns a thousand dollars from the gay Republicans.

And the last—but not the least—important question: Do you wear briefs, boxers, or nothing?

[Laughs] Briefs. Newt Gingrich's, but I don't know where I got them from. ▼

Bob Smith will be both the special guest host and the opening act at the Laff Stop for "Gaylapalooza" on October 17 and 18. Headlining these two nights will be Houston's own Scott Kennedy and Kevin Maye with their sellout show, *The Gay Comedy Jam: Freedom Tour*. The show is "homo-humor that is hetero-friendly." Tickets are available at the Laff Stop (1952 W. Gray) for \$12 (advance) and \$15 (the day of the shows). For more information or to charge tickets by phone, please call 524-2333.

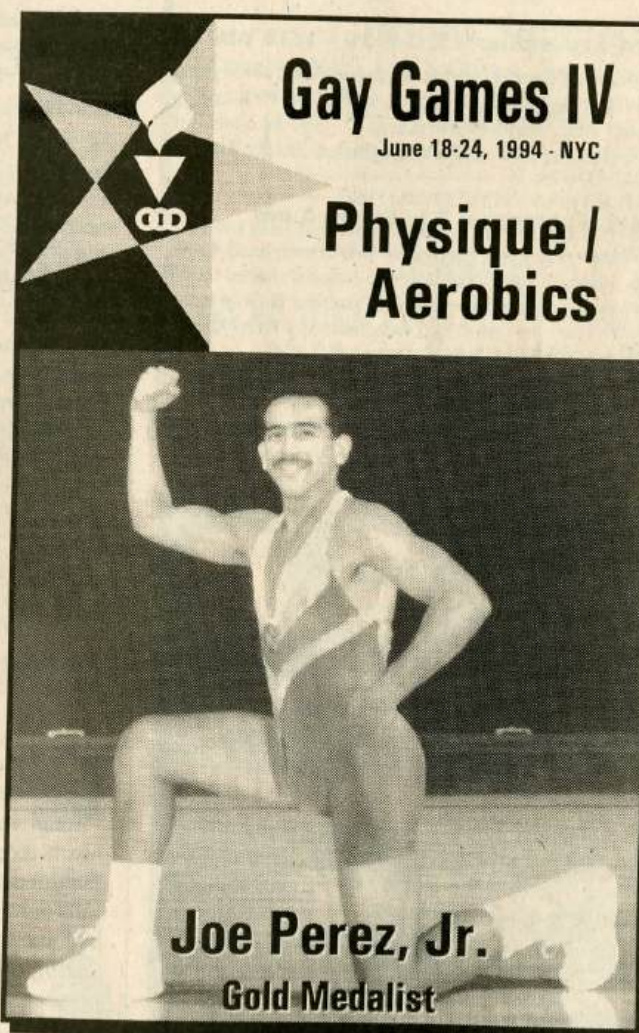
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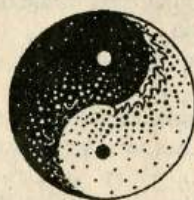
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All events are open to the public, but some events may require tickets for admittance. For more information about any event, please call the numbers listed below.

Wednesday, September 13, 12:30 - 1:30 pm

Monica Pope of the Boulevard Bistrot, 4319 Montrose Boulevard, will be giving a cooking demonstration at Macy's Galleria store during the "Benefit Shopping Day" for the Montrose Clinic. Attendees will receive 10 - 20% discounts, lots of free stuff and a chance to win a \$1,000 shopping spree. Tickets: \$10 per person. Details: 520-2000.

Thursday, September 21, 5:30 - 8 pm

The Absolut Martini Mash—the grand opening of KAD's Piano Bar & Grille, 1512 W. Alabama, benefiting Milam House, an AIDS hospice, chaired by Jeff Pickett, and co-chaired by Muffie Moroney. KAD's Piano Bar & Grille is the newest restaurant in the Museum District and was created by Kathy Knecht and David Lawson. Tickets: \$25, \$50, & \$100. Details: 520-9248.

Thursday, September 28, 6 - 9 pm

Monica Pope and the Boulevard Bistrot, 4319 Montrose Blvd., will be hosting a "Women Only" Smoke Out in association with Society Demimonde and the Consolidated Cigar Corporation. Tickets: \$30 per person includes of one cigar, passed hors d'oeuvres, two spirits, tax, and gratuity. Details and reservations: 490-5816.

Friday, September 29, 8 pm

A Letter from Mozart—opening concert of the Houston Harpsichord Society 1995-1996 season, St. Luke's Methodist Church, 3471 Westheimer, featuring the Mozartean Players, with KUHF anchorperson Dean Dalton as narrator, who will be reading from Mozart's own letters. Chaired by Michael Kemper. A percentage of ticket sales will benefit the children's fund for AIDS Foundation Houston. Tickets: \$15 - \$100. Details: 497-7382.

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Tuesday, October 10, 7 pm

Teresa Byrne-Dodge, editor of *My Table: A Critic's Guide to Dining in Houston*, will be hosting an Italian Country Cooking Chef's Dinner with Antonio Mingalone at Montesano, 6009 Beverly Hill. Tickets: \$57 per person. Details: 468-3913.

Tuesday, October 17, 7 pm

Teresa Byrne-Dodge, editor of *My Table: A Critic's Guide to Dining in Houston*, will be hosting a Native Foods of the New World Chef's Dinner with Michael Cordua at Americas, 1800 Post Oak Blvd. Tickets: \$57 per person. Details: 468-3913.

Sunday, October 22, 3 - 6 pm

Owner Donnette Hansen will be celebrating The Rainbow Lodge's eighteenth anniversary with its annual wine and food festival. The event will feature selected wines from the Franciscan and Estancia vineyards paired with the Lodge's signature gulf-coast and wild-game cuisine, served at food-stations located in the gardens and dining rooms of the Lodge. Tickets: \$35 per person. Details: 861-8666.

Tuesday, October 24, 7 pm

Teresa Byrne-Dodge, editor of *My Table: A Critic's Guide to Dining in Houston*, will be hosting a Chiles: From Soup to Nuts Chef's Dinner with John Watt and Hugo Ortega at Backstreet Cafe, 1103 S. Shepherd. Tickets: \$57 per person. Details: 468-3913.

Geoff C. Bay Wins Absolut Art Contest

Chair Jeff Pickett and co-chair Muffie Moroney announced on Wednesday, August 23, that Geoff C. Bay, an architect and artist (phone 522-4235), won the Absolut Martini Mash Art Contest. The contest was open to all area artists and included all art mediums: paintings, watercolors, sculptures, and photographs, depicting the Absolut Martini. All entries have become the property of Milam House and will be offered for sale during the Absolut Martini Mash. A cash prize of \$500 will be presented that evening to Bay for his winning entry, Absolut Loss: Truth in Advertising—a very dramatic sculpture of a smashed Absolut Vodka bottle behind shattered glass. Tickets are \$25 each. Details: 529-3870.

A celebrity committee of leading art critics and patrons chose the winning entry, and its image will grace the invitation to the grand opening of David Lawson and Kathy Knecht's KAD's Piano Bar & Grille, the newest restaurant in the Museum District.

The Absolut Martini Mash benefits Milam House, a 501 (c) (3) non-profit agency, that operates a community home for people living with AIDS. The event will feature piano entertainment and an art show and sale. Corporate sponsors currently include Crea-

tures' Comforts, Houston Artists Society, *Houston Press*, Dr. James N. Lindsey, Les Marks Chevrolet-Mazda-Geo, The Michael W. Kemper Salon, Minuteman Press-Montrose, *My Table: A Critics Guide to Dining in Houston*, *OutSmart* magazine, *Public News*, The Silver Shop, and St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. For more information, contact David Lawson at 529-3870.

Rainbow Lodge to Host Wine Festival

Owner Donnette Hansen will be celebrating The Rainbow Lodge's eighteenth anniversary with its annual wine and food festival, Sunday, October 22, 3 - 6 pm. This afternoon event will feature selected wines from the Franciscan and Estancia vineyards paired with the Lodge's signature gulf-coast and wild-game cuisine—such as Franciscan Merlot, 1992, will be paired with duck served with pumpkin seed and sundried cherries. Food-stations will be located in the gardens and dining rooms of the Lodge. Tickets: \$35 per person. Details: 861-8666.

The Rainbow Lodge is nestled in two acres of woods in Houston's historic Bayou Bend district. In 1976, this private residence that was constructed in 1935, was expanded utilizing native materials. The stair rails are made from purple cedar, and the columns in the main dining room are stripped pine. The decor has evolved through time into a romantic mixture of rich woods, antiques, and hunting and fishing relics. The antiques, mounted trophies, and collectibles complement the historic surroundings and are part of an extensive private collection. The Tied Fly Bar is a hand-carved troutstream created by Vermont artist Bill Herrick.

The Rainbow Lodge has won numerous awards, including the Wine Spectator's "Award of Excellence" for the past six years; the Rainbow Lodge's "Kendall Jackson Food and Wine Pairing" was voted best public food and wine tasting for 1994 by the *Houston Chronicle*; and was voted "excellent" by the 1995 Zagat Houston Restaurant Guide.

For more information on the 1995 Rainbow Lodge Food and Wine Festival, call 861-8666.



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HIV/AIDS WATCH

from Gaynet Wire Service

Experimental Thalidomide Trials OKed for PWAs

WASHINGTON — Thalidomide, the tranquilizer that caused birth defects throughout Europe in the 1950s, will be offered on an experimental basis to U.S. AIDS patients whose bodies are wasting away, the drug's maker has announced. The special "expanded access" program, approved by the Food and Drug Administration, represents the broadest use of thalidomide ever allowed in the U.S. Celgene Corp. is conducting clinical trials to see if its brand of thalidomide, known as Synovir, counteracts the severe weight loss and deterioration that plagues 150,000 AIDS patients.

Two Studies Examine AZT's Effectiveness

BOSTON — Two seemingly conflicting studies of the drug AZT published in the latest issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, in fact support the increasingly more common attitude among AIDS experts that use of the drug alone is ineffective in fighting AIDS and that starting infected patients on multiple anti-HIV drugs as quickly as possible is the best medical course of action. A team of researchers led by Dr. Paul Volberding of the University of California at San Francisco and Dr. Stephen Lagakos of Harvard University studied two groups of patients for more than six years, comparing the progress of 549 HIV-positive but asymptomatic patients who were given only AZT, and 547 who did not get AZT until signs of approaching AIDS appeared. The researchers found there was no difference in the length of time it took for the appearance of full-blown AIDS or death. The results, consistent with earlier studies, suggest that AZT by itself does little to delay the appearance of the disease in people who are infected by HIV but remain generally healthy. But a European study published along with it by a team led by Dr. Sabine Kinloch-De Loes of Geneva University, reported that 39 people treated with AZT very early kept their CD4 counts above 500—a marker level used as an indicator in the progress of the infection—about six months longer than 38 people not treated promptly. In an accompanying editorial, Dr. David Ho of the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center at New York University School of Medicine said that treating HIV with a single drug "is doomed to fail." Ho suggested that the reason the European study found a better response to AZT is that the viruses in its subjects had not had time to develop many mutant varieties.

SEC Wins Ruling in Viatical Insurance Suit

WASHINGTON — Life Partners Inc., of Waco, Texas, has been ordered to release its policies to a third party. The Securities and Exchange Commission filed suit against the company and its president, Brian Pardo, in 1994, charging that they sold unregistered securities, that they did not register as a securities broker, and that they misled investors. Life Partners makes viatical settlements—an insurance arrangement in which it buys AIDS patients' life insurance policies, allowing them to receive a portion of the policy's value while an investor continues to finance the policy's

premium. The SEC charges that the company and Pardo kept the policies themselves until after the patient dies. Federal authorities said they are concerned about the arrangement because about 90% of the company is owned by offshore corporations that have yet to be identified. A U.S. District Court judge dismissed Life Partners' claims that viatical settlements are not securities subject to federal regulation and issued a preliminary injunction requiring the firm to transfer control of the policies to a third party to hold.

DODGING SEX AND HIV

by Bart Loeser



I presented a workshop recently where two gay men immediately rose and walked out after they heard the title: Dating, Mating and HIV. They reportedly warned another guy entering the building not to go in because it was "about dating HIV-positive guys." Since they "don't do that," they didn't feel there was anything they needed to know or discuss. CASE CLOSED.

What they don't realize is that dozens of gay men are still getting infected every day in Houston for that very reason. The problem is not that they are ignorant about condoms; they just didn't use them because they didn't believe there was a risk.

My guess in most cases is that men today treat all their partners "as if they don't have it" (instead of the opposite). That is...until their partner admits that they are HIV positive. Whether before or after they have had sex, it usually produces anxiety, if not panic.

We avoid talking about HIV with our friends, much less with a sex partner. It is as if it were 1969 and no one wants to think about the Vietnam war or discuss how it affects our lives. Twenty-five years later, another war is impacting ALL of us—both the men's and the women's communities. We all need to start talking more about this issue and own up to it!

The issue can't be avoided ignoring the realities. Most gay and bisexual men have had and will have sex with HIV-positive men, whether we're aware of it or not. And many lesbians won't even acknowledge the possibility of risk. But it seems that this lack of awareness is most responsible for the risks we take (often on a regular basis).

You don't have to take those risks. This is why AIDS Foundation Houston (AFH) offers workshops and house parties: opportunities to discuss the feelings and attitudes about the complicated issues of lust, love, sex, and intimacy. They can help you look at positive choices in your life for finding what you want.

I invite everyone to the monthly workshops. Dating and Mating: Erotic Choices is offered every third Tuesday (September 19, 1995) and Love, Lust and Intimacy: Having It All is scheduled monthly on the fourth Tuesday each month (September 26, 1995). These FREE workshops are located at the Multiservice Center at 1475 W. Gray (across from the River Oaks Cineplex Odeon) from 7-9 pm.

You will definitely learn a lot about yourself and will enjoy an entertaining presentation at the same time. Workshops are also offered in a "home format" where you can host a group of friends at your convenience. It's a great way to reach people with this message who might otherwise never get it. The "house parties" can be scheduled anytime, anywhere. Please call me at AFH if you want more information on these free programs, (713) 623-6796.

Bart Loeser is education coordinator for AIDS Foundation Houston.

U.S.-Thai Team Begins AIDS Vaccine Tests

BANGKOK — A combined U.S.-Thai team of military doctors has begun drug trials of a potential AIDS vaccine made by the U.S. firm Chiron Biocine, called SF2 gp120/MF 59. So far, two Thai volunteers have been injected with the drug, but 22 more will also receive the experimental vaccine during the first phase of the experiment, which will last six months, according to Lt. General Kamrob Saisuan of the Armed Forces Research Institute of Medical Sciences (AFRIMS). U.S. Army Colonel Rodney Michael said that the vaccine has already been tested in the U.S. and that "it proved to be safe with no side effects."

HIV Found in a Fifth of Semen Samples

SEATTLE — According to a recent study, HIV is found in more than one-fifth of all semen samples from HIV-infected men, making unprotected sex with such men very risky. According to Dr. Ann Collier of the University of Washington at Seattle, a study of more than 100 semen samples from 16 HIV-positive men over a two-year period found live and infectious virus 22% of the time. The presence of HIV appears to be sporadic, Collier reported, and was not affected by whether or not the men were taking anti-viral medications at the time.

Study Raises Questions About Effectiveness of Dental Disinfectant

WASHINGTON — A study published in the journal *Nature Medicine* indicates that a chemical disinfectant commonly used on some medical and dental devices may not kill HIV. In the laboratory, the scientists discovered that the germ-killer glutaraldehyde did not eliminate the virus in blood lodged in lubricants frequently used in dental equipment and in

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HIV/AIDS Watch

Continued from previous page

medical equipment called endoscopes. Researcher David Lewis of the University of Georgia said, however, that none of the devices has ever been shown to actually be the source of transmission of HIV. According to Lewis, the study underscores the need to sterilize dental equipment at very high temperatures and indicates that the standards for decontaminating endoscopes should be revised.

Canadian Red Cross and Lab Battled Over Blood

TORONTO — Two ex-officials of a Canadian government-owned company testified in court that the Canadian Red Cross and their company struggled for control over blood products as HIV entered the country's blood supply. Alun Davies and William Cochrane, both ex-officials at Connaught Laboratories Ltd., testified the two organizations squabbled about who should make blood products for hemophiliacs. Lawyers representing HIV-infected Canadians have claimed that the CRC and Connaught spent more time arguing over who should manufacture blood plasma than increasing the national blood supply's safety.

Studies Say Legal Needles Cut HIV Infection Rate

STAMFORD, Ct. — New studies indicate that needle-sharing among IV drug addicts dropped 40% after Connecticut approved a law three years ago allowing pharmacies to sell syringes over the counter. The studies, published in the *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes*, concluded that the increased availability of clean needles should, therefore, stem the spread of HIV and make "a dramatic change in behavior at no cost to the public," according to Beth Weinstein, director of the AIDS unit of the Connecticut Department of Health, which conducted the studies with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. One year after the needle laws took effect, 83% of the state's pharmacies were selling needles over the counter, and injection drug users were using them as their primary source of needles, according to the studies. The second study surveyed drug users at HIV counseling programs, prisons, and drug treatment centers in Connecticut where the authors found that less than a year after the law went into effect, 78% of those surveyed had bought syringes from a pharmacy in the previous month, while just 28% had purchased needles on the street. The researchers also found that 30% of the users who said they only bought syringes from pharmacies said they had shared a needle at least once in the previous month, compared to the 52% found in a survey conducted before the law took effect.

NEA Gives \$20,000 to '96 AIDS Quilt Display in D.C.

WASHINGTON — The federal National Endowment for the Arts has given \$20,000 to the San Francisco-based NAMES Project in support of an October 1996 display of the AIDS Memorial Quilt in the nation's capital. Anthony Turney, executive director of the NAMES Project, said the display is timed to "focus the eyes of our leaders and American citizens" on the AIDS epidemic during the 1996 election. The display will be the first time in four years the 45,000-panel, 60-ton quilt will be on display in its entirety.

No Appeal Filed in Congressional AIDS Bias Case

WASHINGTON — Rep. Barbara-Rose Collins (D-Mich.) missed the filing deadline to appeal the claim of a former aide in her office who said he was fired because the lawmaker thought he had AIDS. Since Collins did not appeal, Bruce Taylor will now receive compensation for more than seven months' back pay and attorney's fees. Jim Davison, a media services administrator for the House of Representatives, said he knew of no other instance in which a member of Congress had had a case before the Office of Fair Employment Practices. Taylor claimed his firing last December—just two days after his male partner died of AIDS—was in violation of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act. The law protects individuals who are perceived to be infected or have AIDS, as well as those who actually have the disease. According to Taylor, both Collins and her chief of staff repeatedly asked about his health before he was fired. Although they deny the allegations, the judge ruled that Taylor was perceived to be infected and that Collins and her chief of staff had decided he "would require time off for health reasons."

Mass. Proposal to Parole Prisoners With AIDS

BOSTON — Massachusetts lawmakers are considering legislation that would offer medical parole to inmates in state or county prisons who have been diagnosed with AIDS or other terminal illnesses. The proposed bill passed the state senate and is expected to reach the house later this year. A spokesperson for the Massachusetts Department of Correction said that in 1994, 19 state inmates died of AIDS-related illnesses. Statistics on voluntary HIV testing show there are some 416 HIV-infected inmates in state prisons, but prisoner advocates say there are many more infected prisoners who do not want to be tested because of fear of other inmates' reactions. State Sen. James P. Jajuga, who is co-sponsoring the compassionate parole measure, said it is designed to give parolees at least several days at home before

their deaths. Inmates who are diagnosed with six months left to live may apply for early parole, although convicted first-degree murderers may not.

Woman With HIV Re- moved From Airplane

CAIRO, Egypt — A maid who was being deported by Egyptian officials because she is infected with HIV was also kept from returning home to Ethiopia because fellow passengers would not let her on the flight from Cairo airport. According to Cairo airport officials, passengers on the EgyptAir flight headed for Addis Ababa recognized the woman, Mariam Mesaret, because of widespread publicity she had received in Egypt after being arrested because she is infected. The flight's passengers refused to sit near her, and the plane's captain asked officials to remove her from the commercial airplane. Egyptian authorities later reported that Mesaret was returned to a hospital to await deportation.

HIV-Positive Student's Mom Gets Death Threat

REVILLO, S.D. — A woman whose 15-year-old son is infected with HIV reported to the county sheriff's office that she had received a death threat after news spread that her son, who is expected to be an incoming freshman at Grant-Deule High School, was HIV-positive. Grant County, S.D., officials confirmed that they were investigating the reported death threat against the woman whose identity was not being released. State health officials said they would provide testing and educational information in the community of the northeastern part of the state that has had—until now—no other recorded case of HIV infection.

Baboon Located for HIV Bone Marrow Transplant

SAN FRANCISCO — Scientists have identified a baboon in Texas that will be used as the source of an experimental bone marrow transplant to Jeff Getty, a California man with AIDS. The seven-year-old male baboon passed a series of tests for several viruses found in the species that are known to be potentially harmful to humans. Researchers with the University of Pittsburgh have wanted to perform the recently approved but untested marrow transplant procedure. While it is considered a very risky operation, if it works, Getty's immune system would be replaced by the baboon donor's and give him a renewed chance at fighting off the disease which is now threatening his life. If all goes as planned, the operations will be performed in September or October by Dr. Steven Deeks at the University of California at San Francisco. ▼

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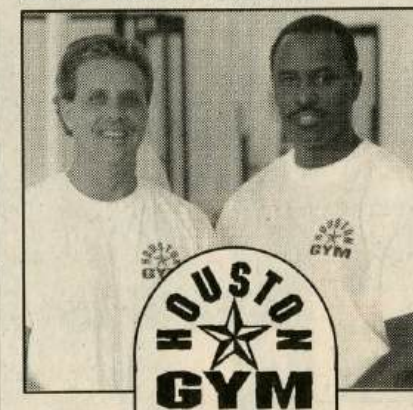
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Book Now for Holiday Travel...

Sitting through another 98-degree day in Hot Humid Houston, it's hard to realize that these dog days will soon be gone, and our travel thoughts will turn to skiing, winter beach vacations, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and the New Year. If you have the remotest plan for traveling during the coming months, want to save money, and travel where you most want to go, then you'd best shake off that sweat and make travel plans now!

It's a fact: the busiest travel time of the year is Thanksgiving weekend. Airports are jammed, flights are overbooked, and the turkey is overdone waiting for your arrival. Ever think about being the good gal and switching from Wednesday/Sunday of Thanksgiving weekend to Thursday/Monday? You'll avoid hideous airport traffic and parking hassles, most likely save money on your airfare, and still arrive at the table intine for the blessing and pumpkin pie.

Christmas travel also poses problems, but because our window of opportunity is bigger, it's easier for you and your travel agent to coordinate dates that will work. The big crunch in December is the precious week between Christmas and New Year, when we have all dis-

pensed with our family obligations and are free to walk out Mom's door the second the last present is opened on December 25. Your problem is this: If you haven't booked that red-eye to San Francisco leaving at 11:55 pm on Christmas night, then you are stuck with the nieces and nephews for another six hours!

Starting to get the message? If you plan to travel between now and February, then by all means, make firm and definite plans now. This is especially true if you want to take advantage of any of the exciting gay and lesbian trips coming up the next four months.

When I say *don't miss the boat*, you should think about the fading opportunity to capitalize on RSVP's Early Booking Discounts. In February, RSVP is sailing the Caribbean on three separate weeks, each with a different itinerary. Two of these sailings are already half full, so if you're planning your winter tan, book now to avoid disappointment. Early Booking Discounts are still available for the 1996 RSVP French Canada Cruise and the Eastern Mediterranean & Greece Cruise, scheduled next July and August. Remember, deposits are fully refundable if you must cancel and do so six months prior to sailing.

For the gals, Olivia Cruises and Resorts has

another wonderful week at Club Med Ixtapa Mexico coming up November 4-11, 1995.

I've been so impressed with the fellows who own and operate Spirit Journeys, a unique gay tour company who organize journeys "designed to foster self-discovery, intimacy, brotherhood, and provide vision." These very special trips include workshops, retreats, and adventure journeys. During Thanksgiving, Spirit Journeys is doing Thanksgiving in Jamaica, November 19-26, and priced at an affordable \$995 per person, which includes all meals, airport transfers, and retreat activities.

If you're looking to vacation during the Christmas holidays, then choices are plentiful. There is a Caribbean QE2 Gay Group Cruise beginning on December 20, which can last from 4 to 15 days. There's a delightful deluxe Christmas in San Francisco package available December 23-29, or if you want something a bit more exotic, try the Christmas and New Year's in Costa Rica tour, scheduled December 23 through January 1.

As we enter the new year, OutSmart is sponsoring a fun-filled long weekend tour, scheduled for January 18-21, 1996, where we'll

visit the most gay city in Mexico, beautiful Puerto Vallarta. Enjoy exclusive use of two fabulous gay-owned and -operated villas, complete with their own staff. Each bedroom has a private bath, and the villas each have lovely tropical terraces overlooking Banderas Bay with swimming pool and poolside bars. We've planned a private welcome cocktail party by the pool, and there's a wonderful new dance club to kick up our heels, plus a list of gay-friendly shops and restaurants that make San Francisco jealous! Book early for this one: It's strictly limited to 40 Smarties.

When February rolls around, we all start thinking about "thinking about" the wonder down under, Australia and her legendary Gay Mardi Gras. There are numerous packages available for this event, ranging in length of time and providing everything from budget to luxury components. One of the most exciting tours is a 10-night package, which combines five nights in Sydney, including all Mardi Gras festivities and parties, then the group jets over to Lindeman Island, where the awesome beauty of the barrier reef surrounds Club Med, which is contracted for exclusive gay use for the other five nights of the tour. Optional extensions to New Zealand are



The Caribbean



by Sandra Wilkins

available, where those beautiful kiwis are just waiting to greet the Texas visitor!

In closing, here's a much-needed new product: Mutual of Omaha is now selling a tour and cruise travel insurance policy that waives all pre-existing conditions. This is wonderful news for the HIV+ traveler.

Until next time, don't let the sun catch you crying because you failed to book your winter vacation travel!

Sandra Wilkins is owner and president of The Travel Partnership, Inc., a travel company proud to serve the gay and lesbian traveler. Contact her at (713) 526-4471, or pager (713) 903-1247.

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Living With a Life-Threatening Illness: How to Take Financial Control

PART 6

I'm going to say a nine-letter cuss word. Are you ready? Here goes. Insurance. In our world, insurance generally has a negative connotation and that's unfortunate.

Now, I want to tell you about the most important and wonderful word that exists in our financial lives. Are you ready? Here goes. Insurance.

Believe it or not, insurance can be an important part of your financial life. The pros: Without insurance, most people would not be able to maintain their incomes and lifestyles in the face of tragedy. For example, imagine your life without car insur-

INSURANCE

ance. Most of us are pretty good drivers, but in our lives we will probably have at least one accident. Auto body repair costs, hospital bills, etc.—how much out of pocket costs could you afford? Or how about medical insurance and all those minor or major surgeries we have in our lives? And what about disability insurance, if you ever became injured or ill, would your incomes be preserved without it? Finally, without life insurance, would there be an ability to replace incomes for our partners, spouses, and/or kids? Insurance is an extremely important part of everyone's lives. But we've all had problems of varying degrees with insurance companies. The cons: some people don't know the details about their own insurance policies and might not own the type of insurance appropriate to meet their needs. Fortunately, this occurs in only a small percentage of cases.

I bring all this up because after helping many people who are facing a life-threatening illness, we've all come to appreciate more the benefits of insurance, specifically medical and disability insurance.



by Julie LaRue
LUTCF

Medical insurance is one of your biggest assets when facing a life-threatening illness. It is extremely important to understand the coverages, lifetime maximums, portability once you leave your employer, continuations, extensions, and conversions incorporated in your medical insurance policy. There are many specific coverages to be reviewed carefully such as benefits and lifetime maximums which often differ from policy to policy. Let's look more closely at how to keep your medical

insurance once you go on disability.

If you own an individual medical policy, you will continue to have the policy when you go on disability. You will not, however, have some of the options offered to those with employer-provided benefits. Hopefully, you have already reviewed your individual policy with appropriate advisors to maximize its benefits.

If you are covered by a group medical plan, check to see if your employer has a self-insured plan. This generally means that the employer is funding the plan, not an insurance company. These self-insured plans are covered by the federal Employee Retirement

Income Security Act (ERISA) rather than state insurance law. ERISA law can, in certain instances, be more lenient than state law in giving the employer the ability to amend, modify, or terminate this type of plan. For instance, the company could choose to eliminate all employee benefits or change the amounts offered. Therefore, it is impor-

tant to know the possible risks.

If you are employed by a company with more than 20 employees, COBRA regulations apply to you. These regulations require employers to offer continued group health, dental, and vision benefits to employees who are terminating employment or would otherwise lose coverage under the plan.

If an employee terminates employment, coverage can be continued up to 18 months. A dependent of a deceased worker can be covered for up to 36 months. In addition, if an employee leaves employment due to disability (as defined by Social Security), he/she may be able to extend coverage for another 11 months. This totals to 29 months of coverage. To receive this extension, the employee must have been disabled as determined by Social Security at the time of termination and must notify the plan administrator within 60 days of receiving their determination letter. The 29 months, coincidentally, is the waiting period to qualify for Medicare for people disabled under the age of 65. Many times employers with less than 20 employees will also provide COBRA benefits although not required to.

Instead of shifting to Medicare coverage at 29 months, some people may convert their COBRA coverage to an individual policy. This application must be made within 31 days of COBRA ending. There are no pre-existing condition exclusion periods or medical questions to answer if applied for within 31 days. A conversion policy should be evaluated carefully because it may provide benefits that Medicare does not, such as prescription drug coverage.

Coverage may also be extended with a disability extension. There is often a clause in a medical policy which will extend coverage for expenses associated with a disabling illness after insurance has been terminated. Extensions may be for different

periods. Close review of medical coverages may reveal this often overlooked benefit.

Another major asset someone with a life-threatening illness can have is disability insurance. Whether you own your policy or are covered under your employer's group plan, you should review some important areas of your policy. There are basically two different types of disability coverage: Own Occupation, which is defined as the inability to perform the duties of your own occupation, and Any Occupation, which describes disability as being unable to perform the duties of any occupation for which you are suited. The elimination period, or waiting period, is just that—how long you have to wait before you receive a benefit. The benefit period is the period of time you will receive a benefit. Many group plans cover an employee up to age 65. Most group disability plans also have what is called a coordination of benefits provision. This means that the group disability benefit will be reduced by other specific sources of income such as Social Security Disability Income. Also, the taxability of benefits is an important area to consider. If you paid your premiums, either for an individual policy or a group policy, the benefit is tax-free. If your employer paid the premiums, then the benefit is taxable to you.

There are no COBRA provisions that apply to disability plans. Most group disability plans are not portable from one company to another; so if you go elsewhere for employment, remember that your disability plan probably won't go with you. However, if you own your individual plan, it can usually go wherever you go.

Medical and disability insurance plans are wonderful assets. I believe people would have a better feeling about all types of insurances if good, reliable information were made available. Accurate, helpful information about insurance can help us understand and appreciate, without fear, the advantages and benefits. ▼

Julie LaRue, LUTCF, is a financial advisor with The Acacia Group. Her practice includes insurance sales through Acacia Mutual and Acacia National Life Insurance companies and financial planning for people facing a life-threatening illness through 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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ADULT ADOPTION - An Estate Planning Tool?

by Connie Moore

The other day a friend called me to confirm something he had read in the daily paper. It seems there was a mention of an adult adoption and he wanted to know if this was possible in Texas. When I confirmed that adult adoption was indeed legal in Texas, he was eager to sign up. After we had discussed the pros and cons of his idea, it became clear that he had more to consider than he originally thought.

The Texas Family Code states that a court may grant the request of an adult living in Texas to adopt another adult. There are very few requirements to be met. Unlike the adoption of a child, there is no need to formally abolish all existing parental rights of the person being adopted nor is there a need for a social study, criminal history check, or an attorney ad litem. The basic requirement is that the adult being adopted consents in writing to be adopted by the person requesting the adoption. Both parties must attend a brief hearing before the court unless good cause is shown why either party cannot attend.

What is the effect of an adult adoption? The adopted adult becomes the son or daughter of the adoptive parent or parents. This means that the legal relationship of next of kin has been established for all purposes. The adopted adult is entitled to inherit from the adoptive parents the same as if the adopted adult were the biological child of the adoptive parents. The adopted adult is also entitled to inherit from his or her biological parents. However, a

biological parent may not inherit from an adopted adult.

Inheritance rights are the primary reason why a lesbian or gay couple will seek an adult adoption. Sometimes certain types of employment benefits will only be awarded to a surviving spouse or child and not to an estate or named beneficiary. The adoption decree will create the "surviving child" relationship and entitle the adopted adult to receive benefits that might otherwise go unawarded. Because gays and lesbians are discriminated against by their inability to marry, the adult adoption provides a way to create the legal relationship that will solve some problems.

Another advantage of the adult adoption is to completely eliminate the rights of the biological parents of the adopted adult. Without having to formally terminate the rights of the biological parents, the adult adoption decree effectively cuts out and abolishes the ability of the biological parents to control any financial or health-related decisions of the adopted adult and terminates any inheritance rights the biological parents may have as a matter of law.

Like many solutions, however, there are drawbacks. Adult adoptions are permanent. Once the adoption decree is final, it cannot be undone. Unlike a marriage, a will, or other more traditional means of establishing a legal relationship, an adoption cannot be dissolved if the relationship dissolves. This is the primary reason why lesbian and gay couples in Texas usually refrain from adopting.

Other disadvantages include the fact that the adoption option creates a one-way relationship. The couple must decide which person will be the adopted adult and which will be the parent. Also, cost is a factor. A general rule is that the adoption is more expensive than simple estate planning.

The bottom line is that lesbian and gay Texans can use the adoption law to obtain certain inheritance rights usually reserved for married couples. Just like any other legal maneuver, the adult adoption option must be evaluated carefully to ensure that it will meet the long-term needs of the parties involved. ▼

The Adoption Option

The law firm of Moore & Hunt is sponsoring an all-day seminar called The Adoption Option on Saturday, September 23, 1995. The seminar will feature professionals from a variety of fields speaking on the topic of building families through the adoption process.

Houston-based therapist Sherry M. Wilson, MSW, LMSW-ACP, will begin the day with how to prepare psychologically and emotionally for having children. Peggy J. Stamy, LMSW, Executive Director of CARE Connection, will lend insight into dealing with adoption agencies. Julie LaRue, LUTCF, of the Acacia Group, will provide information on financial planning for adoptive families.

The afternoon session will feature attorneys Connie Moore and Debra E. Hunt leading discussions on the legal process of adoptions. They will explore topics such as the rights of birth parents versus adoptive parents and the specific court procedures required for adoptions in Texas. The day wraps up with a panel discussion consisting of parents who have already been through the process of building families through adoption.

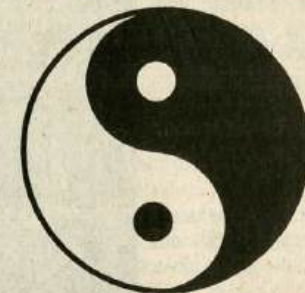
An informational "how to" source book will be provided, and each speaker will answer questions at the end of each segment. Cost for this all-day event is \$35.00, with lunch provided in-house. Class size is limited and pre-registration is required.

For registration information, please call Natalie Williams at 713-522-4282 ext. 10.

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 522-4282.

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DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH BY REV. JANET PARKER



There is a common phrase used among Christians that may be confusing to many people. You might say that it is a religious jargon kind of word. I thought that this month I might help us understand a concept that could open up our eyes to what this phrase really means. The phrase is "Born Again." If you look at the scripture in the gospel of John 3:1-5 we find that a "religious" person named Nicodemus came to Jesus at night. Possibly he was scared of being seen with Jesus in the daytime. He came under cover to ask a few very important questions. Some of you may be wanting to understand what it means to be "born again" but you are afraid of letting anyone close to you know that you have this yearning. Nicodemus was such a man. He basically told Jesus that he knew Jesus was more than just an ordinary man. He saw Jesus do miraculous deeds that only God could be responsible for. Nicodemus wanted to know how he could see who Jesus really was. Jesus responded by using our coined phrase, "You must be born again." Like most of us, we think of going back into our mother's womb and coming out a second time. What Nicodemus learned that night would change his life forever.

When humanity was created by God, Adam and Eve became the first parents. Every human being that came into this world after them was birthed into this world. You might say that Adam and Eve are the only two people without belly-buttons! What we inherited from Adam and Eve was their nature. This nature leads us to be survivors, co-dependent, addicts, self-sufficient, insecure, prideful, stubborn, rebellious, etc. This nature was born out of disobedience to God. Scripture tells us that this nature has nothing in it that can be salvaged. The "seed" of Adam and Eve can never produce what God originally created humanity to be. We keep perpetuating this from generation to generation. Does this mean we are stuck? No.

We all are familiar with the principle, "A seed only reproduces after its own kind." God came up with a plan. Rather than expect from humanity what can never happen, God offered us a "New Seed." We have all said, "If I had my life to live over again, I'd do things differently." That's probably true for most of us. The problem is that we'd do it all over again differently—wrong. We would still have the Adam and Eve nature that would be incapable of following God. We literally need to be born a different way—not of the womb of humanity, but of the womb of God. When a person imitates Christ to come into their life, Jesus deposits a seed in our spirit. Since Jesus is the Word of God incarnate, we might call this seed a "baby word." This seed is a perfect seed that does not sin. It produces the character and behavior of one who is a child of God. We call this being "Born Again." That is why in I John 3:4-9 that we are incapable of sinning as children of God. God's seed is perfect. Our problem comes with our realization that our Adam and Eve nature is living in the same body as our Christ-like nature. We must starve one and feed the other. God's Word is what we as "born again" people must crave. This new life is to be reflective of the One who made us—who are you reflecting?

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Tarot and astrology are symbolic systems translated into symbolic words. For everyone there is a time, and for everyone there is a place, so that the gifts of spirit may live on. Peace, light, and love to the old ones!

THE WORLD

On September 23, approximately nine days after this issue is published, the planet Mercury in the sign of Libra will make itself felt in our lives. Your car could go on the fritz, your cellular phone could pick up other numbers, and your computer could just call it quits. The retrograde effect will last over three weeks, until the 15th of October. To better understand this specific transit, you should read the sign of Libra, paying particular attention to the first paragraph and the pieces dealing with relationships. As this movement has a transitory effect, none of the things started during this period are likely to last. It's a time to go within, partake in silent contemplation, and finish the projects of the past.

ARIES (3/21-4/19)

A shift in your life is apt to occur. There will be movement away from stagnation. The seed of life is placed before you. A new beginning is offered in your life, a beginning over which you will have no control as the wheels fall off your chariot. Here is the potential for optimism, travel, or the birth of new ideas. In relation to your profession or the seducing of a new lover, you are urged to allow intelligence and thoughtfulness to flow through you.

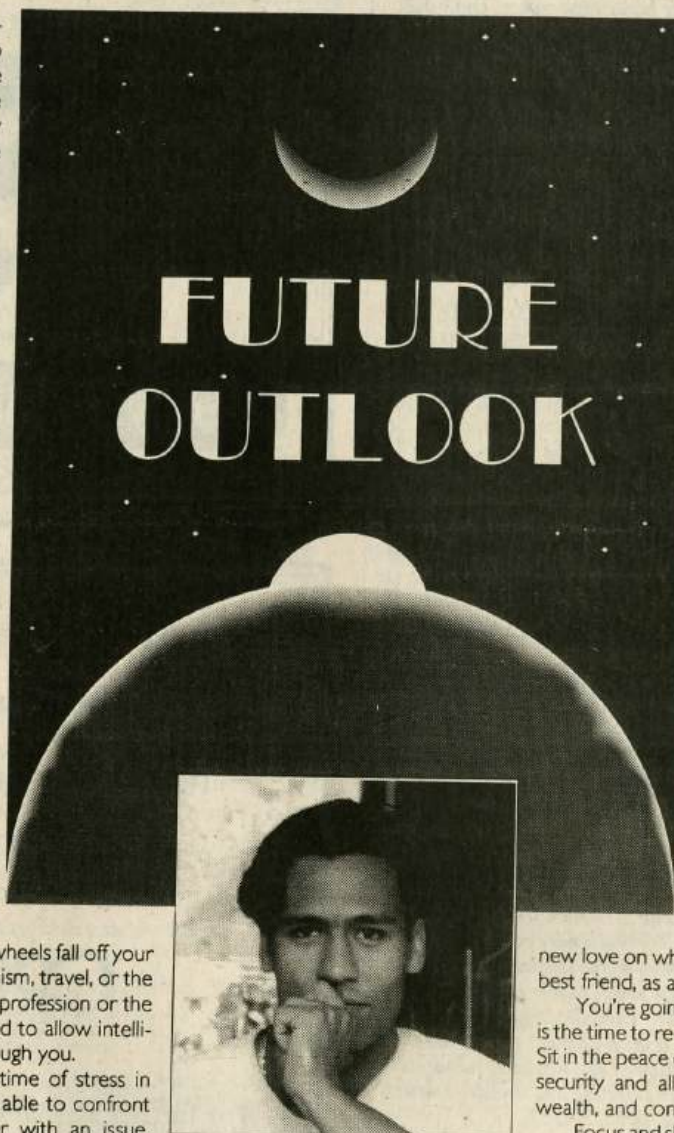
Some Aries could experience a time of stress in relationships, or a sense of not being able to confront your mate or current dating partner with an issue. Married or single, you are tempted to allow your passions to control you. For some, this will be good; for others, not so good. You are offered a new direction, a change in your life. The decisions you make now are most powerful. They could lead to your success or your downfall.

With the key to comfort before you and a sense of radiance within you, unlock the door which leads to joy. Peace and good luck.

TAURUS (4/20-5/20)

In life there is a fine line between need and greed. As the mysteries teach, ask only for what you need, for the love of wealth could turn to greed. Slowly the rewards of life rain down with whatever your wish, be it love, career, or your chosen life path. Your tendency to use pressure to bring things into form could cause you more trouble than gain. Persistence is a virtue, but in this case it is a vice. There should come a pause in the development of your goals. It is time to reevaluate your work. Take this opportunity to re-think your strategy. If calling on a higher power is your strength, by all means, do so at this time. You should float deep, deep, deeper down within yourself to let that little voice sing free.

Then you will go through a time of adoring yourself, honoring the goddess within you, selfishly loving the luxury of your life. In this way you will heal the wounds within and arise again with courage, optimism, and faith. Then you will be off and able to find something greater.



BY JOSEPH MOLINA

GEMINI (5/21-6/20)

Here we find all possibilities—love, freedom, and stability. You will have urges to go to the park and spend some time worshipping the sun. You will reaffirm your sacred temple and take stock in all those things that you have achieved. You will gear your consciousness more toward your body, and you will re-focus on your career. And then, only as life can do, expect a shift of 180 degrees. On September 23, the planet Mercury goes backward in its course, placing many Gemini's lives in the middle of a whirlwind. Push no new ideas. Traveling would not be wise. Complete old tasks and clean out your head. This influence will subside after October 15. At this time Gemini's life regains its order.

CANCER (6/21-7/22)

With all of life's ups and downs, what is one to do? Just as your career has settled into a space of ease and your finances have finally leveled off, a shift could hit you and throw you for a loop. You'll want to party with the boys, eat a gallon of ice cream, and throw discipline right out the window. You could notice a sense of loss for loves long gone as you start on this new direction to come.

There is a strong indication of possible love. Letting go within of old love that has shut down paves the way to new love on whatever level it may come—as a mate, as a best friend, as an admirer from afar.

You're going to ease into the feel of your home. This is the time to re-arrange, re-paint, or put up a new picture. Sit in the peace of your sanctuary, steadfast on the road to security and all those things that come with it—love, wealth, and contentment.

Focus and shape your future by cutting your ties to the past.

LEO (7/23-8/22)

This is a time to allow the symmetry of your life to flow, a time to maintain balance between your responsibilities and the things you do for yourself. Life offers no immediate solution or alternate paths to change the course of your life. Stay strong and determined to keep all things in order until a change is offered before you. People around you will seem to oppose you as your rebellious nature becomes more pronounced. Then, with the blink of an eye, like you've changed the channel, tension will ease and you will let go of stress to honor the joy in your life.

In marriage there could be a slight period of stress. Know it's only a temporary shift of cosmic energy. Keep your attitude smooth, optimistic, and light. If single, it's best now to enjoy your friends, unless lasting relationships aren't what you're looking for.

This is a time to be focused, as Leo naturally is, to keep all things within your control.

VIRGO (8/23-9/22)

You are coming to the end of a difficult cycle of luck. The hard pressures of life have been forcing you to change so that more positive choices can be made. New opportunities will present themselves. A new life will begin to

unfold with promises of things to come.

Do not be surprised if, just as you are on the verge of salvation, ill-winded luck breezes past you again. A warning and a bit of advice: Don't fall into worry or be taken over by anxiety. This is not a situation in which you can make your influence felt. You won't feel like working or producing any Van Goghs. Contracts will be delayed and your ambitions will be noticeably less, well, ambitious than usual. Be strong with fortitude and alive with inner strength. Let the wheel turn upward again.

Think of the future, having knowingness of what is to come—a life revitalized and interest repeated. Just leave all those memories far behind.

LIBRA (9/23-10/23)

Get prepared, Libra—your inner soul is about to be activated. You're going to confront the issues of your past. With this energy centered around relationships, a peace is going to settle within you, healing the scars of past loves, the wounds inflicted by family, and the buttons pushed by friends. The wisdom of actions long gone finds a place of understanding. Old skin will shed and old patterns will die as you leap off the mountain of experience.

Your words shall be charmed, your movements eloquent. A sensuality will exude from you.

If single, romance is in the air, speeding through your life like an arrow. If married or dating, write poetry, or maybe a letter dusted with rose. Show just how romantic you really can be.

A future shrouded in mystery remains unformed in the shadows. It is within your own power—for good or bad—that you shape your own life to come. Be honest, be fair and be true to everyone. Become the master of your own fate.

SCORPIO (10/24-11/21)

Change and movement occur more quickly than the eye can blink. This is a time of major transformation within the life of Scorpio—a transformation that reaches to the very core of your being. This is a time for releasing self-doubt and fear of rejection as you are confronted by the universe within yourself.

There is a strong indication that you need to slow down. The limits you place on yourself should be broadened. Your health is likely to be tested, so give some extra care to your body.

This time is not particularly strong for movement in any of the areas of your life. It will seem to take longer to complete your work, and more time to meet with your friends. Formation of new relationships seems to halt. Take no step before it is time and all things will fall right into place. Once again, no pressure, Scorpio. Just let things be.

You may be called upon to mediate some situation between individuals whose honesty you may question. This may be a reflection of the people around you, or of you yourself. Do what you feel is right, and trust that core within you.

SAGITTARIUS (11/22-12/21)

This is a time for adjustments in your life, separating you from people or situations that are doing you no good. You will re-focus your basic directives and upscale your sense of morality. You could be unsure of how to handle things, not knowing whether to cut back or expand. This may result in a considerable amount of tension. A viable solution is to go off by yourself somewhere and contemplate. The issues will come more in focus and you'll have a stronger sense of peace.

You will begin to expand your trade and career potential as you come out of this sluggish space. Your creativity will flow and the diva in you will emerge. This is a good time to focus on money—bringing more of it into your life, that is. Finish unfinished projects. Offer your time to some higher purpose. When you aspire to grow spiritually, the spirit will guide your way.

CAPRICORN (12/22-1/19)

This is a most profound time for you, Capricorn—one of heightened sensitivity and awareness. The universal forces demand that you use this in your life. Cosmically, there is a conflict, one that you feel very deeply in your nature. Your basic sense is for security, yet you make many insecure decisions. There needs to be an aligning within your soul. A direction must be chosen: Either bask in spontaneity or live in stability. If a choice is not made, expect conflict. This could result in a loss of prosperity and a stagnant flow of income. Use your wisdom of past experiences to guide you now. Learning to budget (and doing

it well) is not only suggested, but required.

There will be an unusually noticeable awareness of death in your life. This teaches you the meaning of living. Learning the truth of transition can teach you the true meaning of love. Through birth, life, and death, the cycle of rebirth continues.

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AQUARIUS (1/20-2/18)

It's time to enjoy the rewards of discipline in your life as a sense of accomplishment fills you. Enjoy your success—you accomplished it; you achieved it. You should rest assured with confidence and trust that the more you stay strong and true to yourself, the better your life will become.

Single Aquarians, stay true to yourselves. Take no risks with immature or unstable romance. A worthy lover is soon to come. Be as virtuous as you can be as you wait until true love appears. Married Aquarians, outside influences will be unusually strong. Let spontaneous romance prevail. Show your lover the passion that fills you.

Some Aquarians will be surging with the energy of life. Thoughts of hopping on the back of a motorcycle or in your VW to voyage across country are becoming more and more appealing. You could have a yearning to "Take this job and shove it," venturing off to some place tantalizing yet accessible—like San Francisco. Contain these urges and maintain control; maybe the next time these emotions surface, you'll be a little more prepared for them.

PISCES (2/19-3/20)

Take heed, Pisces. The vibration of this time will be extremely challenging as you face one of the biggest tests of your life. This is a time to evaluate your goals and relationships. Weigh them on a scale of importance. Anything that does not measure up should be abandoned, or at least substantially changed. Restrictions will become more noticeable as they seemingly pop up everywhere, out of nowhere. You will have to work very hard to maintain your customary standards.

The seeds that you have planted have grown exceptionally fertile and will continue to give birth to new life. You should remain confident, humorous, and certain. The surrounding environment may not be so complimentary, so you'll have to stay true to yourself.

There could be some problems with someone you value highly. This could be a dating partner, a co-worker, or a friend. For some, this could be it—a time to sever paths.

Clean out your life and put things into perspective as you grow through the understanding of structure.

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.

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Family Ties

Continued from page 36

to pay for all the court-appointed fees, the community rallied around Kim and raised an astounding \$6,000 in just a short time. One woman, a donor Kim never met, contributed \$2,000 to Kim's plight.

"She was taken from her mother at a young age herself," Kim glows when speaking of the woman. "She wasn't a lesbian or anything. She just vowed years ago that she would help children in similar circumstances. I never got to meet her in person. I was so thankful. She really saved me."

The court battle raged on for years until, finally, her ex-husband met someone else and decided to settle. Kim wonders if he would have won anyway, considering how the first temporary custody suit went.

"The way the court worked in 1989, he thought he could go into court and say 'lesbian' and everyone would go screaming into the night and take my kids away. But we were ready for him. We amassed so many witnesses that they filled up the courtroom for this temporary hearing and he had no witnesses. I hadn't done anything but be a mommy all those years—and I was a really good mother. There were a lot of people who came to court to talk about what a good mother I was. A lot of people stood up for me."

Connie Moore taps fingers on her desk.

"There is no prohibition in the Texas family code against homosexuals having custody, homosexuals adopting children, anything along those lines. There is no case law in Texas that says homosexuals, per se, are unfit parents. A lot of people are familiar with the Bottoms case out of Virginia where this woman lost her child because she's a lesbian. Virginia had a case law that says being a lesbian per se means you are an unfit mother. We don't have anything like that in Texas."

Moore continues.

"There are a lot of myths and arguments that people try to use in order to keep gays and lesbians from getting custody of children; the fabric of our society, kids will be social outcasts...these were the same arguments that were used in cases when they were trying to uphold their statutes that forbid interracial marriages. So we just take those same arguments and change the word from interracial marriages to gay and lesbian relationships," winks Moore.

Outside in the bright day, birds sneak onto the bird feeder perched outside her office window. Her jewelry jingles pleasantly again, like chimes. Everything and the law seems pretty, deceptively peaceful. Suddenly, she stops.

"Don't walk away from here thinking it's always rosy," Moore warns. "We don't always win every lesbian and gay custody dispute."

"From a legal perspective, we don't make the facts. We can just present them to the court. The parents make the facts. Now I don't want to mislead and say there are no judges in Harris County that just turn the other cheek and say, *Oh, that doesn't matter, bring me all the queer litigants, I love them all.*"

She laughs, diffusing the Pollyanna state gays and lesbians are notoriously lulled into.

"It's not that way."

**Some of the names of persons in this story have been changed to protect privacy.*

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

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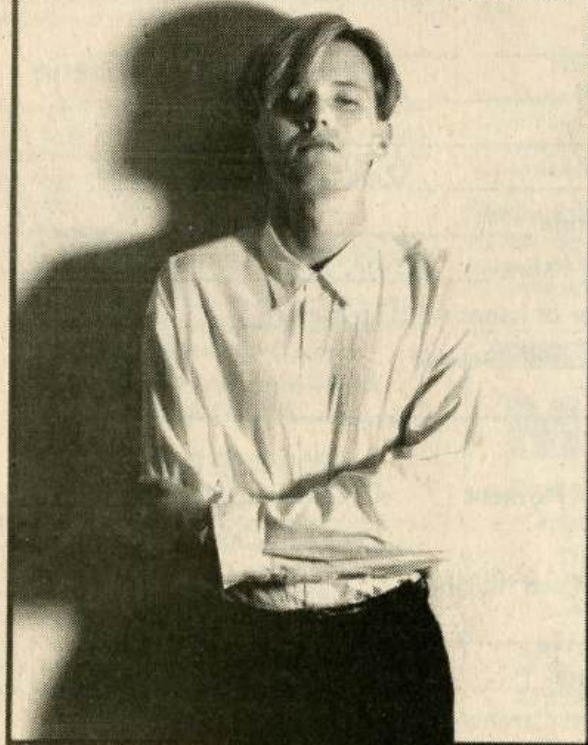
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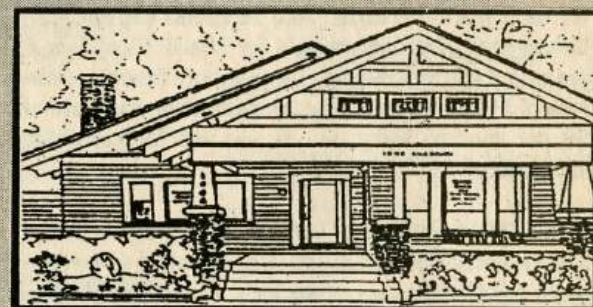
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Announcements

ROXANNE RENEE KALLUS AND KIMBERLY KAY HYDE



Roxanne Renee Kallus and Kimberly Kay Hyde were united in Christian marriage on Saturday, August 5, 1995 at seven o'clock in the evening at the Knights of Columbus. Reverend Dr. L. Annette Jones officiated the ceremony. Dining and dancing immediately followed.

Given in marriage by her parents, George and Jerrilyn Kallus, and escorted by her father, Roxanne wore a luxurious gown of white chiffon with a bodice of intricately beaded Chantilly lace, designed especially for her by Ann. To complement her gown, she selected a crown of silver beads and iridescent stones that adorned a tip-length veil. She carried a European-style bouquet of flowers and an Austrian crystal rosary, handmade by her father. Given in marriage by her mother, Patricia Cameron, and escorted by her brother, Patrick Hyde, Kimberly wore a white ruffled blouse of silk Georgette, designed especially for her by Marco. To complement her attire, she wore a hand-beaded vest, soft crepe pants trimmed in black satin, and a corsage of white and pink roses.

Sandie Stewart of Pauls Valley, Oklahoma, best friend of Roxanne, served as Matron of Honor, and Patrick Hyde, brother of Kimberly, served as Best Man. The precious flower girls, dressed in white lace, were Alisa Kallus, niece of Roxanne, and Haley Hyde, niece of Kimberly. David Kallus, nephew of Roxanne, and Charles Kallus, her brother, served as ushers.

Roxanne, an honor student at Wharton County Junior College and member of Phi Theta Kappa, will graduate in May with an Associate's Degree in Nursing and will pursue a Bachelor of Science at the University of Texas. Kimberly is a graduate of Crosby High School and an assistant manager and clothing designer for the Custom Shop in the Galleria, Houston, Texas.

After the honeymoon, the couple returned to their home in Sugarland, Texas. Roxanne and Kimberly would like to thank their family and friends for sharing their very special day.



ALISON S. THOMPSON AND DIANA R. POOR

Alison S. Thompson and Diana R. Poor were joined together in Holy Union on September 9, 1995 at Unity Church. Alison was born and raised in Houston and Diana hails from California. The couple will reside in Houston with their two children.

WHAT A WORLD, WHAT A WORLD...

AN OPEN LETTER TO
SHANNON FAULKNER
or
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Hey Girl—

How's it going? Feeling better? Forcing fluids?

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by Nancy Ford

follow your lead. Thanks for being a knob, Shannon. You're the knobbiest, and I say that with respect.

That aside, let's move on to the important stuff. So tell me, are you a lesbian or what?

People have asked me repeatedly about your sexuality, as if I have some kind of inside track to allegedly closeted media lesbians. Listen, the day I get a fax from Jodie or Ellen or even Hillary, the world will know. I'm not trying to out you—I have no idea if you are lesbian, straight, bi, transgendered, or circumcised, for that matter. Whenever asked to speculate on the undeclared sexuality of another

I often rely on a quote from the legendary Tallulah Bankhead. When asked if she would confirm that Noel Coward was indeed a homosexual, she very tersely replied: "I don't know, dahling. He's never sucked my cock."

Frankly, Shannon, if you are a lesbian, the folks from *Hard Copy* or *The National Enquirer* probably would have had something to say about it by now, likely linking you with Candy Gingrich. But if you are on the fence about coming out, please know that there is always room for one more recruit in *this* woman's army. You looked right at home in those cute little regulation blue shorts and T-shirt and boots. You're in the band (even though drills left you too pooped to pucker up to your flute). All signs are affirmative. Please say you're a syster. After your recent battle with a week's worth of heat exhaustion, you could more than handle the brief scorch of marching in one of Texas' Gay/Lesbian Pride Parades with little or no sweat.

So now what will you do? Apply for membership at the Friar's Club? Take a year off to re-hydrate? I understand Sally Struthers can help you learn air conditioning and heating repair at home in less than two years. Or will you skip the Ivy League-with-a-Weapon education offered by The Citadel and enlist directly in the military? That would have been your imminent destination after four years of knobbing it in South Carolina, you know. And then where would you apply your intelligence and focus?

One more question, Shannon. If you are indeed a lesbian, and had you stayed at The Citadel, would your next border to conquer be coming out as the first homosexual to matriculate from a military school? If you'd stayed at The Citadel, would you really "be all that you can be"?

Welcome home, Shannon. Glad you're back.

Sincerely,
Nancy Ford

Nancy Ford is a Houston-based comedian and frequent contributor to the gay and lesbian press. She performs each Thursday at 8:30 p.m. at Ms. B's in the Plaza, 9200 Buffalo Speedway in Houston. Call (713) 666-3464 for information and reservations.

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