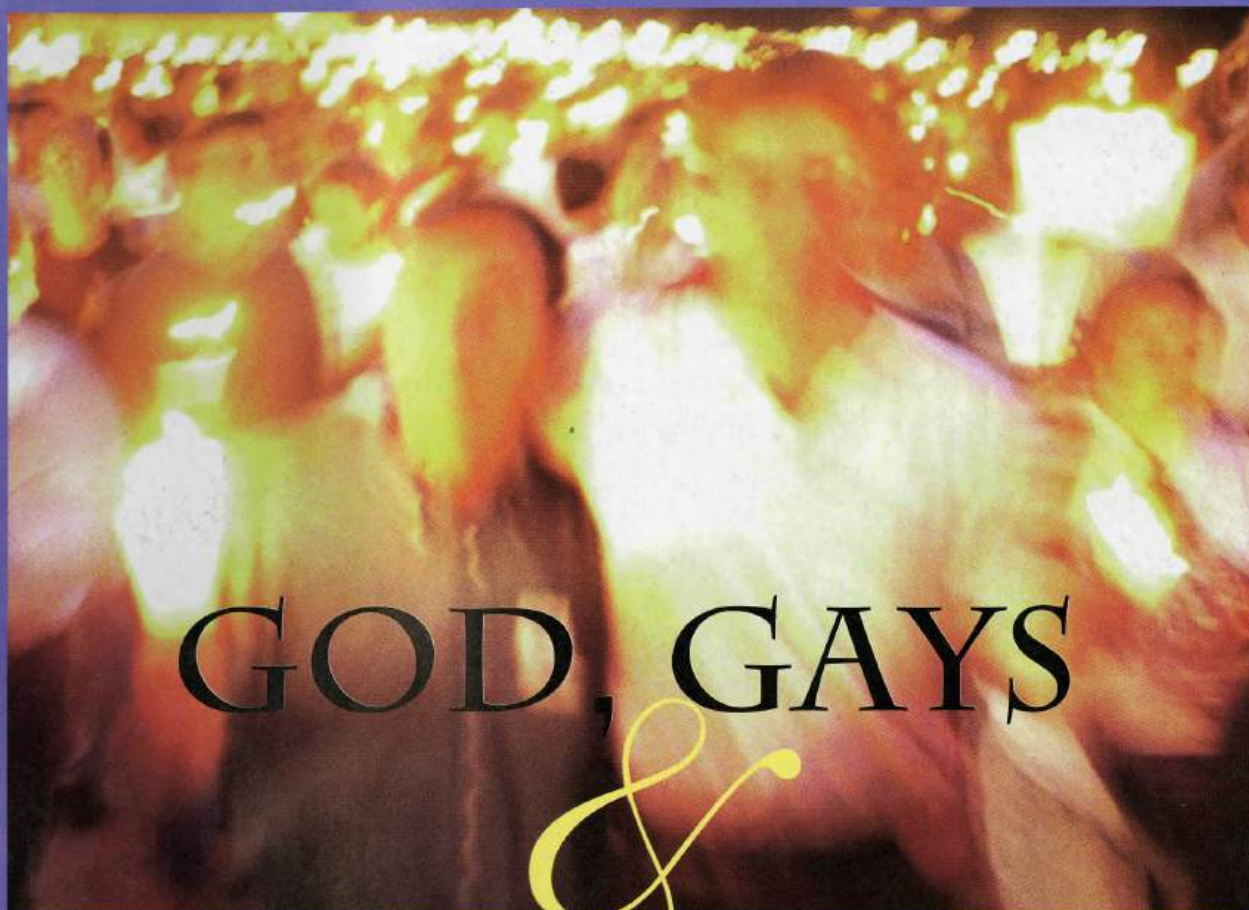


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HOUSTON'S GAY & LESBIAN MONTHLY MAGAZINE



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—THE SPIRITUALITY ISSUE—

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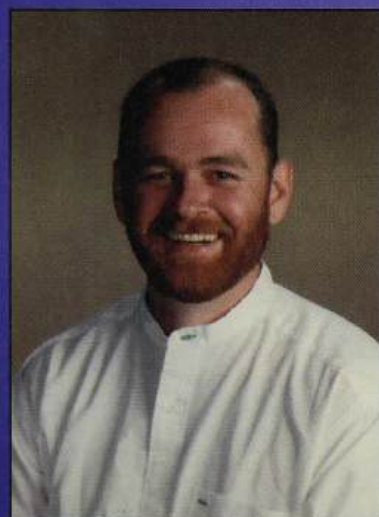
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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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 10 NOVEMBER 15-DECEMBER 14, 1995

FEATURES

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE 28

Not interested in becoming a mall rat? Let your fingers do the walking through OutSmart's Holiday Gift Guide. You'll be amazed how easy shopping can be this year.

GOD, GAYS, & THE CHURCH: DO WE HAVE A PLACE? 34

OutSmart examines religion, spirituality, and how gays and lesbians fit in. Part One of this series focuses on Christianity.

THE CHRISTIAN THING TO DO 36

Houston is home to 20 established churches that tend to a mostly gay/lesbian flock. Lis Mendes talks to some of the Shepherds.

QUEENS, SHRIMP, AND FOOTBALL 37

Love the homophobe, hate the homophobia. The Rev. Ralph Lasher offers a history lesson as to why biblical literalists are the way they are.

SEEK AND YE SHALL FIND 39

Surprise! Support without judgment for gays and lesbians is to be found among mainstream institutional churches—you just have to know where to look. By Lis Mendes.

JAY THE BAPTIST 41

The Baptist Church—it's not just for bigots anymore. Steven Foster interviews a pastor who's blazing, albeit not flaming, a path to Glory.

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE! 46

Whether infected with HIV or affected by it, the Wellness Learning Center offers insight to all. By Eric L. Roland.

DEPARTMENTS

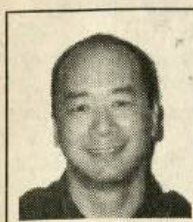
Letters to the Editor	6
OutSmart Calendar	8
Queer Quotes	12
Out Here	14
Out in our World	16
OutSpoken	22
Reviews	24
OutLook	26
HIV/AIDS Watch	48
OutSmart Travel	50

OutTales	54
OutLaw	56
Future OutLook	58
Classifieds	60
Resource Directory	64
OutWit	66

ON THE COVER:

Cover Photo by Theresa DiMenno

A Note From the Publisher



A few months ago my boyfriend Daniel and I went out for a few drinks. While crossing the street to get to the club, a young woman approached us handing me a small booklet. Assuming she was a volunteer from the AIDS Foundation, I said, "Thanks," and kept walking.

Glancing down to see what it was, I realized it wasn't a pamphlet about AIDS and safe sex or even the Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus voters' guide. Nope.

I recognized it from my early teenage years when I was a flaming Baptist convert. The pamphlet was a religious tract telling me that I was destined for hell because of my heathen homo ways.

Incensed that someone had the nerve to tell me where I was going—without giving me the opportunity to tell her where to go—I found myself back in front of the woman shoving the religious tract back into her face.

"Excuse me, are you a Christian?" I asked, rather calmly.

"Yes," she said.

"THEN WHY DON'T YOU ACT LIKE ONE? Why aren't you out doing something constructive with your time, like feeding the homeless or volunteering somewhere?" I asked angrily.

"Because this is what God told me to do today. Maybe he'll tell me to do that tomorrow," she said rather snidely.

I wanted to tell her, "God just whispered into my ear your next mission," but decided to keep the comment to myself.

"Speaking as a Christian, I think you need to reread your Bible," I said.

"You can't be a Christian if you're gay and you go in there," she said pointing to the door of the bar.

Realizing that the young woman was just simply "eaten up with the stupids," we walked away shaking off the angry confrontation.

Today, as I think back to the young woman, I shudder to think how I must have appeared in my Baptist religious "daze." I was probably pretty obnoxious,

too. Actually, I *know* I was obnoxious.

I truly believed the religious dogma that I was taught, and I never bothered to question it. Simply, if you or your loved ones were to suddenly die without believing and professing these particular religious beliefs:

First, you and your loved ones would be tormented in hell and lost to wander around in circles begging for a glass of water and the way out. Since helping those I care about was and is a priority in my life, the thought of not being able to help someone was very frightening indeed.

Second, you would be separated from the people you love and care about, and they would not be spending time in eternity with you. Yikes! As a youngster, this thought brought my abandonment issue right over the edge.

As a teenager, I was freaked! With the vigilance of an Amway salesperson, I was out hocking the Baptist Fire Insurance Plan to everyone I loved and cared about. I was on a mission—probably so I could sleep at night. After all, since I had told them about "my" beliefs, it was now up to them to decide to either spend eternity with God and me or spend eternity with Hitler in hell.

Twenty years later, I find my spiritual beliefs have changed quite a bit. And I am still very grateful for my stint in Baptist theology. It not only gave me a first-hand knowledge of understanding why we as gays and lesbians often find conflict in our spiritual lives, but also helped me come to terms with my own spirituality.

I no longer have a desire to put a "Honk if you love Jesus" bumpersticker on my car or even ask someone if they've accepted Buddha as their personal savior. If there's one thing I've learned, it's that one's religious beliefs and spirituality are personal things—judged not by those who do not practice them.

Taking the time to read what the Bible really says about homosexuality was quite enlightening. And for me, I now try to practice what I believe the true message of Jesus Christ is all about—to demonstrate love and compassion in everything we do.

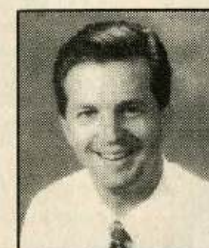
For those still wrestling with the spirituality issue, we hope this special issue helps settle a few conflicts of the soul and, at the very least, shed a little light on the subject.

—Greg Jeu

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DACHAU FOR QUEERS

While I'm glad to see the subject introduced at all, several points in David Morales' article "Dachau for Queers" [October 15, 1995] need to be addressed. Let's start with the title: sensational? Yes. Appropriate? Not in my opinion. Persecution of non-heterosexuals is a legitimate category of human rights abuses; there is no good reason to appropriate Jewish oppression in the Holocaust.

Second, the psychiatric abuse of women and girls is barely mentioned in these three pages. In this country and others, at least until the middle of the 20th century, women and girls were subjected to various forms of female genital mutilation, including excision of the clitoris, to "treat" suspected lesbian tendencies. Rape has been and almost certainly continues to be used for the same purpose—these in addition to shock therapy, lobotomy, isolation, and other forms of mental and emotional abuse.

Third, the author states several times that these practices continued right up until the mid-1970s. What a lovely fantasy. In reality, shock therapy has experienced something of a revival, and physical, sexual, and emotional abuse have never been abandoned, despite removal of homosexuality from the APA's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual in the 70s. Today, in 1995, those who do not conform to societally acceptable roles of gender and sexuality are involuntarily institutionalized on a regular basis, suffering physical and emotional damage that will remain with them through their lives. Children and youth—who have no real rights in this country—are especially vulnerable to this kind of abuse, and often are "locked up" by parents or guardians who "want the kid fixed." More often than not, these youths also experience abuse—physical, sexual, and/or emotional—at the hands of the family members signing the intake papers.

On a positive note, thank you for Lis Mendes' article "Latina Lesbian Leaders." These incredible women represent the tremendous reserves of intellect, talent, and commitment of women in our community who struggle for rights on many fronts.

—Laura McKieran
Houston, TX



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.

WELCOME BACK!

After a four-year absence, I have recently returned to Houston to find several changes—some for the good and some bad. I must say that one of the better changes is your magazine.

How nice it is to pick up a gay and lesbian publication and find that it is not all sex ads but useful information!

I hope you keep up the good work for the community.

—Michael Venator
Livingston, TX

Ed. Note: Thanks—we hope so, too. A good way to help us "keep up this good work in the community" is to surprise your other queer Livingstonians with a holiday subscription to OutSmart. Think of us as an outreach plan and a great stocking stuffer, all wrapped up in one! Thanks for writing.

"TRANSGENDER GAINS" UPDATE

Here is a brief follow-up to my article ["Transgenders Make National Gains," OutSmart, October 15, 1995].

Just one day before the article went to press, a meeting was held between Dianne Hardy Garcia of the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas (LGRL), Dee McKellar of the Transgender Law Conference, and myself. It was agreed that the boards of the LGRL and It's Time, Texas! will hold an informal joint meeting in December. This will mark the first time that the boards have met face to face.

It was further agreed that two organizations will sponsor a series of informational seminars dealing with the "personal" aspects of being transgendered. The seminars will be held in Austin, San Antonio, Houston, and Dallas, beginning in February. Exact times and locations will be worked out in the next few weeks.

I want to thank Dianne for her leadership in creating this arrangement. Let me also re-emphasize that this agreement was reached one day before the article appeared. Dianne did not know the article was going to appear until I told her about it, and OutSmart knew nothing about the meeting (it was a surprise to me as well). It's yet one more sign of how rapidly progress is occurring for transgenders across the country.

Look for specifics on the joint educational series in the coming weeks.

—Sarah DePalma
It's Time, Texas!
Houston, TX

LETTERS TO THE CHIEF

Dear Chief Nuchia:

During the meeting held on Wednesday, October 5, 1994, while discussing the possibility of pay raises and step increases, you made reference to the \$4 million that Mayor Lanier had told us that he was going to use for that purpose, saying that they could just give it to AIDS research, that it would really piss off the police.

Chief, with all due respect, Blanca and I, as members of the gay and lesbian community, found that comment in very poor taste and completely out of place and were highly offended by someone of your position making such a flippant comment.

Chief, we have watched hundreds of members of our community die of AIDS during the last 10 years and watch even more suffer today. AIDS is no joke.

We just felt it necessary to express our feelings on this matter to you.

—William M. Johnston Jr.
President, Houston Police Support
Personnel Union
Houston, TX

November 1, 1995

Dear Chief Nuchia:

On October 7, 1994, I sent you a letter in which I referred to a statement you made during a meeting held in your office on Wednesday, October 5, 1994. A copy of that letter is attached.

Chief, with all due respect, I am still waiting on a response.

I have been very busy this past year, Chief, because Roger Kinzer, who has been a part of my life for almost 12 years, tested positive for HIV in January of 1994. Just around the time you were "giving \$4 million to AIDS research," Roger was going into Park Plaza Hospital for what would be his first of many visits to fight his HIV/AIDS diagnosis.

Roger has been in and out of the hospital six or seven times since that October day last year, and yesterday, October 31, 1995, he was placed in the care of the hospice at the Texas Medical Center. They are helping Roger and I prepare for his death.

Chief, I wish you could have known Roger before he became sick. He has been a part of my life for almost 12 years and is probably the most unselfish person I have ever met.

Roger has always been there for me—encouraging me to apply for my job with the Houston Police Department in June of 1984; standing with me when the gay rights referendum was defeated in the early '80s, which would have protected gay and lesbian city employees from discrimination; working with me for almost five years as we produced a weekly gay and lesbian radio program broadcast over KPFT 90.1 FM; and supporting me when HPD hired civilian supervisors, and I was the only person who was denied the chance to take the test, being told by Captain Vaughn that I wasn't qualified for the job. Roger knew the truth as to why I wasn't allowed to take the promotion test. Roger held me up after Assistant Chief Bradford ordered me to remove an earring from my ear the day after I stood in front of Mayor Lanier and the City Council as President of the Houston Police Support Personnel Union, asking the mayor and council for adequate staff for the dispatch center, better and regular training for the dispatchers along with maintenance of the equipment we work with. Roger was there when I was placed on the committee to look at the civilian dress code for HPD employees and was so proud the day I brought home the finished product, where you had signed that the length of an employee's hair or whether or not his or her ears were pierced would not be an issue any longer. Roger gave me such support when I fought to help with the Gay and Lesbian Sensitivity Training at the police academy, only to be told that I didn't really "fit in" to the current game plan. I apologize, boss, but it's impossible to cram all of the times that Roger stood next to me and told me to hold my head up high and continue to fight for what I believed was right.

For, you must understand, Roger knew my record at HPD since 1984. He knew that I have had an outstanding job performance review time after time after time. He knew of the times I had gone above and beyond the call of duty to help a citizen trying to get through the red tape or make a call back on a slip that would get my responding officer the information he needed to make an arrest. He knew that I was simply doing my job, yet refusing to sit quietly at the back of the bus.

Roger had worked most of his life, starting at first selling roses near the Galleria to help pay for his education shortly after his family moved to Houston some 25 years ago, graduating from Strake Jesuit, then moving on to the University of Houston where he would finally receive a Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism. Roger worked

several years as a manager for the Eckerd Drug Company and, simply because he worked as a book buyer for a company with less than 20 employees when he became ill, he was left with no insurance and one heck of a hill to climb.

This past year has been devastating, not only to Roger's health but also to us both financially. As you know, I have been with the City since June of 1984, and we don't get things like pay raises or a cost of living raise. And since no one recognizes Roger and I as a family—and believe me, sir, we are a family—I was not able to put him on my health insurance, so we have spent many of my off days at Thomas Street Clinic and dealing with the Harris County Hospital District. No one has held a barbecue for us to help with the medical bills.

Roger's biggest concern last Monday, when our doctor told us that they had done all they could do and his health had begun to decline to the point that we needed to put him into hospice, was, "How are we going to pay for the funeral?"

Chief, please review your files from last October, and try and find the time to respond to my letter dated October 7, 1994.

I can't let Roger just become another statistic. I can't allow him to die without standing one last time with him by my side, so that the next gay or lesbian employee of this department or city will not go through the hell that Roger and I have been through this past year.

Sincerely,
William M. Johnston Jr.
President, HPSPU
Houston, TX

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OUTSMART CALENDAR

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COMMUNITY EVENTS AND MEETINGS

November

15 A NIGHT OF TUNA, with Joe Sears and Jaston Williams as characters from their hit plays *Greater Tuna* and *A Tuna Christmas*, benefiting The NAMES Project Houston, \$20, 11 pm, Rich's, 2401 San Jacinto, 713/526-2637.

MEN'S NETWORK for gay and bisexual men. Topic: "Safe, Sane, and Consensual" by Houston Chapter of National Leather Association, 7-9 pm, Montrose Counseling Center, 701 Richmond, 713/529-0037.

17 CRIS WILLIAMSON & TRET FURE, a benefit concert, \$20, 9 pm, Westin Galleria Ballroom, 5060 West Alabama, tickets available at Inklings.

LESBIANS IN BUSINESS, speaker: Suzanne Anderson on "Marketing Your Business, Your Organization, Yourself," 6 pm, Innova Building, 20 Greenway Plaza, 713/529-0077.

18 SELF-EMPOWERMENT IN HIV DISEASE, speakers Tarek Elbeik, Ph.D. on viral load tests and Jon D. Kaiser, M.D. on management of fatigue, 2-5 pm, Doubletree at Allen Center, Granger Room, 400 Dallas, 713/520-2000 ext. 227.

HOLIDAY FASHION SHOW, to benefit the Alley Theatre's Community Outreach Program, \$25, 12 noon, J.W. Marriott, 5150 Westheimer, 713/223-1505.

FINE ART BENEFIT, with more than 600 oil paintings on sale to benefit PWA Coalition, 9 am-6 pm, Tim Hamrock Interiors, 4091 Westheimer.

ALPHA TO OMEGA 5K, run, skate, walk, wheelchair to raise money for Omega House, Houston's only residential AIDS hospice, for entry form, call 713/524-6662.

19 MARANATHA MCC CLASS on "Looking at Relationships from a Godly Perspective," every Sunday through February 18, 10 am, Maranatha Fellowship MCC, 3400 Montrose, Suite 600, 713/528-6756.

21 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, 713/524-2374.

PRIDE COMMITTEE OF HOUSTON, general meeting and social hour, 6:30 pm, 2700 Albany, 529-6979.

HIV/AIDS TREATMENT MIXER, open forum for sharing information, 7-9 pm, 2700 Albany, Suite 205, 713/527-8219.

22 THANKSGIVING EVE B.Y.O.B. PARTY with Nancy Ford ("Bring Your Own Baster"), benefiting AFH Stone Soup Pantry (donate non-perishable items and canned goods), 8:30 pm, Ms. B's, Plaza 9200, 9200 Buffalo Speedway, 666-3464.

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

23 THANKSGIVING DAY (turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, pumpkin pie...hungry?)

26 MARANATHA MCC CLASS on "Homosexuality and the Bible: Spirituality and Sexuality Integration," every Sunday through February 18, 10 am, Maranatha Fellowship MCC, 3400 Montrose, Suite 600, 713/528-6756.

27 GAY AND LESBIAN READERS GROUP will discuss the book *Glamourpuss* by Christian McLaughlin, 7 pm, Barnes & Noble, 3003 West Holcombe, 349-0050. Next meeting will be January 29 with *Mothers* by Jax Peters Lowell as the selected book.

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

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

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

LOVE, LUST, & INTIMACY, explores the options of safer sex and sensuality through discussion and games, 7-9 pm, Metropolitan Multiservice Center, 1475 W. Gray, 713/524-2374.

29 HOME BUYER'S SEMINAR, exploring all aspects of buying a home, with Suzanne Anderson, Jennifer Harris, and Robbie Burnside, 7-8:30 pm, Suzanne Anderson Properties, 239 Westheimer, RSVP 713/529-8484.

30 HOME SELLER'S SEMINAR, exploring all aspects of selling your home, with Suzanne Anderson, Jennifer Harris, and Robbie Burnside, 7-8:30 pm, Suzanne Anderson Properties, 239 Westheimer, RSVP 713/529-8484.

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.

DOLLARS & SENSE, a panel workshop, reviews legal and financial matters concerning people living with HIV/AIDS, 7-9 pm, Metropolitan Multiservice Center, 1475 W. Gray, 713/524-2374.

December

1 WORLD AIDS DAY

TREE OF REMEMBRANCE, annual holiday memorial to those who have died of AIDS, bring your own ornament to remember your loved ones, Metropolitan Multiservice Center, 1475 W. Gray, 713/524-2374.

2-3 POSTCARDS FROM AMERICA, film based on writings of David Wojnarowicz (see review in this issue), \$5, Dec. 2—7:30 pm and 9:30 pm, Dec. 3—7:30 pm, Rice Media Center, University Blvd. (Entrance #8), 713/527-4853.

3 LADY VICTORIA LUST CHRISTMAS SHOW, benefiting Lady Victoria Lust PWA Holiday Fund, 6 pm, Brazos River Bottom, 2400 Brazos.

P-FLAG WINTER PARTY, 3-5 pm, call Susan Upchurch at 995-9777 to RSVP. P-FLAG Houston Helpline: 713/867-9020.

4 HOW TO READ AN INSURANCE POLICY, with attorneys Mitchell Katine and John Greco, 6-8 pm, Montrose Library, 4100 Montrose, RSVP 713/981-9595.

5 PRIDE COMMITTEE OF HOUSTON, executive meeting, 6:30 pm, 2700 Albany, 529-6979.

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

MEN'S NETWORK for gay and bisexual men. Topic: "Love, Intimacy, and Relationships" by Bart Loeser, 7-9 pm, Montrose Counseling Center, 701 Richmond, 713/529-0037.

8 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.

8-10 HOUSTON MASTERY WORKSHOP, weekend-long workshop for HIV-positive persons and their family, registration required, 713/523-8711.

9-10 MOVIE POSTER SALE, all prices, River Oaks Theatre, 2009 W. Gray.

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

THE NUTRITION DIFFERENCE, workshop focusing on the impact of exercise and good nutritional habits for people with HIV/AIDS, 7-9 pm, Metropolitan Multiservice Center, 1475 W. Gray, 713/524-2374.

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

13 THE MIND/BODY CONNECTION explores wellness and the many alternatives to Western medicine, 7 pm, Metropolitan Multiservice Center, 1475 W. Gray, 713/623-6796.

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

14 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.

BACK TO BASICS, panel discussion explains the basic understanding of HIV medical approaches, lab tests, and treatment information, 7-9 pm, Metropolitan Multiservice Center, 1475 W. Gray, 713/524-2374.

heater

THE ACTORS WORKSHOP, 1009 Chartres, 713/236-1844. Nov. 24-Dec. 23: *Angels Fall*.

A.D. PLAYERS, Grace Theater, 2710 W. Alabama, 713/526-2721. Nov. 24-Dec. 30: *A Christmas Favorite*.

ALLEY THEATRE, 615 Texas Ave., 713/228-8421. Oct. 20-Nov. 18: *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Nov. 28-Dec. 30: *A Christmas Carol*.

THE COMPANY ONSTAGE, 536 Westbury Square, 713/726-1219. Through Nov. 18: *Jake's Women*. Dec. 1-Jan. 13: *Greetings*.

COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE, 12802 Queensbury, 713/467-4497. Through Dec. 2: *...My Name Is Still Alice*. Dec. 15-31: *Bah Humbug!*

DIVERSEWORKS, 1117 East Freeway, 713/223-8346. Dec. 1-2: *Strip Poker: The Story of Jesse and Damian* (a work in progress).

ENSEMBLE THEATRE, 4212 Main, 713/520-0063. Nov. 23-Dec. 31: *Sing a Christmas Song*.

THE GRAND 1894 OPERA HOUSE, 2020 Postoffice, 409/765-1894. Nov. 18: *Maureen McGovern with the Duke Ellington Orchestra*. Dec. 1-2: *A Christmas Carol*.

THE GROUP THEATRE WORKSHOP, Cafe Brasil, 2604 Dunlavy, 713/522-2204. Through Nov. 9: *Sex Is My Religion*.

HOUSTON BROADWAY SERIES, Jones Hall, 713/629-3700. Nov. 14-19: *A Tuna Christmas*.

HOUSTON SKYLINE THEATRE, 1617 Fannin, 713/759-0701. Through Nov. 25: *Julie Johnson*. Nov. 18-Dec. 23: *Hippo's Holly Daze*.

MAIN STREET THEATRE, 2540 Times Blvd., 713/524-6706. Through Nov. 26: *The Solid Gold Cadillac*. Dec. 7-24 (at Hamman Hall): *The Secret Garden*.

NEW HEIGHTS THEATRE, 339 West 19th, 713/869-8927. Nov. 29-Dec. 24: *Side by Side and An Unnatural Woman*.

RADIO MUSIC THEATRE, 2623 Colquitt, 713/522-7722. Through Nov. 18: *Fertile and Friends!*. Nov. 24-Jan. 13: *A Fertile Holiday!*

THEATER LAB HOUSTON, 1706 Alamo, 713/868-7516. Through Nov. 25: *Dark Rapture*.

FOR SALE



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Cris Williamson (right) and **Tret Fure** celebrate the release of their new collaborative album, *Postcards from Paradise*, at a benefit concert, Friday, November 17, 9 pm, The Westin Galleria Hotel, Galleria Ballroom, 5060 West Alabama. Tickets are \$50 VIP, \$20 General and are available at Inklings, 1846 Richmond, 713/521-3369.

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THEATRE SUBURBIA, 1410 West 43rd, 713/682-3525. Through Dec. 2: *Absurd Person Singular*.

THEATRE UNDER THE STARS, Music Hall, 713/622-TUTS. Nov. 30-Dec. 17: *Singin' in the Rain*.

Dance

HOUSTON BALLET, Wortham Center, Texas at Smith Streets, 713/227-ARTS or 1-800-828-ARTS. Nov. 24-Dec. 30: *The Nutcracker*.

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.

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 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 MAISON COFFEE ROASTERY, 2089 Westheimer, 713/528-6750. Live music every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Thursday night is movie night

(new releases). Sunday is open mic night hosted by Somewhere South.

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. 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. 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.

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 Hilcroft. 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.

HOPE PROJECT (HIV, Outreach, Prevention, and Education) provides HIV/AIDS information to the African-American community. Board meetings are held every second Wednesday of the month. Contact the HOPE line at 713/935-2393 for more information.

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.

HOUSTON TENNIS CLUB, an affiliate member of the Gay and Lesbian Tennis Association, welcomes men and women of all ages and skill levels. They meet Wednesdays and Fridays from 7:30-9 pm and Sundays from 9 am-12 noon at Memorial Park Tennis Center. To join, call Bobby Riggins at 713/868-5039.

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.

LIVING IN PROCESS GROUPS: Ongoing mixed group for men and women three Wednesday evenings per month. Ongoing gay men's group three Thursday evenings per month. Recovery, healing, and transformation are possible. Based on the work by Anne Wilson-Schaefer. Call Eric Mayo at Living in Process Southwest for more information—713/622-7250.

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.

MEDITATION AND CHANTING GROUP meets every Thursday at 7 pm. Call Alan at 713/942-0923 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.

MONTROSE COUNSELING CENTER offers numerous counseling groups, including groups for men and women living with HIV, people in recovery, lesbian survivors of cancer, survivors of sexual abuse, people living with chronic pain, lesbian survivors of domestic violence, and many more. For more information, contact (24 hrs.) 713/529-0037.

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.

OUTVOTE, a nonprofit organization dedicated to registering, educating, and motivating our community to vote, meets at 7 pm the third Wednesday of the month at the Multiservice Center, 1475 W. Gray. For more information, call 713/520-VOTE or 713/522-9837.

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.

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.

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What does Shirley MacLaine (pictured here in 1983's *Terms of Endearment*) think of Jerry Falwell and the truth?

Jerry Falwell

(Listen, *American*, Jerry Falwell)

"Jesus Christ loves every man and woman, including homosexuals and lesbians. Only He has the power to forgive and cleanse people guilty of this terrible sin. But this does not mean that we should accept their perversion as something normal. A person is not born with preference to the same sex, but he is introduced to the homosexual experience and cultivates a homosexual urge. It is innocent children and young people who are victimized and who become addicts to sexual perversion."

"Heterosexuality was created by God and is endorsed by God."

Shirley MacLaine

(*The Advocate*, 2/18/86, Kim Garfield)

Garfield: What do you say to the Jerry Falwells who believe that AIDS is God's punishment for the homosexual's "perverse lifestyle"?

MacLaine: I just would have to say that it might be Jerry Falwell's truth, but it's not my truth—nor the truth of billions of people. But it is his truth and he's just going to have to live with it because it's a judgmental truth—a manifestation of his value system. If Falwell thinks AIDS is God's wrath, then I have to ask him what he thinks of *that* God?

Henry Rollins

(*Details*, 7/95, Henry Rollins)

"Look at all the trouble Mary had to go through. Never had sex and then a mandate from Heaven gets her knocked up. And she didn't even get to get off. Bearing the Christ child was a consolation prize for her frustration and misery. Mary didn't have any real power; she just got spiritually boned."

Rev. Rick Oberheide

(*Newsweek*, "Letters to the Editor," 12/19/94)

"Too often, what passes for 'spirituality' is a self-constructed solution to the emptiness, fear and anxiety of our day: rigid dogmatism, strutting evangelism, empty ritual. In the name of such solutions, abortion doctors are murdered, homosexuals hated, ethnic groups purged and books burned. Sadly, it seems that the most religious among us are often the least spiritual."

John Waters

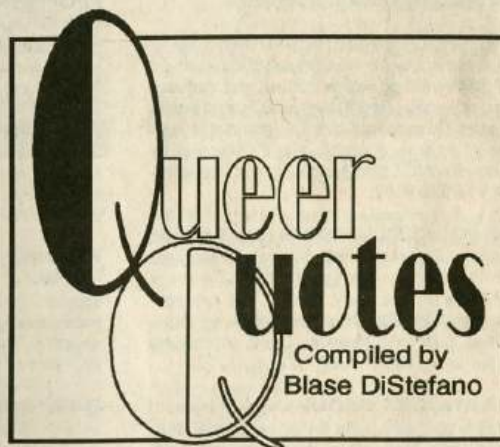
(*This Week in Texas*, 7/12/85, Rob Clark)

Clark: Weren't you raised a strict Catholic?

Waters: They tried. I went to an all-boys Catholic high school. That's where I started taking drugs and doing all the things that they were so uptight about. My parents hated it. None of my brothers or sisters went to a Catholic school after me. Any interest you had, they discouraged. . . .

What effect does your Catholic background have on you today?

It will always make sex better, because it will always be dirty. I hate Catholicism, but I'm not sorry I was raised that way because I think it made me weirder. You never lose the indoctrination. You can see in my movie *Multiple Maniacs*, there's a whole scene where someone gets a rosary up their ass. I thought that would get it out of my system. A church actually let us film that in there late at night on the sly. I think I was dealing with a gay priest. Actually, the Catholic church helped me get my start in movies. They would read us a list of movies and say, "If you see these, you'll fry in hell." So I rushed down to see them. I would have never heard of them if they hadn't told me about them.



Dalai Lama

(*Out*, Feb/Mar/94, Scott Hunt)

"At first the Dalai Lama seemed to say that homosexuality was prohibited by traditions proscribing sexual misconduct. 'Blow, here,' he said in broken English, pointing first to his mouth and then to his groin, 'is wrong.' After giving the issue more thought, however, he arrived at an answer that modified his initial response: 'If someone comes to me and asks whether it is OK or not, I will first ask if you have some religious vows to uphold. Then my next question is, What is your companion's opinion? If you both agree'—he laughed heartily—'then I think I would say, if two males or two females voluntarily agree to have mutual satisfaction without further implication of harming others, then it is OK.'"

Tony Kushner

(*Encore!* [w/permission from The New York Times Company 1994], Spring 1995)

What interested you about Mormons?

The Mormons I've met have been both right-wing and good-hearted and, that, in my experience, is an unusual combination. Mormonism is America's home-grown religion. The Church of Latter-Day Saints is notoriously homophobic, as bad in that regard as the Roman Catholic Church. But I do find other aspects of Mormon theology appealing. You're judged by your deeds rather than your intentions. That's something Mormonism and Judaism share: you have to do good to be good.

Amanda Donohoe

(*Details*, 10/91, Eve MacSweeney)

MacSweeney: ...Do you believe in God?

Donohoe: Absolutely not.
Do you have a personal slogan?
Never be intimidated out of your beliefs.

What does Cybill Shepherd (seen here in a recent photo from her hit sitcom, *Cybill*) think of Jesus and the Pope?

Call Lipson

Cybill Shepherd

(*Art & Understanding*, Jan/Feb/95, Nick Steele)

"I think the Catholic Church's stand on homosexuality is horribly evil. It's as though they dipped right down into Satan's closet and brought out some hideous stuff that is so bad for people. It just enrages me to see them take that position. We can debate about Jesus as a historical figure, but when I think of Jesus, I think of someone who is truly about love. I don't think he'd get along too well with the Pope."

Way Bandy

(*Us*, 11/17/86, Dick Polman)

"Early in their friendship, [Way Bandy] managed to put Hopson [a hairdresser] back in touch with spirituality. The hairdresser had grown up Catholic in Texas, and had even thought about becoming a priest, but had turned away for a number of reasons, one of them being the church's intransigent opposition to homosexuality. But Way loaned him a book that convinced him, as Hopson puts it, 'that you can feel connected to a higher being without having to be part of organized religion.'"

Patrick Swayze

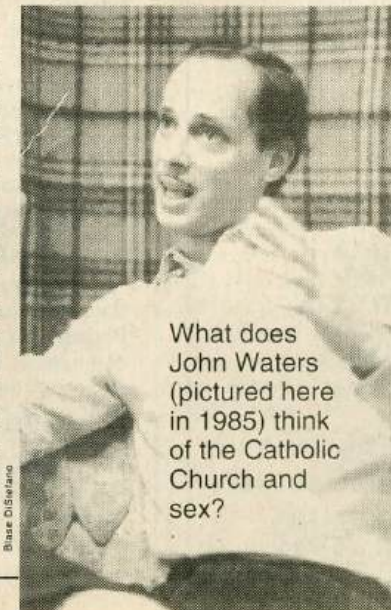
(*Us*, 9/95, Tom O'Neill)

O'Neill: I know you carry your father's knife as a keepsake. Do you have anything of your sister's?

Swayze: This is my keepsake [holds up an emerald-and-crystal-encrusted scepter]. It's my magic wand. It has been in India and Japan and all over the world. I put it into each person's hand and say that this is to bless the production and create an atmosphere of mutual goal devoid of ego. . . .

Um, Patrick, do you ever worry about how all the spiritual stuff, like the wands, might affect your image—both inside the studios and out?

I don't care what image I have! Take any image you want of me, I'm going to change it, because we are chameleons. We have the crazy person, the shy person, the angry person, the intellectual person, the ignorant person, the gay person, we have the little boy in us... Oh! Heaven forbid we have a feminine side! I've now ceased to worry about image, because I don't care what people think of me anymore. Because I've had such a battle with what I think of me and with trying to find a way to like myself.



What does John Waters (pictured here in 1985) think of the Catholic Church and sex?

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OUT-HERE

BERING CARE CENTER PREPARES FOR ANNUAL FEAST

The Bering Care Center extends a warm invitation to join them for its Annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner. This event is an opportunity for the community to celebrate the holiday together, give thanks for the gifts we have in each other, and especially offer support to those who are living with HIV. All are welcome to join the celebration. A traditional Thanksgiving meal will be served at noon on Thanksgiving Day in the Bering Memorial United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall, 1440 Harold. If you would like to volunteer your assistance, please call the Bering Care Center at (713) 520-7070.

PFLAG LAUNCHES PROJECT OPEN MIND

In the ecumenical location of the Christ Church Cathedral, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) announced the advent of Project Open Mind. The national public awareness campaign is the first of its kind to utilize

prime-time television's commercial market.

In recent years, anti-gay groups have begun an orchestrated assault on gay men and women, demonizing them in political attacks and fostering a climate of bigotry and hate. Project Open Mind, subtitled "Speaking the Truth about Lesbian and Gay Americans," addresses the hate and hate words so prevalent in contemporary language and attitudes directed at the lesbian and gay community.

The campaign is targeted for two other U.S. cities in addition to Houston, including Atlanta, Georgia, and Tulsa, Oklahoma.

SCHLEPP SUNDAY SET

Houston Interfaith Ministries and the Jewish Community Center have designated December 10, from 8 am to sundown, as "Schlepp Sunday." At that time members of the community are urged to donate food, clothing, and toys to be distributed to those in need via the Houston Interfaith Ministries of Greater Houston Hunger Coalition. Reusable items should be brought to the JCC, 5601 South Braeswood, where receipts will be issued for those who want to take a deduction for tax purposes.

OUTRAGE '95 SUCCESSFULLY CONTINUES HALLOWEEN TRADITION

Organizers of "Outrage '95-The Halloween Party" have reported raising \$10,500 at their eleventh annual spook-tacular, held October 28 at Rich's. The event, attended by over 600 costumed revelers, benefited the PWA Coalition, an organization by, of, and for HIV positive individuals, and the pediatric AIDS organization Loving Arms Foundation.

"One of the unique qualities of Outrage is that our hosts cover all the costs of the event. Every dollar given by our guests goes to the charities," stated Daryl Hickman, president of Outrage '95.

Outrage officially incorporated on October 1, 1995 and has applied for 501(c)(3) status. Interested in becoming a host member? Call (713) 868-9133, mailbox #2.

MONTROSE COUNSELING SERVICE ACCENTUATES OUTPATIENT PROGRAM

Following redirection of funding from the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, the Montrose Counseling Center has adopted appropriate program changes, providing affordable chemical dependency and substance abuse outpatient treatment for lower income and indigent adult members of our community. Services will be available four nights per week for persons new to sobriety via the Outpatient Group Treatment program which will provide clients with over five hours of services per week for as low as \$20 per week, with fees based on client resources. Individual counseling is available at \$25 per person for each 50-minute session.

Fees set by MCC are based on merely covering the cost of providing these services, though many clients find them difficult to afford. To find out how you can help or be helped, call Montrose Counseling Center at (713) 529-0037.

PRIDE PARADE JUMPS FROM FRYING PAN

Indicating that the traditional two o'clock start time was oppressively hot for some participants and spectators, the Pride Committee of Houston has announced that the annual parade will be held later in the day. The 1996 Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade is scheduled for Sunday, June 26, commencing at five o'clock pm. Puzzlingly, the National Weather Service reports that the temperature at 2 pm on Pride Day '95 was 93 degrees, while the temperature

at 5 pm was 96 degrees.

The parade route remains the same, commencing at Woodhead and moving east on Westheimer.

The Pride Committee encourages more community involvement in its preparations and invites all interested parties to attend its meetings each Tuesday evening at 6:30 pm at 2700 Albany, third floor. For more information, call at (713) 529-6979.

NATIONAL BLACK GAY AND LESBIAN LEADERSHIP FORUM REPRESENTATIVES TO VISIT TEXAS

As a prelude to its 1996 annual national conference to be held February 15-19 in Dallas, conference leaders of the National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum (NBGLLF) will visit Texas at two information exchange/fundraising events.

The meetings are scheduled for Saturday, November 18, 1995, in Dallas, and Sunday, November 19, 1995, in Houston. Keith Boykin, the NBGLLF executive director, and Phil Wilson, founder and long-time activist, will be present at both gatherings. Both meetings will provide an opportunity to meet the NBGLLF leaders to discuss the goals, needs, and strategies of a national organization devoted to the needs of African-American lesbians and gay men. For further information, call Steve Walker at (713) 864-2242.

SPECTRUM '96 EXTENDED TO TWO DAYS, OFFERS DISCOUNT TO EARLY BIRDS

Town Meeting, Inc., the producer of Spectrum '95, has scheduled October 5 and 6, 1996 for Spectrum '96, to be held at the George R. Brown Convention Center. As a pre-holiday incentive to vendors, the organization is offering its standard 10x10 booth for a rental fee of \$500, which will double in cost after December 31. The board of directors has stated it will hold all moneys received from booth sales in an escrow account, "...helping to guarantee the success of the event."

The internet will also be a part of Spectrum's changes and additions. Effective November 15, 1995, Town Meeting, Inc. offers a "home page" accessible on the worldwide web at <http://www.stars.com>, allowing individuals to learn about the exhibitors, sponsors, and entertainers involved with Spectrum. "Unlike TV advertising, we will be able to allow our exhibitors the chance to get exposure that may otherwise not be available to them," said Alan Bourgeois, president of Town Meeting, Inc.

For a spectrum of information on Spectrum '96, call (713) 526-2853.

TEXAS HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATION HOSTS GAY LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

For the first time, the Texas Human Rights Foundation (THRF) brought together over a

dozen leaders from Houston's gay and lesbian community at a meeting dubbed the Kellett Symposium. Co-sponsored by the African American Lesbian/Gay Organization, the meeting sought to open dialogue that would promote greater understanding of diverse community interests.

"Bringing black and white leaders together to the same table is a giant step for the Houston gay community," said Donald Skipwith, THRF board president. "I'm excited by the commitment shown by these leaders and look forward to working with them throughout the year."

THRF has scheduled a follow-up meeting for early next year and encourages all Houston gay and lesbian leaders to participate by contacting THRF at (800) 828-6417.

THOMAS STREET HEALTH CENTER SEEKS NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS

At its upcoming January meeting, the presiding council of the Harris County Hospital District Thomas Street Health Center will appoint new members to fulfill the terms of those who have resigned or passed away.

Council seats fall under two categories: Consumer council members are those persons infected with HIV, who would be eligible for services at the health center regardless if they use services or not. Non-Consumer council members are those persons considered not eligible for hospital district services, but are community-minded persons who want to be involved, regardless of HIV status.

Other council membership requirements include that the applicant is 18 years of age, resides or works in Harris County, is not employed by the hospital district, and possesses the willingness to actually put the time in on meetings, listening to patient concerns, and then taking action.

Council Chairman Matt Locklin adds, "Extensive community experience is not required. Rather, you should be familiar with the daily lives and needs of persons living with AIDS, and then use your common sense in a group situation for the betterment of all health center patients. It is about a six-hour a month commitment, including a monthly formal board meeting and assorted informal committee meetings, phone calls, and faxes."

Persons interested in addressing the TSHCC board or in serving as council members and patient group representatives may self-declare their intention at the meeting to be held at Thomas Street Health Center, 2015 Thomas St. (off N. Main and Paschal), Wednesday, January 11, 1996, at 2 pm.

More than 4,000 Harris County residents receive medical services for HIV/AIDS at the Harris County Hospital District Thomas St. Health Center.

Wanna Take Control?
See page 46.

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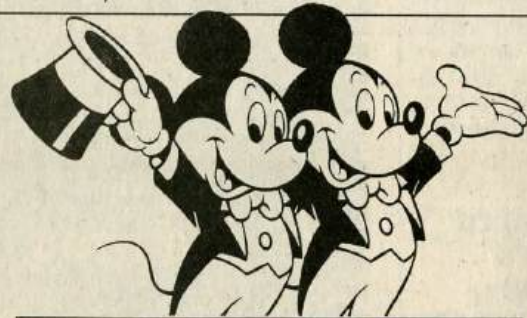
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Fla. Lawmakers Attack Disney Partners Policy

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Fifteen Florida state legislators have written to Michael Eisner, chief executive officer of the Walt Disney Co., denouncing the motion picture and theme park giant's decision to offer health insurance benefits to the domestic partners of its gay and lesbian employees. The 15 legislators charged Disney with "belittling the sanctity of marriage" and of forcing its customers to pay for treatment for people with AIDS through the new health coverage that "will result in an increased number of AIDS cases." A Disney spokesman in Burbank, California, John Dreyer, said the company has no intention of reversing itself on the new policy and said it was consistent with the firm's non-discrimination policies. "This is about providing health benefits for our employees and nothing more," Dreyer said. "When we get the letter, we'll decide how to respond to them, but we won't do it through the media." The full text of the letter from the lawmakers to the Walt Disney Co. follows:

"An open letter to Michael Eisner and the Walt Disney Board:

"We are deeply disappointed in your recent decision to extend health benefits to the domestic partners of your homosexual employees. The media and entertainment industry may consider this a 'politically correct' and courageous change in policy, but we—and others who have looked to you as the provider of wholesome, family-oriented entertainment—consider your decision a big mistake both morally and financially.

"We are surprised at your belittlement of the sanctity of marriage. By implying that vows no longer need to be made in order to gain marital privileges, you are alienating the millions of people in this country who take the marriage covenant seriously and believe that it is ordained by God. We strongly disapprove of your inclusion and endorsement of a lifestyle that is unhealthy, unnatural and unworthy of special treatment. Those who practice homosexuality are engaging in a life style that should not be given the same status as heterosexual marriages.

"Financially speaking, how can you give medical benefits to a group of people with such a high medical risk, knowing full-well that other Disney employees and the American people will have to pick up the tab for the inevitable increased health insurance premiums? With your decision, you are alienating the vast majority of families in this country. You may be gaining the applause of a vocal minority of your employees, but you are jeopardizing your financial base which creates the need for those same employees.

"We are also deeply disappointed in the path that the Disney company has chosen to follow. For more than 50 years Walt Disney Co. has represented all that is good and pure and wholesome in our nation. Families flocked to Walt Disney World and Disneyland because they knew that Walt Disney respected and nurtured the traditional American family and its strong moral values. Disney could always be counted on to provide parents and children alike with family-friendly, good-natured entertainment. Nowadays, however, you are producing anti-family films under other labels, such as Miramax, and moving even further away from traditional American values with this policy decision.

"We wonder what Walt Disney himself would think of your decision if he were alive today? We are inclined to believe he would be quick to pull the plug on such anti-family company policies. We hope you will be quick to reconsider your new policy and work to reestablish the Disney Co. as a family-oriented organization."

The letter was signed by the following: Republican Reps. Bob Brooks (Winter Park), Randy Ball (Titusville), Jerry Burroughs (Cantonment), Marvin Couch (Oviedo), Jim Fuller and Stephen Wise (Jacksonville), Carlos Lacasa (Miami), Ken Pruitt (Port St. Lucie), Bob Starks (Casselberry), John Thrasher (Orange Park), Mike Fasano (New Port Richey), Mark Flanagan (Bradenton) and Buddy Johnson (Plant City); Republican Sen. John Grant (Tampa); and Democratic Rep. Everett Kelly (Tavares).

LESBIANS AND GAYS DEMAND ACTION FROM UN ON HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

As heads of state from around the world gathered to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender activists convened in an international tribunal in New York City calling attention to the widespread and systematic abuse of perpetrated against them. "The UN continues to turn a blind eye to human rights violations based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and hiv status," said Julie Dorf, executive director of the International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGHRC). The testifiers, who represented a wide range of

issues and geographic regions, presented their cases to a distinguished panel of international human rights experts including Kerry Kennedy Cuomo, former director of the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Human Rights Center, and Sunila Abeysekera of the Sri Lanka human rights monitoring organization INFORM.

IT 'CAME' IN OUTER SPACE

KANSAS CITY, Kan. — Dr. Joseph Tash of the University of Kansas School of Medicine has been given a contract by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to conduct sexual experiments in outer space. Little is known about sex in the weightlessness of space, but there is some evidence that male sperm is

more active and aggressive in orbit. But before you start suiting up and heading off to NASA headquarters in Houston with visions of astronaut orgies, however, Tash notes that these experiments will only involve studying the behavior of the sperm of sea urchins—no, not "street urchins"—which is chemically close to that of human sperm.

LOBBYING ORGANIZATION CHANGES NAME, LAUNCHES INTERNET SITE

WASHINGTON — Noting that it is "so much more than a fund," the Human Rights Campaign Fund has formally changed its name to the Human Rights Campaign. HRC has

recently begun publishing "HRC Quarterly," a journal of political news and perspective. In announcing the name-change, Elizabeth Birch, HRC's executive director, also announced the organization's latest Internet addition, a World Wide Web site that it says will let Internet users keep track of voting records for their members of Congress and communicate with them quickly. The WWW site is: <http://www.hrcusa.org>.

PAPERS PRINT PHOTO OF GREEK PM'S WIFE NUDE WITH 'ANOTHER WOMAN'

ATHENS — Greece erupted in a political uproar after three newspapers in Athens published a front-page photo of Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu's wife Dimitra Liani in what purports to show her nude on a beach in "an intimate pose with another unidentified woman." The photo, which Mrs. Papandreu has denounced as faked, depicts the unidentified woman fondling her genitals. Authorities arrested the publisher of one of the papers on misdemeanor charges that his publication made an "unprovoked insult" against Mrs. Papandreu, who met and married the Prime Minister when she was an airline stewardess. The publishers of the two other papers that published the photo also face warrants for their arrests but have gone into hiding, police say. Mrs. Papandreu, who is 40, said the photo was a fake representing a "dirty campaign" to thwart her increasing political ambitions.

REP. STUDDS ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT FROM CONGRESS

BOSTON — U.S. Rep. Gerry Studds (D-Mass.), who became the first openly gay member of Congress when he came out on the floor of the House after he had been censured for having had sex 10 years earlier with a congressional page, has announced that he will not run for his Cape Cod district seat again next year. Following that censure vote, Studds was nevertheless re-elected by a solid margin to become the first openly gay

person ever elected to Congress. Studds has held his seat for 12 terms, a total of 23 years.

RESEARCHER CONFIRMS EARLIER STUDY ON 'GAY GENE'

NEW YORK — The scientist who made headlines two years ago with research that demonstrated a link between male homosexuality and specific genetic markers has now reported in new research that the so-called "gay gene" influences the sexuality of gay men, but not lesbians, confirming the link that drew enormous national interest when first

reported in 1993. In the latest issue of *Nature Genetics*, Dr. Dean Hamer and his fellow researchers at the National Institutes of Health reported that the expanded study confirms that there is a genetic link between male homosexuality and the genetic marker (known as X q28) inherited from the X chromosome of the mother. The researchers found that 22 of 32 pairs of gay brothers from unrelated families (69 percent) shared the same version of the genetic material, leading them to confirm the genetic link. When the scientists looked at the heterosexual brothers of gay men, however, they found only 22 percent of the heterosexual siblings had inherited the Xq28 pattern. At the same time, researchers examined 36 pairs of lesbian sisters, but found no evidence of any shared genetic marker in the same region. "The finding in gay men but not lesbians suggests that the mechanisms underlying male and female sexual orientations are at least partially distinct," Hamer concluded in the report. Earlier statistical studies have also shown that gay men were more likely to have gay brothers than

lesbians to have lesbian sisters, he noted. Hamer said, "It shows that it is not impossible to map complex psychological traits to genes. It is still a very large genetic region. We have narrowed down which haystack in the field it is, but it's still a haystack."

Continued on next page



RUPAUL NAMED PETA "COVER GIRL"

Add RuPaul to the list of supermodels speaking up for animals. The singer and spokesmodel is featured on the cover of PETA's 1996 Shopping Guide for Caring Consumers, a guide to products not tested on animals. Says RuPaul, "Mama used to say, 'It's got to be fat-free, duty-free, and cruelty-free.'" PETA's guide makes cruelty-free shopping easy for everyone, with products ranging

from cosmetics and condoms to household cleaners and office supplies. The Shopping Guide can be ordered from PETA by calling (301) 770-PETA, and is also available at natural food stores and other retail outlets.

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O U T ▼ S M A R T

Out in Our World

Continued from previous page

ANOTHER HISTORY MONTH PROCLAMATION

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Albuquerque Mayor Martin Chavez proclaimed October "Lesbian & Gay History Month" in the city on October 27, recognizing the "important contributions to our society" by gays and lesbians. The proclamation also noted that National Coming Out Day, which was October 11, was started seven years ago by long-time New Mexico resident Robert Eichberg, who died earlier this year. Earlier in the month, Santa Fe Mayor Debbie Jaramillo also issued a similar proclamation recognizing "Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual History Month" in that city.

IRANIAN MAN BEATEN, LASHED FOR WEARING WOMEN'S CLOTHES

TEHRAN — An Iranian newspaper has reported that a man in the capital city of Tehran was beaten up by outraged women and later sentenced to 20 lashes by a court, because he got on a municipal bus dressed in the heavy veils and billowing caftan-like gown of a woman. The 31-year-old man, who was not identified, told the newspaper that he had dressed as a woman and sat in the women-only rear section of the bus as part of a \$33 bet with his father. Apparently, the man's large frame and feet didn't fool the women, however, and he told the paper they "got angry and beat me up." The man was later sentenced by a religious court to 20 lashes for what it called his "ugly and improper" prank.

COURT NIXES COUPLE'S JOINT BANKRUPTCY PETITION

ATLANTA — U.S. Bankruptcy Judge A. David Kahn has rejected the joint bankruptcy petition of two gay men, ruling that they were ineligible because they aren't legally married. Judge Kahn agreed that the men's long-term relationship had a number of similarities to a heterosexual marriage, but he ruled that federal bankruptcy laws required legal marriage or its equivalent as "more than a mere technicality." The case is believed to be the first of its kind in the U.S.

GAY SAILOR'S CASE DISMISSED

BALTIMORE — Federal District Court Judge Joseph Young has dismissed a lawsuit by Navy Lt. Richard Selland who has been challenging the Defense Department's new so-called "don't ask, don't tell" policy of excluding openly gay and lesbian service members from the military. The court ruled that Selland's First and Fifth Amendment rights do not take precedence over Congress' and the Defense Department's right to set military policies. Selland currently is

a supply officer at a base in Virginia, but when he came out in 1993, he was stationed on the submarine Hammerhead.

HOUSE GUTS

D.C. PARTNERS MEASURE

WASHINGTON — Leaders of the Republican-controlled Congress voted 249-172 for an amendment to the District of Columbia's 1996 budget that would repeal the capital's domestic partner ordinance. The partnership repeal measure was proposed by Rep. John Hostettler (R-Ind.), who said the District's partnership ordinance leads to the "erosion of the traditional family" because it includes same-sex couples. Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) ridiculed the notion, saying, "Are you so frightened that people will see two men living together in a loving relationship, or two women living together in a loving relationship, and that will undermine the family? Shame on you. You are the ones who undermine the family when you trivialize it like this." Elizabeth Birch, head of the Human Rights Campaign, joined in criticizing conservatives in the House. "Politicians who purport to champion 'local control' and 'family values' have now revoked this local law that costs the taxpayers nothing and benefits local families, senior citizens, and people with disabilities—all because some of the people the law helps are gay," Birch said. "In the midst of an overzealous dismantling of Medicare and Medicaid, this Congress has once again gone too far in imposing the views of anti-gay extremists on the rest of the country—even at the expense of the most basic human right to visit a loved one in the hospital."

RESEARCHER LINKS TRANSEXUALISM AND BRAIN STRUCTURE

LONDON — Researchers in the Netherlands have reported in the journal *Nature* that male-to-female transsexualism may have a biological basis, based on a tiny region of the hypothalamus in the brain. Prof. Dick Swaab of the Netherlands Institute for Brain Research in Amsterdam said in the report that the stria terminalis region of the hypothalamus that is linked to sexuality is larger in men than in women, regardless of their sexual orientation. But Swaab reported that, after studying the post mortem brain structures of six male-to-female transsexuals, he found that all had the smaller "female" structure in this area of the brain. Swaab said the results imply that male-to-female transsexuals had this smaller stria terminalis area from birth and that the region of the brain may be linked to gender identity as well as sexuality in general. Swaab said that there was no evidence that transsexualism is genetically inherited, but noted that it was not possible to say how much influence environmental factors play compared to inherited traits. Swaab and other researchers, including

Dr. Simon LeVay of the Salk Institute, have found similar differences in the size of another area of the hypothalamus between gay and straight men.

ANTI-GAY MINISTER OPENS HOUSE WITH PRAYER

WASHINGTON — Rights activists and Democrats in the House of Representatives expressed dismay and outrage over having far-right anti-gay minister Louis Sheldon of the Traditional Values Coalition deliver the daily prayer that usually begins the legislative body's day on Thursday, November 2. Rep. Lynn Wolsey, a California Democrat said Sheldon had made "a career out of vilifying lesbians, gays, and persons with AIDS" and had called for people infected with HIV to be "confined in concentration camp-like establishments." Elizabeth Birch of the Human Rights Campaign agreed. "It is outrageous that those in control of this Congress would allow that man, whose every waking breath is spent attacking lesbian and gay people in this country, to lead the House in prayer," Birch said. "Sheldon has created a cottage industry out of political gay-bashing and hate, and it is insulting to every fair-minded American." But a spokesperson for House Speaker Newt Gingrich said Sheldon's invocation was "perfectly appropriate." Sheldon had been invited to deliver the brief prayer at the request of Rep. Ken Calvert (R-Calif.).

TEMP AGENCY SUED FOR BIAS

MINNEAPOLIS — Marcus St. James has filed a lawsuit against the Dolphin Temporary Services' Industrial Group, an employment agency, charging that they fired him as an employee of the company because he is gay. In the suit, St. James also charges that the temporary agency singled him out for retaliation because he had refused to fabricate data for some 500 job seekers in order to meet equal opportunity employment requirements. An attorney for the firm denied any reprisals against St. James and insisted that his "job performance was the sole reason for his termination." St. James is asking for some \$50,000 in damages and lost wages.

COLLEGE REPUBLICANS SUE OVER SCHOOLS' ANTI-BIAS PLEDGE

DENVER — A GOP student organization, the College Republicans, has filed a federal lawsuit against Colorado State University, the University of Northern Colorado, and the Metropolitan State College in Denver, charging that the three campuses violate their First Amendment rights for insisting that student groups sign a nondiscrimination agreement that includes sexual orientation. The suit charges that "if the College Republicans were compelled to accept homosexuals... this would change the message communicated by the College Republicans' speech and other First Amendment activities." The suit asks the U.S.

District Court to force the schools to sanction the College Republicans, which would include providing them with office space on campus. Leaders of the College Republicans said earlier this year that they had no intention of actually barring homosexuals but that they object to the colleges' decision to require all student organizations to sign the pledge, which states: "The club will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, age, gender, disability or sexual orientation." "We really feel the school is violating our freedom of association by shoving someone's sexual preference down our throat," said Nate Hall, chairman of the Metropolitan State College Republicans. "If a person is gay, so what? Our biggest concern is, are you a Republican? But we don't as a club condone homosexual activity." Sheila Kaplan, Metropolitan State College president, said that the school stands by the anti-bias requirement. "One of the founding principles of Metro is a commitment to maintaining a campus environment free from discrimination in any form, where all people are respected and valued," Kaplan said. "We believe Metro's nondiscrimination policies are both appropriate and legal."

DOLE WAFFLES ON LOG CABIN CONTRIBUTION

WASHINGTON — Republican presidential hopeful, Sen. Bob Dole of Kansas, abruptly changed his tune about a \$1,000 campaign contribution from the gay and lesbian Log Cabin Republicans, saying it was a mistake to return the money and blaming the whole incident on his campaign staff. Dole, whose GOP presidential bid has been lagging recently, said his campaign staff had not cleared the decision to return the Log Cabin PAC donation with him. Dole's latest statement on the returned funds contradicts statements he made last month when he said on a television interview: "I didn't want the perception that we were buying into some special rights for any group or lifestyle or whatever it might be with gays or anyone else." But a month later, Dole blamed his campaign staff entirely for the August incident, and implied that he hadn't known about the decision to return the contribution. "I think if they had consulted with me, they wouldn't have done that," Dole told reporters in mid-October. "I just didn't agree with what happened." Neither, obviously, did the gay GOPers who have since handed over their \$1,000 campaign contribution to Sen. Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, another Republican presidential candidate. Rich Tafel, executive director of the Log Cabin Republicans, said he believed Dole had figured out during the past month of campaigning that beating up on gay supporters wasn't a smart political move. "I think as he's traveled around the country he's found as we have that moderate Republicans, a lot of Dole supporters, were really turned off by this whole incident." Dole said he would not ask the gay Republicans for the donation again because "I don't want to open it all up again."

Continued on next page



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Out In Our World

Continued from previous page

CLINTON BACKS FEDERAL ANTI-BIAS MEASURE

WASHINGTON — President Bill Clinton has made history by becoming the first U.S. chief executive to endorse federal legislation that would bar bias based on sexual orientation, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. The act, sponsored by Sens. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), James Jeffords (R-Vt.) and others, is aimed at preventing employment bias against lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals. A White House letter from Clinton to the Human Rights Campaign, a major backer of the legislation and the country's largest gay lobbying organization, says that the president considers the bill "important civil rights legislation." The bill bans discrimination based on sexual orientation in businesses with more than 15 employees. Religious organizations are exempt from the measure. Clinton noted that the proposed legislation does not apply to businesses with 15 or fewer workers, to the nation's armed forces or to religious organizations or the schools they operate, and that it specifically excludes any quotas. The bill also would not require businesses to provide health or other benefits to domestic partners of gay or lesbian employees. "The bill, therefore,

appears to answer all the legitimate objections previously raised against it, while ensuring that Americans, regardless of their sexual orientation, can find and keep their jobs based on their ability and the quality of their work," the Clinton letter says. George Stephanopoulos, a senior Clinton advisor, said, "This is a reasonable response to a real problem. It ensures that everyone receives equal treatment and no one gets special treatment." "People should not be fired from their jobs for a reason that has nothing to do with their abilities," said Elizabeth Birch, executive director of the Human Rights Campaign. "Today in America, it's perfectly legal to fire someone for being gay or lesbian. The President stands with the vast majority of Americans in supporting equal rights in the workplace for lesbian and gay citizens." The bill is opposed by many conservatives on Capitol Hill, and is given poor chances of passage in Congress at this time.

GEORGIA SODOMY LAW CHALLENGED AGAIN

ATLANTA — The *Atlanta Constitution* reports that L. Chris Christensen is challenging the Georgia sodomy statute, which the U.S. Supreme Court upheld nine years ago. Attorneys representing Christensen, who was charged with soliciting an undercover sheriff's deputy, will argue that Christensen's right to privacy is

greater under the state Constitution than it is under the U.S. Constitution and that the sodomy statute infringes on that right.

SUPREME COURT HEARS ARGUMENTS IN COLORADO ANTI-GAY MEASURE

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in what is widely considered the most important gay rights case in more than a decade. The outcome of that case could affect local and state laws across the country. At issue in the case is the anti-gay Amendment 2 narrowly approved by Colorado voters in a statewide referendum in 1992. The amendment prohibits state agencies or local governments from adopting laws or regulations extending anti-discrimination protections to cover sexual orientation. Following the Supreme Court hearings on Tuesday, October 10, Colorado's Attorney General Gale Norton told reporters that gays and lesbians as a group do not merit "special protections." "The status quo, in almost the entire United States, is that there are no laws granting special protections on the basis of sexual orientation," Norton said. "And Amendment 2 just says that there will not be those additional special protections on that basis." On the other side, attorney Jean Dubofsky argued before the Court that the Colorado amendment violated the U.S. constitutional guarantee of equal protection under the law. She said that if the Supreme Court upholds the Colorado measure, homosexuals will lose their basic right to challenge discriminatory laws and regulations anywhere in the country. "If we lose this case and Amendment 2 goes into effect, it immediately repeals all the local ordinances and all the general state laws and policies that protect people from discrimination on the basis of gay orientation only," Dubofsky said following the Court hearing. "And it prohibits, in the future, any general policy or any protection at any level of government from discrimination on the basis of gay orientation or from the opportunity to seek any protection from discrimination." During the hearings, several Supreme Court justices questioned the validity of the Colorado amendment, expressing fears that it could allow hospitals to deny medical treatment to gays or permit hotels and restaurants to turn homosexuals away.

MARTINA DEBUTS RAINBOW VISA CARD

NEW YORK — Tennis great Martina Navratilova has stepped into the corporate promotion area by introducing the "Rainbow Card," Visa's credit card aimed at the nation's gay and lesbian community. Backed by automaker Subaru, part of the card's fees will go to the Rainbow Card Foundation, a non-profit organization that will help fund gay and lesbian health and education groups in the U.S. The Rainbow Card is available through the Travel-

ers Bank, and domestic partners can apply for a joint account. "The inspiration for the Rainbow Card and the foundation came from the incredible strength and unity so many of us shared at the 1993 March on Washington," Navratilova said. "This experience prompted my friends and me to evaluate ways to harness the economic power of the gay community to achieve humanitarian goals. Today, I'm proud to introduce the Rainbow Card as a fundraising tool that will generate a substantial amount of money for health and education causes relevant to lesbians and gays." The fund hopes to raise some \$20 million for various charitable groups within the next five years, Navratilova said. To find out more information about the Rainbow Card, phone 1-800-99-RAINBOW.

TOO MANY 'RAINBOWS' FOUNDATION SAYS

NEWARK, N.J. — Just days after it made a highly publicized debut, the Rainbow Card Foundation has been handed a "cease and desist" order from the Rainbow Foundation, a New Jersey charity that helps sick children. A spokesperson from the Rainbow Foundation said, "Their causes are not our cause." Attorney Mark Momjian, representing the Rainbow Card Foundation, which will distribute funds raised for gay- and lesbian-oriented groups, said hundreds of charities use the word "rainbow" in their names.

UNIVERSITY CAMPUS ADDS LESBIGAY INSTITUTE

LOS ANGELES — California State University's Northridge campus has OKed creating an Institute on Gay, Lesbian & Transgender Studies. The institute will conduct lectures and seminars on the Southern California campus, starting this semester. In announcing the new institute, Donald Hall, an associate professor of English at the school, said it will serve as a resource for faculty members who would like to include gay and lesbian studies in their course material. Hall said the campus has a large gay and lesbian student population, which the institute will serve.

ECONOMIST: GAY MARRIAGES WOULD ADD 172,000 TOURISTS IN HAWAII

HONOLULU — A state committee holding hearings on the differences in benefits enjoyed by married couples that same-sex couples are ineligible for, was told by Somner LeCroix, an economist with the University of Hawaii, that legalizing gay and lesbian marriages would increase the number of tourists visiting the state by about 172,000 people annually. "Adding more tourists of any stripe to the state would in general be good for the state," LeCroix told the Commission on Sexual Orientation and the Law, authorized by the legislature as the state tries to deal with the complex political and legal questions raised by a court challenge to the

state's refusal to give marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS HONORED BY USPS

CLARKSDALE, Miss. — Playwright Tennessee Williams is being honored by a U.S. Postal Service commemorative stamp. Williams, best known for his complex and emotionally intense plays such as *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, and *Suddenly Last Summer*, was born in Columbus, Mississippi in 1911. He died in 1983.

MALAYSIAN STATE PROPOSES TRANSVESTITE 'REHABILITATION CENTERS'

JOHOR BAHRU, Malaysia — Officials in Malaysia's southern state of Johor are considering setting up "rehabilitation centers" for transvestites, who frequently work as prostitutes in the country's larger cities. After a member of the state assembly recently urged police to crack down on the capital city's transvestites, officials with the state welfare department said they would evaluate the impact of the sex-workers in spreading HIV. "The department is looking at ways to check the activity which mostly occurs in dimly lit alleys and slum areas," said Halimah Sadique of the state welfare department. "We will work together with the police and relevant authorities to prevent this group from getting more peers and to ensure the state is free of such activity." No details of the "rehabilitation centers" were outlined, but said they would offer counseling and vocational and technical training for transvestites "so that they can become useful citizens instead of soliciting."

IRISH COURT: ORIENTATION DOUBTS NOT ENOUGH FOR ANNULMENT

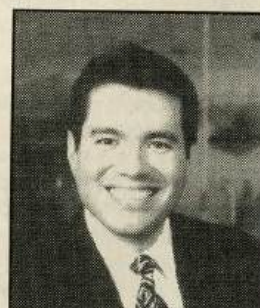
DUBLIN, Ireland — The Irish Supreme Court has refused to nullify the 16-year marriage of a couple, unnamed in court documents, who each believed the other was homosexual or bisexual. The couple, who have three children, wanted to annul their marriage even though neither presented any concrete evidence about the sexual orientation of the other. The wife said she thought her husband might be homosexual or bisexual because of a "close friendship" he had with another man and because she said that at times he preferred masturbation rather than sexual intercourse. Similarly, the husband said he thought the wife might be a lesbian because of a "long and very close friendship" that she had with a younger woman. A lower court rejected the annulment petition, and the Supreme Court upheld the lower court ruling, noting that "an inadequacy of the ability to communicate" was not justification for an annulment and that despite the difficulties the couple faced "there must have been a fair amount of full sexual intercourse" simply to have had three children.

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Vaid in Vain

Urvashi Vaid's new book, *Virtual Equality: The Mainstreaming of Gay and Lesbian Liberation*, tackles a central question in the organization of the gay civil rights movement: what do we want? Vaid's answer is shared in some form by many prominent leaders of our movement. For that reason, and because Vaid herself is lionized by many, her ideas must be treated seriously. *Virtual Equality* is an extended argument for the "coalition-" and "bridge-building" rhetoric that has become almost a mantra of some of our local and national leaders, especially on the political left. Before we build our bridges, though, we would do well to ask just where they will get us.

Vaid (pronounced "Vad" as in "bad"), the former executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), argues that the movement has, since at least the late 1970s, followed a strategy she calls "mainstreaming" or "legitimation." This strategy, she says, consists in trying to convince the straight world that gays are "just like" straights. It focuses on eliminating public, legalized discrimination (like the ban on gays in the military or gay marriage). Mainstreaming, says Vaid, seeks to concentrate efforts on supposedly narrowly defined "gay" issues rather than to pursue a broad-based "progressive agenda."

Vaid urges instead a strategy she calls "liberation." According to this strategy, equality for gays within the traditional social framework is not sufficient. Liberation would mean no less than a "cultural transformation." The institutions of family and communal life must themselves be "recreated." Vaid denies that gays are "just like" heterosexuals. She asserts, without support, that homosexuals "differ markedly in our view of sexuality, gender, power, and morality" and that we somehow "make gender obsolete." She even says that straight society must be "assimilated" into gay culture—a notion that would be hilarious if not offered so seriously. Ironically, Vaid and the religious right agree: gays are "different" in some relevant sense, they seek to impose their agenda on everyone else, and they want literally to upend our most fundamental social institutions. No wonder she had such a hard time, by her own admission, debating Louis Sheldon of the Traditional Values Coalition. Her liberation philosophy

has no response to him.

Moreover, "gay" liberation is not enough under Vaid's strategy. Gays must build bridges to other oppressed communities. Hence, she argues, "gay civil rights must be seen as part of a broader focus on human rights, sexual and gender equality, social and economic justice, and faith in a multiracial society." Of course, what constitutes "social and economic justice" and the like

is very much up for grabs. Vaid nowhere explicitly defines these big causes, but we get strong hints what they mean to her. At one point or another in *Virtual Equality* she urges the gay civil rights movement to take a stand on the deficit, crime, public schools, housing, the "role of government," defense, welfare reform, raising the minimum wage, free school lunches, immigration, the Contract with America, NAFTA, affirmative action, "progressive redistricting which creates minority districts," AFDC programs, and the "shrinkage of the workforce," among other novelties. Any guess what she thinks the "gay" position on these issues must be? Under Vaid's watch, NGLTF practiced this politics of coalition-building by coming out against the Gulf War, a decision of colossal stupidity and futility. It's a good thing she's not also a radical animal-rights activist or she'd have us building bridges to the spotted owl and humpback-whale communities.

The book is, however, not a complete disaster. I share Vaid's view that legal equality is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the creation of real freedom for gays. There must indeed be an acceptance of gays into the fabric of social and cultural life before we will be truly free. (See "Real Freedom," *OutSmart*, May 1994.) Any such acceptance will require profound changes in Americans' prejudice about homosexuality but not, as I see it, a revolution in all social mores. Vaid also has useful and important things to say about the need for local- and state-based chapters to support our national organizations. She properly denounces the hideous and cannibalistic practice of "outing," ACT UP's notorious 1989 demonstration at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York, NAMBLA, and the frequent use of the "Uncle Tom" analogy to stifle dissent in gay politics.

Yet the book is so riddled with misunderstandings (especially of gay conservatives),



by Dale Carpenter

inconsistencies (she rejects "single-issue politics" but says that "the most successful movements... have involved single-issue organizing"), rhetorical excesses ("Heterosexual morality is predicated on the suppression of joy," she maintains), and ambiguities ("social justice" anyone?) that it would take another book to undo them all. There is error on every page. But the most fundamental error—and the one shared by many gay activists—is the book's call for a movement dedicated to more than "merely" gay civil rights.

Vaid champions the view that the gay civil rights movement, by itself, is somehow incoherent or at least incomplete. She's the latest in a long line of "queer" theorists to insist that gay civil rights is really about Something Greater. For Marxists in the 1960s, the achievement of gay civil rights required the destruction of capitalism. For some pre-AIDS gay male activists, it was really about sexual freedom and license. For some feminist thinkers and certainly for transgender activists, it's really about gender. For the NAMBLA-loving Camille Paglia, it's rooted in the sexualization of children. Now comes Vaid to tell us the gay civil rights movement is really about "economic justice," "racial equality," and the like—as she understands them. It seems that whatever the Big Cause we're offered, it always squares with its proponent's ideological

pre-commitments.

The left is not alone in its ability to co-opt the gay civil rights movement for its own purposes. I could make a case that gay civil rights is intimately tied to personal autonomy, which is meaningless without economic self-determination and freedom, which demands minimal government intervention and coercion, which is the opposite of Vaid's preferred economic system. Pro-life gays could

It's a good thing she's not a radical animal-rights activist or she'd have us building bridges to the spotted owl and humpback-whale communities.

claim that gay civil rights demands an ethic of protecting the weakest and most abused among us, of which gays are one constituent and fetuses another. I'm sure gay libertarians would have plenty to say about the proper place of gay "liberation" in a larger pantheon of rights. We can all play the game, you see.

The point is not that we are unaffected by the world around us or that each of us should drop our opinions about non-gay issues or stop working for the varied causes we cherish. The point is that once we pursue our own political agendas in the name of gay civil rights, we lose the only common thread that weaves together the diverse tapestry we call

the "gay community." We enter upon contentious social and economic spheres where we will never agree, much less convince the rest of America to agree. We should remember the experience of an early gay civil rights organization based in New York, the Gay Liberation Front (GLF). The GLF, after a promising start, spun apart after its members began pressing a variety of leftist causes like socialism and opposition to the Vietnam War.

Obsessed with building bridges to the Black Panthers and the peace movement, unable to maintain its focus, the GLF broke down into squabbling factions and withered away. The same end awaits Vaid's project, and any gay organization that adopts her Something Greater

approach to the gay movement. Someone, somewhere has got to tell these people that the gay civil rights movement is really about gay civil rights.

A similar fate stalks her related nostrum, progressive coalition-building. Vaid wants to build bridges to all her favorite organizations—NOW, NAACP, Planned Parenthood, ACLU, AFL-CIO, and so forth—in the hope of cobbling together an electoral majority. Our experience with such coalitions has been mixed; they tend to be very unstable and rarely coalesce around more than a single vote or candidate at a time. Such

Continued on page 63

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Reviews by Eric L. Roland

Total Eclipse

Movies about gay historical figures rarely get made, and, if they do show up on the silver screen, the homosexual content is often downplayed or even alluded to in order to sell more tickets at the box office. Not so in *Total Eclipse*. The tempestuous relationship between French poets Arthur Rimbaud (played by Leonardo DiCaprio) and Paul Verlaine (played by David Thewlis) is explored through every angle, including the sexual and emotional.

Their relationship is, at first, intended to be a mentoring type friendship—the 16-year-old Rimbaud writes to Verlaine, one of the leading symbolist poets of his time, asking him to read some of his works including the great symbolist poem *Le bateau ivre*. Verlaine, recognizing the brilliant intellectual gifts of Rimbaud, invites the young poet from the French countryside to Paris where Verlaine keeps him housed in an attic flat away from Verlaine's own wife and in-laws. Their nights are spent discussing politics and poetry in Parisian taverns drinking absinthe, a hallucinogenic green liquor popular in the late 1800's, while their days are spent sobering up and writing poetry.

Rimbaud, who dreams of seeing the ocean and visiting Africa, convinces Verlaine to leave his wife, and the two travel throughout France and to Belgium and England. Their relationship is, however, not one to be idolized. In bitter, drunken rages the two engage in violent confrontations, climaxing in a scene where Verlaine shoots Rimbaud in the hand and is sent to prison for assault and sodomy. Although the film is a violent depiction of a gay relationship, it is not intended to be homophobic. Besides being a fact-based representation of two historical figures, the film does show the love behind the relationship—one that was not only controversial, but illegal, during that time period.

Leonardo DiCaprio is mesmerizing as Arthur Rimbaud, portraying the poet as ultimately immature, yet illustrating how the young genius' creative and destructive forces were constantly at war. However, the most disappointing aspect of the film is that DiCaprio doesn't speak with even a trace of a European accent, and his American accent certainly sticks out among the acting talents of Brit David Thewlis and French actress Romane Bohringer, who plays Verlaine's wife. Directed by Agnieszka Holland (*Europa*), the film is an intense experience,



James Lyons stars as the adult David in *Postcards From America*, playing at Rice Media Film Center on December 2 and 3.

which is appropriate considering Rimbaud's life and work was fueled by an insatiable hunger for intense experience.

Carrington

The subject of this biographical film, set 70 years prior to our own sexually liberated society, is one that is still difficult to discuss. Although essentially a tragic love story, *Carrington* tells the tale of people who tried, in their own way, to acknowledge openly that a great difference exists between love and desire.

Set between the first World War and the early 1930s, the film follows the unconventional relationship of its title character, Dora Carrington—a young bohemian English painter played by Emma Thompson—and Lytton Strachey—an older eminent writer played by Jonathan Pryce. With her boyish, androgynous figure, Carrington is at first mistaken for an attractive young man by the openly gay Strachey. Following their initial meeting, a strong friendship blossoms, and, while Strachey flirts with young men, Carrington resists all the burning young lovers who pursue her, eventually confessing her love for Strachey. The two miss-matched lovers begin an idyllic, passionate relationship, together renting a house in the country where they can write and paint.

Their unconventional relationship turns more odd when Carrington marries a former soldier who happens to be the object of Strachey's affection—Strachey even joins them on their honeymoon in Venice. After a

few years, Carrington begins an affair with the best friend of her husband, who also happens to be having an affair with a young London woman. After the whole adulterous matter comes into the open, Carrington, in one scene, realizes the absurdity of it all as she sits on the lawn at dusk looking up at the



Emma Thompson stars as Dora Carrington, who is in love with the gay Lytton Strachey.

silhouettes in the windows—her husband and the young London woman in one window, Strachey and his male lover in another, and her own lover in the third.

Although the plot sounds much like a soap opera—and in many ways it is—the primary point is to show how it affected or didn't affect the relationship between

Carrington and Strachey. Through all of her lovers, Carrington continually realized that she truly loved Strachey even though theirs was a relationship devoid of sex. Carrington's goal, then, was to live with the man she loved and have sex with the men she desired, and, for the most part, she succeeded.

Written and directed by Christopher Hampton (who also wrote the screenplay for *Total Eclipse*) and beautifully filmed at 39 different locations throughout England, the film will most likely receive Academy Award nominations in several categories. Although word is out that Jonathan Pryce will be a good bet for a best actor nominee, it will be disappointing if the best actress category doesn't include Emma Thompson in her superb performance as Dora Carrington. In the same vein as a Merchant Ivory film, *Carrington* is a slow-moving, dramatic piece that envelopes the audience, drawing them directly into the early twentieth century lives of a bohemian painter and the Bloomsbury writer she devoutly loves.

Postcards From America

This visually beautiful and powerfully moving film is loosely based on the life of on-the-edge poet and writer David Wojnarowicz. Inspired by Wojnarowicz's autobiographical writings,

specifically from his books *Close to the Knives* and *Memories that Smell Like Gasoline*, *Postcards from America* interweaves three stories from the life of a young gay outsider living in a homophobic, abusive world. One of the stories concerns young David, a fat gay child who is traumatized by his violently abusive



James Duval (l) and Johnathon Schaech star in director Greg Araki's *The Doom Generation*.

father and a mother who continually endures the abuse. The other two stories revolve around a teenage David, a runaway who lives in New York City making his living as a hustler, and an adult David, who hitchhikes in the American desert finding solace in the open road and anonymous sex.

Through its interweaving stories (a technique that makes the film difficult to follow) seen through the eyes of a young gay rebel, the film represents a view of America that many would just soon not know about. Yet in its honesty, we are reminded that many gay youth have made the choice to escape an abusive childhood and enter into an adult world on their own just as the character in this film does. Moreover, it may remind many of us that this is the road we could have taken,

and that we should be grateful our lives did not follow this bleak path.

The film ultimately deals with conflict—between young David and his family, between teenage David and his gay identity, and between adult David and society at large. Beautifully filmed by award-winning cinematographer Ellen Kuras (*Swoon*, *Unzipped*), this film is undoubtedly disturbing if not depressing in its depiction of a young gay outsider caught in a unwelcoming society.

The Doom Generation

To say this film is not strange would be lying. But, in its own clever, strange way, the film is good—just don't expect to leave the theater feeling enlightened in any way. You may leave shocked, horrified, or just plain confused, but unless you're under the influence of a pretty good hallucinogen, I doubt you're going to learn anything new about life, sex, or death.

This alienated teen pic revolves around Jordan, a spaced-out, yet likable, teenage dude (James Duval); Amy, his crystal-snorting, annoyingly loud girlfriend (Rose McGowan); and X (short for Xavier), the handsome, bisexual drifter (Jonathan Schaech) whom the young couple rescue from a gang of gay-bashing punks. Bonded by a gruesome murder at a quickie mart, the trio flee Los Angeles on a trip to nowhere, continuously running into other violent situations wherever they go.

However, this is not a road movie, for it is the relationship—primarily the sexual relationship—between the three that is of importance here. On several occasions, sexually tense, homoerotic experiences between X and Jordan are quickly extinguished by an interruption, which usually results in Jordan

Continued on page 53

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Joe Militello

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Let's face it: on the rare occasions straight men can muster up enough courage to look another man in the eyes and speak, the old ISC gene kicks right in. It unleashes a virtual torrent of testosterone until all they can think to mutter about is football, baseball, or basketball.

I knew I was born without that gene even before I knew I was gay. On major holidays, my family would break up into two groups. My uncles huddled around the living room TV for the big game, and my aunts swapped recipes and dished out stories about their sex lives in the kitchen. Guess where I hung out? Let's just say I have no idea what determines a first down, but I can tell you which one of my uncles fumbles in the sack—and I can still score points with my chocolate chip cookies.

As adults, it's the workplace that presents special challenges for those of us who have to deal with our genetic discrepancies. I was enjoying lunch during a recent business trip with my host, a nice-enough straight guy. But the minute our mealtime banter switched from business to pleasure, it was downhill all

"I have no idea what determines a first down, but I can tell you which one of my uncles fumbles in the sack."

the way. "So you're from Houston," he said. "You must be a big Oilers fan." "Not really," I admitted, hoping he'd take the bait. But no such luck. The next thing out of his mouth was, "Well then, what a year for those Rockets, huh?"

After his countless questions about which teams I followed and my endless attempts to

change the subject, I thought I'd finally hit pay dirt when I swung the conversation around to our hometowns. He seemed to glow as he talked about growing up in the Midwest. But just as I got comfortable again, I opened my big mouth and told him I was from Buffalo. "Well, hell," he exclaimed, "no wonder you don't care much about the Oilers. YOU MUST BE A BIG BILLS FAN!"

I gave up.

And just when my boss back in Houston seemed to be getting over his disappointment that I didn't have any kids or stories about them to swap with him, Rockets fever swept the office. The poor guy seemed to go into mourning when he found out that yours truly didn't have the right gene to trigger what it took to relive a play-by-play of the prior evening's game.

Even some women seem to have been born with ISC genes on those X chromosomes of theirs. During the basketball finals, a woman I had never met jumped into the elevator and screamed, "Wasn't last night's game incredible?" After I choked out a confession that I didn't actually watch it, she stared back in disbelief and shouted, "Then you must not be from Houston!" All I wanted to say was, "And you must not be from the land of people who have lives."

My lack of enthusiasm is certainly not for a lack of trying on my part. Every night during Go Rockets! mania, I stood in front of my mirror and tried to practice a playful "way to go!" fist-like hand gesture while rehearsing how to deliver that week's universal greeting: "How 'bout them Rockets?!"

But to no avail. After all, when it comes to whether you were born with or without the Incessant Sports Chatter gene, you can't fool anyone.

So now our brothers in Nashville can know firsthand—like we Houstonians do—the real genetic difference that makes us gay. I just hope they keep it handy for when someone tries to beguile them with that "chosen lifestyle" bunk.

Joe Militello is a corporate communications specialist and freelance writer. He lives in Montrose with his partner, Stephen, and two cats—all of whom are equally as clueless when it comes to sports.

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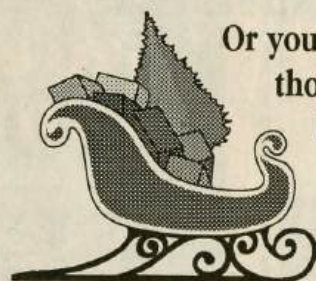
What to do?



**Worry not, oh gentle holiday reveler.
You have options. You can—**

A) hit the malls, hoping to spend at least somewhat less time obtaining a parking space than time spent obtaining gifts.

B) hit the catalogs, and pray that your orders arrive in time. But *Shocking Gray* went belly-up this year. And Spiegel's Catalog is just so... Spiegel's Catalog. You have an image to protect, you know.



Or you could be smart and practical and supportive of those who support you by shopping with OutSmart's Holiday Gift Guide. We've taken the liberty of organizing an array of gifts guaranteed (more or less) to delight even the most un-delightable Scrooge on your gift list.



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UNDER THE STARS' new season. Give showtunes for the holidays with TUTS Bucks, available in multiples of \$10. These certificates can be used in place of cash for the purchase of tickets to any 1996 Music Hall season production. Choose any or all of TUTS' upcoming productions—*Carousel*, *The Music Man*, and *Crazy for You*. Call **(713) 622-TUTS**, or dance in at **4235 San Felipe**.

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For the low, low price of \$19.95, **CAFE MAISON** at **2089 Westheimer** offers you two choices: the first is "Barista's Choice Sampler." We don't know

who Barista is, but her sampler includes four flavors of espresso coffee, "with not just one universal espresso, but a complete line of espresso choices, with flavor profiles as unique as the person who enjoys them." The second section is the "Gourmet Family Classics," which is "like most family albums...filled with the diversity found in every family—sweet, sinful, wistful and dreamy, practical and dependable, dark and brewing." Sounds like most families we know. **(713) 528-6750**.



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ing and clanging that sends many children to bed with no supper. Must be experienced

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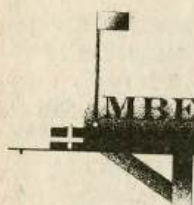


From flat tops to fluffs, each individual receives individual attention from Robin Duncan at

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Before your holiday guests arrive, you should probably clean up the mess left over from your Halloween party. Treat yourself and your less-than-immaculate friends to a gift certificate from **TONY AKIN'S MAN-MAID CLEANING SERVICE**. It's one of the few gifts that we know of that's prompt, personalized, gay-owned and -operated and bonded. **(713) 993-9737**.



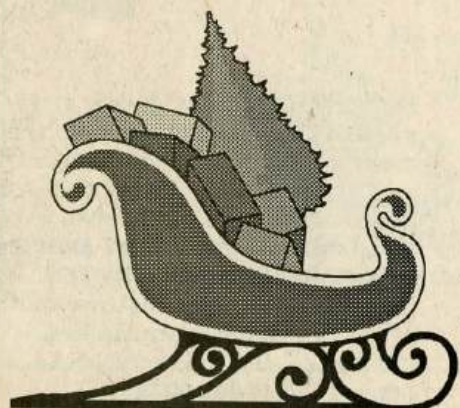
As far as owner/operator Elizabeth McLaine knows, her **MAIL BOXES ETC.** outlet is the only "family" owned and operated MBE in the area. Located in

the former Windsor Plaza, her staff provides expert packing and crating services as well as complete domestic and international shipping. Whether your package is fragile, delicate, oversized, or overweight, MBE "will do whatever it takes" to get it delivered. **5090 Richmond. (713) 626-2920.**



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Photogenic or not, your favorite beauty queen will enjoy a gift certificate for a glamour shot photo at **SOROUSH'S EUROPEAN HAIR SALON**. This full-service salon for men and women is also expert at the fine art of the make-over, just in case your 1996 New Year's resolution has anything to do with putting on a happy face. **2456 Bolsover, (713) 522-7708.**



Trim your trunk, or the trunk of one you love with the "Gym Kit" from **MUSCLE**

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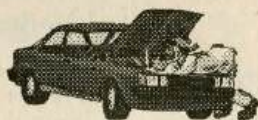


We can't guarantee you'll look as good as this guy, but the boys at **BASIC BROS.** can suggest holiday vests, shirts, and accessories, ranging from \$25 to \$75, that will pretty up almost any package you

find relaxing under your tree. **1232 Westheimer. (713) 522-1626.**



You don't have to be Nostradamus to know that "an ounce of preventative maintenance is worth a pound of cure." Or something like that. But unlike most places that advertise tune-ups, **AL & NORVAL'S AUTO SERVICE** offers a complete winter tune-up package that evaluates the condition of your plug wires, caps, rotor, air and fuel filters, and timing. The neat thing is, they replace only the parts that actually need



replacing. What a concept! The perfect gift to keep your friends on the road. Mention you saw A & N in *OutSmart* and receive 10% off. **2040 Marshall (near corner of W. Alabama and S. Shepherd). (713) 523-4044.**

More gift ideas on page 32



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Where can you buy local art and baked goods combined together as one gift? At **DESSERT GALLERY** you'll find Angela Bartuska's hand-crafted keepsake boxes (limited edition) in either paper or wood. Each box is unique and lovely, filled with deliciously decadent assorted chocolate chunk cookies. From only \$30, such a lovely gift has never been so sweet! Stuff stockings with golden "gift tokens" and for a smile ask about the "Party in a Bag." **3200 Kirby Dr.** (entrance on Lake St.). **(713) 522-9999.**



Have a friend or loved one who needs some guidance and direction? Sometimes we need more than a Key Map. Discover an alternative way to handle the new year with a Psychic and Life Purpose Reading with **SANDRA NICHOLAS.** Gift certificates available. Don't hesitate—*OutSmart* readers receive a \$10 discount 'til December 15, 1995. **(713) 522-0990.**



Granted, this gift will be a challenge to wrap, but imagine the look on your favorite elf's face when he/she finds the key to your new home at the bottom of his or her stocking. At 217 Avondale, this rare find (formerly the Mayor Pickett Mansion) is loaded with charm. It has four bedrooms, two-and-one-half baths, a music room, a sun room, wrapped deck, an office, 9.5 foot ceilings, and a speaker system throughout. Call **SUZANNE ANDERSON PROPERTIES, (713) 529-8484.**



Whether you're shopping for practical presents or not-so-practical gifts, **AREA** has both! From elegant to comfy...from old to new...you will find a vast eclectic selection of vases, sofas, garden objects, kitchen items, overstuffed pillows, unusual lamps, one-of-a-kind accent pieces and more, with prices to fit every taste. **3200 S. Shepherd, (713) 528-0220.**



Love the holidays but hate the post-holiday depression? Instead of pouting your way into 1996, clear your calendar for the weekend of January 18-21, and join the staff



of *OutSmart* for a vacation in beautiful Puerto Vallarta. The four-day/three-night package includes round-trip airfare,

accommodations at two fabulous gay-owned-and-operated villas, full daily breakfast, taxes, service and transfer fees, and a *Welcome, OutSmart!* fiesta on day of arrival. Now there's a stocking stuffer! From \$574-\$593. Also available, travel buck gift certificates. Call Sandra Wilkins at **TRAVEL PARTNERSHIP (713) 526-4471.**



You've shopped until you've almost dropped, so now it's time to unwind

from the "mall madness" of it all. But where, you ask, can you find peace and quiet? At **TOOPEES COFFEES!** Kick back and relax to some great tunes among friendly, not "frenzied" folks. For a sip of Cabernet or a delicious Cafe Latte, soups, sandwiches, and truly fresh homemade desserts...drop in...you'll be glad you did. And just in case you want to skip the insane shopping scene, pick up a gift basket that's sure to please even the pickiest one on your list. **1830 W. Alabama, (713) 522-7662**

**Happy Holidays
from
OutSmart!**

**To be listed in next
month's gift guide,
call (713) 520-7237.**



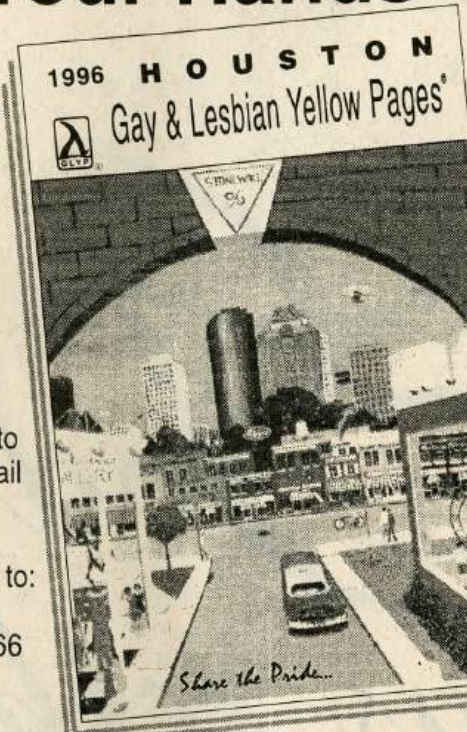
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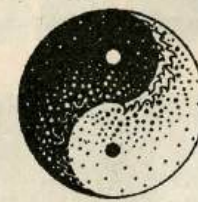
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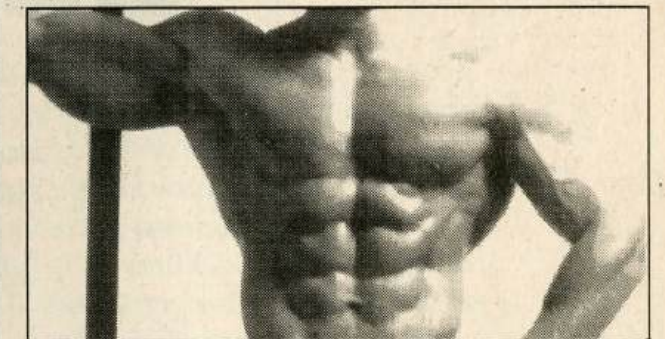
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God, Gays, & the Church...

DO WE HAVE A PLACE?



Theresa DiManno

For an institution born of love, Christianity, especially of late, seems to have been birthing a great deal of hatred. Paradoxically, many lesbians and gays now appear to be coming to grips with their spirituality more than ever before. Some grip the comforting hand of God. Others want their hands wrapped around God's throat. Is the church to blame? Or, worse, is the blame really to be placed on righteous shoulders? That his tenets are true and his laws condemning of who we are?

Many Christians, both heterosexual and homosexual, are finding that God and his flock aren't always the gay-bashing, lesbian-baiting angels of darkness the mass media has made them out to be. In Part 1 of *OutSmart*'s first spirituality issue, we examine the alternatives that were perhaps not available before, the misconceptions that still prevail, and what you need to know before you grab your backpack and head on up to Heaven.

Continued on next page

The Christian Thing to Do

by Lis Mendes

Houston is home to 20 established churches that tend to a mostly gay/lesbian flock. OutSmart talks to some of the Shepherds.

Houston is home to some 20 churches that serve a mostly gay and lesbian congregation, including one of the largest gay and lesbian churches in the country. The Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection (MCCR) with over 500 members and friends recently celebrated its 20-year anniversary.

Before leaving to pastor the King of Peace Metropolitan Community Church in St. Petersburg, Florida, the Rev. Elder John Gill led MCCR to its current strength. Interim pastor James Burns now heads the congregation while a search for a permanent pastor is conducted.

The Metropolitan Community Church was started by Troy Perry, who was a licensed preacher with the southern Baptist Church. Perry left both the Baptist church and his wife when he recognized his homosexuality. After a suicide attempt following a failed love affair, Perry decided to return to an organized Christian fellowship. Since none would accept him as a homosexual, Perry began the first Metropolitan Community Church group.

He put an ad in *The Advocate*, then a small magazine, and announced a gay-friendly Christian fellowship. In October, 1968, 12 people met in Perry's living room for worship services, and MCC was born.

With over 370 churches across the country, MCCR raises over 10 million in tithe money every year and owns some 50 million dollars of real estate.

Founder Troy Perry has been very involved with the Houston's MCCR, calling the church a "model to the rest of the denomination and the larger gay and lesbian community."

Before he left Houston, Rev. Gill told *OutSmart*, "People confuse the institutional church, which has been very condemning and

judging and in many ways has been the foundation for all of the negative things that we endure, with a very loving God. As a result, people turn away from the Lord and any kind of spiritual fulfillment they can have and, instead, live in a spiritual wasteland."

The Rev. Burns, who was the first person to attend the Yale Divinity School as an MCC associate, says, "If we go to the Bible with open eyes and open ears, I believe that we will find our own story there."

Burns says, "God wouldn't have created us as gays and lesbians without also creating a way for us to worship as gays and lesbians as well."

He feels that most theologians who cite Bible verses that are seemingly critical of homosexuals are misinformed. "There is a very healthy debate in modern biblical scholarship as to what the Bible does or does not say about homosexuality, if it even addresses a gay or lesbian identity, or if the verses that are commonly discussed assume a heterosexual identity. Was there even a conception, at the time that the Bible was written, that there might be people who were gay and lesbian by orientation?"

"Many prominent biblical scholars say that there is no place at all that the Bible condemns loving gay or lesbian unions," Burns continues. "All of the seven verses that have traditionally been used to condemn behavior can be legitimately understood. Some of them are mistranslations, some of them do not refer to same-sex behavior at all, and some of them clearly do refer to same-sex behavior but in the context of something else, such as worshipping other

gods or prostitution.

"If you look at the story of Sodom and Gomorrah in which the men were threatening to rape an angel, was the offense that it was homosexual," Burns asks, "or was the offense that it was rape? Or was the offense contact between humans and angels?"

He goes on to say, "There is no conflict within the message of Christianity. Jesus came to show the world the depth of God's love. The conflict is with the church and what the church has taught us about homosexuality and with the way the church has tried to control the behavior of gay and lesbian people."

Rev. Burns acknowledges the huge obstacles that face gays and lesbians as they attempt to integrate their homosexuality with Christian beliefs and says

God wouldn't have created us as gays and lesbians without also creating a way for us to worship as gays and lesbians as well.

he thinks the situation with mainstream churches will get worse before it gets better. He reminds the homosexual community that "it is important to continue to develop a spiritual life, and MCCR is a Christian church where gay and lesbian relationships and identities will be explicitly affirmed and celebrated."

Janet Parker leads a second MCC congregation, the Maranatha Fellowship, with almost 90 members and friends. Like Perry, Gill, and Burns, she left a more traditional church and joined MCC because it allowed her a more complete expression as a person. She says, "I knew it would allow me a full expression of who I was called to be, as a minister of the gospel, as a woman, and as a lesbian."

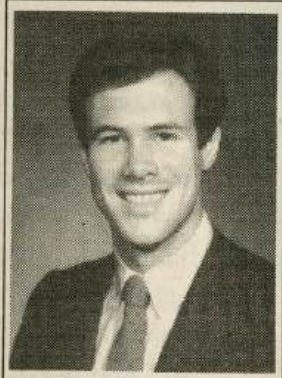
Parker says attempts to condemn gays and lesbians by biblical scholars are groundless. "I had to find out from God. It was like God said, 'I made you the way you are. There's no need to change you, the word



Janet Parker



Chris Chiles



James Burns

does not condemn you. The Bible is talking about violence, about rape and abuse. Not about homosexuality. Not about you."

Another church that serves a mostly gay and lesbian congregation is the Community Gospel Church led by Chris Chiles. He says, "It does not matter to God about your homosexuality. What matters is your heart and your relationship with him. I would hope that we get to a point with all churches where we get beyond that, where homosexuality isn't an issue."

Like MCCR and other churches, Community Gospel Church performs same-sex holy unions, although like many mainstream

congregations, it requires that the couple be members of the church and enter some counseling with Rev. Chiles. "When you have promised publicly to each other and to God that you will love each other for the rest of your lives, I don't want to have you make a promise in front of God that you're not gonna keep," Chiles says. "So if you're serious about this relationship, I want to give you as many tools as I can to help you keep that commitment. The best tool I can give you is a relationship with Jesus Christ, with him as the center of their relationship. When you are loving each other and loving the Lord at the same time, that integration is unbelievable."

"It's important that you're a part of a body of believers and have a church that is supporting that relationship. I'm doing two ceremonies at the first of the year, and after the ceremony, the church is also going to stand and say that they support these two people as a couple. Later, if there are problems in those relationships and a partner comes to me with complaints, I can say, 'Wait a minute. I remember when you stood up and said you were gonna love her till the day you died. You ain't dead yet. Now let's work on this.' Having that support," Chiles concludes, "is crucial for relationships."

Queens, Shrimp, & Football

by Ralph Lasher

Love the homophobe, hate the homophobia—a history lesson as to why biblical literalists are the way they are.

I've known Paul (not his real name) for about a dozen years but lost track of him for a couple of years after he'd moved. It was a happy day for me when he suddenly reappeared in my life. After I'd hugged him, I said, "Paul, it's great to see you again. I hear you've moved." Without even a moment's hesitation or an expression of pleasure at seeing me again, Paul said, "I'm going to move to England." Genuinely disappointed, I replied, "I'm sorry to hear that."

How come? With the timing of a professional comedian, Paul said, "England has only one queen; there are 58 where I live." We both howled with laughter, and I smile every time I think of Paul's joke. This "Q" word and the other one we've all heard don't usually offend me when another gay man uses them, but I feel differently when a homophobe does.

I wonder how Henry and Mary Stuart's only son James felt when he was called a "queen." James, you see, was a king, King of Scotland, and later King of Great Britain. When his mother, Mary Queen of Scots, abdicated the throne of Scotland in 1567, James became James VI, King of Scotland. In 1586, after Elizabeth (daughter of Henry VIII and cousin of James' mother) had Mary beheaded, James established an alliance with England. This may seem like more history than you'd like to know, but please read on. Eventually, I hope this will all make sense. Elizabeth is described as follows in my one-volume *New American Encyclopedia*: "Of great personal popularity, she remained unmarried, although she had many suitors and favorites; was called the Virgin Queen." In 1603, following Elizabeth's death, James became James I, first King of Great

Britain. The *Alyson Almanac*, full of a wonderful collection of items of interest to gays and lesbians, quotes a contemporary of James I as saying, "Elizabeth was King, now James is Queen."

Yes, James I (1566-1625) was gay. He's identified in James Graham's book, *The Homosexual Kings of England*, as one of the six gay kings of En-

gland. So what?, you may ask. As I've already said: "read on." James wasn't popular with the Puritans, a group of reformers within the Church of England which he nominally headed. The Puritans claimed that the Church's Book of Common Prayer had certain biblical quotations which were inaccurate translations. To appease the Puritans and to demonstrate that he was an honorable and religious man, James named a group of scholars to a panel to prepare a new translation of the Bible, known ever since as the King James Version. It is passages in that particular version of the Bible which are most often used by our oppressors to brand us as "sodomites" and "detestable" persons who are an "abomination" in the eyes of God. Isn't that ironic?

With his reputation and crown secured as the person responsible for giving the King James Version of the Bible to the world, James then rushed, not just came, out of the closet. Graham, in his book about

gay kings of England, describes James as "a defiant deviate" with "a notorious aversion toward women and a particular affinity for men."

Another was George Villiers, whom James named a Viscount in 1616. Speaking of Villiers, James was alleged to have said, "I love him more than anyone else. Christ had his John and I have my George." James was talking about John, "the beloved disciple" of Jesus' with

Continued on next page

Top 10 Reasons Why Heaven Is Empty... ...and Hell Is Full

10. Homosexuality
9. Masturbation
8. Having a wet dream
7. Menstruating women going into a church
6. Wearing clothes made of cotton and polyester
5. Eating cheeseburgers
4. Drinking a milkshake with your hamburger
3. Eating shrimp, oysters, clams, etc.
2. Eating pork
1. AND THE NUMBER ONE REASON WHY HEAVEN IS EMPTY AND HELL IS FULL: Playing football!

Queens, Shrimp, & Football

Continued from previous page

whom Jesus had a close friendship. I won't comment on James' reference to Jesus and John; I'll leave that subject for another time.

I was raised on the King James Version of the Bible and know much of it by heart. I love some of its poetry, but I do not hold it in high regard as an accurate translation. It is not the oldest...or the newest...and certainly not the best translation of the Bible into English. Most people don't know it, but it's been revised innumerable times. And the latest edition isn't really much better than the original. It has hundreds of errors in translation; uses more than one name for persons and places; and is trapped in its Elizabethan English, which often doesn't make sense to people in the 20th Century. When he was in Houston recently, scholar and former Roman Catholic priest John McNeil said of the translators of the King James Version, "We are victims of homophobia translators." Do you think that the scholars James had picked could have been trying to brand their King as their Queen? I don't know about this, but I do know that the alleged condemnation of homosexuality in the Bible isn't the cause of homophobia. Homophobes use (actually misuse) the Bible to cloak their hatred and bigotry with respectability. For several years, I have periodically presented a workshop on Scripture and Sexuality in which I categorically state my conviction that the Bible does not condemn homosexuality.

Those who say that the Bible does condemn homosexuality usually drag out their King James Version of the Bible and point out to me a few passages they claim support their view. One of them is Leviticus 18:22: "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with woman-kind: it is an abomination." This is only one of hundreds of "laws" in Leviticus. If this is

"God's Law," then why aren't the hundreds of other "laws" also "God's Law?"

First, let me say that Leviticus 18:22 is not a condemnation of homosexuality. If you want to know what it is, you'll have to come to my next workshop. But for those who say it is, I'd like to point out Leviticus 11:12, which says: "Whatsoever hath no fins nor scales in the waters, that shall be an abomination unto you." Shrimp, oysters, clams, crawfish, lobsters—all live in the waters and certainly don't have fins or scales. If you believe

Jesus, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John didn't say a single word condemning homosexuality.

that Leviticus 18:22 is God's Law and that it condemns homosexuality, then you have to believe that Leviticus 11:12 is God's Law and condemns eating shrimp, oysters, clams, crawfish, and lobsters. I also like to point out that God's Law also condemns eating a cheeseburger, drinking a milkshake with your hamburger, wearing clothes made of cotton and polyester, and having a wet dream. I also enjoy mentioning that God's Law condemns masturbation and doesn't allow a woman to go into a church during her menstrual period.

But my all-time favorite is that God's Law condemns playing football. Yes, that's right. In Leviticus 11:7-8, God's Law says: "And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be clovenfooted, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean to you. Of their flesh, shall ye not eat, and their carcass shall ye not touch;

they are unclean to you." A pig is "swine." God's Law says you can't eat pork. A football is made from the carcass (skin) of a pig. God's Law says you can't touch a pig skin and, therefore, can't play football.

Christianity is a religion based on the ministry and teachings of Jesus, whose life was clearly one of love, healing, and forgiveness. Isn't it strange that as hard as they try to justify their hatred and bigotry by Bible references, homophobes never mention a single word of Jesus' which condemns homosexuality, nor do they mention even one word from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Why? There's a good reason: Jesus, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John didn't say a single word condemning homosexuality.

Jesus did say (and I'm quoting from the King James Version): "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This is an inclusive statement! There's nothing in parentheses! There's no footnote! Jesus didn't exclude queens, not even those of us who eat shrimp and play football. In fact, there's not even a footnote excluding James.

Rev. Ralph Lasber has a Master of Divinity degree and was an ordained priest in the Episcopal Church, until he was forced to resign when he came out of the closet. His clergy credentials were accepted by the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches in 1989, and since then he's been a volunteer member of the clergy staff of the Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection (MCCR). For eight years he was the executive director of the Montrose Clinic and is currently program and development director for an ecumenical ministry to gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered persons. His mailing address is P.O. Box 66669, Houston, TX 77266-6669.

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH BY REV. JANET PARKER



One of the most difficult challenges that we face in life is getting rid of "old tapes." What I mean by this is programming from past experiences that were wounding, lies and painful. All of us have behaviors that we want to see changed. We struggle with how to have this happen. I believe that one way we can begin this process is by learning the truth. We must distinguish the truth from a lie. For instance, if you were raised with a parent who was obsessive-compulsive in their behavior and you were not, they may have labeled you as a "lazy, shiftless, amount to nothing child" because you did not seem to pick up their behavior. If you believed this (and most children believe what their parents tell them) then you worked very hard in life to fulfill what they told you. Maybe this led to a person who goes from job to job, never really amounting to much by your parent's standards (which by this time have become yours).

If you are like most of the human race, you live up to what your parents said about you. If what they said was good and positive, then you were blessed. If what they said was bad and harmful and destructive, then you were wounded terribly. How can a person re-program themselves and get rid of "old tapes?" The first step is to be able to distinguish what is the truth about you. This must be done at several different levels. You must know this intellectually (which many times is the easiest). You must know this emotionally (which is the most difficult). You must know this physically (this would especially pertain to someone who lived with a hypochondriac).

If we approach this from a spiritual perspective one would begin finding out what God says and believes about them. They would then begin to say what God says about them. This gets it into their intellect. They would then begin to look into God's word and put themselves in the Scripture. For instance, "God so loved (your name), that God gave God's one and only Son that if (your name) believes in Him, (your name) should not perish but have everlasting life." Another Scripture is (Jeremiah 29:11), "For I know the plans I have for you, (your name), declares the LORD, plans to prosper you, (your name), and not to harm you; (your name), plans to give you, (your name), hope and a future." If we let our imaginations take us into the realm of what God has for us, we can be transformed. Our soul and body and spirit can be healed by believing what God says about us. Try these Scriptures for a few weeks and see if it changes anything for you! Yield yourself to God's will and direction and see if it won't turn your life completely around—for the good!

O U T ▼ S M A R T

Seek and Ye Shall Find

by Lis Mendes

Surprise! Support without judgment for gays and lesbians is to be found among mainstream institutional churches—you just have to know where to look.

Gays and lesbians have long found a religious home in some congregations—locally, the Unitarian, Unity, and United Church of Christ churches have traditionally welcomed them. But these are considered to be "alternative" or "fringe" denominations by most mainstream Houston Christian communities.

More often, gays and lesbians have been accepted at individual congregations in opposition to the directives of that church's hierarchy. Usually led by an enlightened pastor or with a vocal gay membership, such congregations are sometimes supportive of their homosexual members at risk of expulsion by their mother church.

Nationally, the General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church is one example. The New York City seminary ruled that Deirdre Good, an openly lesbian seminary student in a committed relationship, could continue to live with her female lover in campus housing. Good had challenged the seminary, charging discrimination based on sexual orientation, and complained to the New York City Commission on Human Rights

when she was told she could not live with her partner on campus.

After Good's complaint, the seminary put together a committee of students, staff, alumni, and clergy to draft a housing policy. The new policy allows gays and lesbians in committed relationships and married heterosexuals to use campus housing but excludes unmarried heterosexuals who are living together.

Episcopal officials not associated with the seminary say the policy is in direct violation of the denomination's teaching. Roger Boltz, a member of Episcopalians United, said, "A religious institution is obligated to defend, to the point of death, what it believes to be true. Here's yet another instance of an institution, a diocese, or a bishop going off on its own."

The impact of the seminary's decision could be far-reaching, as its enlightened graduates will no doubt continue to spread a doc-

trine of support and acceptance of homosexuals.

In a more subtle pro-gay vote earlier this year, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) failed to pass an amendment to its Book of Order,

which is similar to a constitution for the denominations, that would expressly prohibit a minister to perform a same-sex union ceremony. Instead, the policy states that it would be improper for a minister to perform a same-sex union ceremony that is the same as a marriage ceremony, leaving ministers the ability to perform unions so long as they were "different" from a marriage ceremony.

Members of the General Assembly that draft the Book

of Order had wanted to amend the policy to say that any Presbyterian minister could not participate in any blessing of a same-sex union. Assembly members see the amendment's failure as a move toward same-sex marriage and the ordination of gay and lesbian ministers within the Presbyterian Church.

Locally, there is similar and sometimes surprising support of gays and lesbians. KTXH Channel 20, a television network affiliate owned by Paramount Pictures, recently removed Pastor Phil Arms from the air when Arms made several anti-gay remarks during his televised sermons. Arms and his ministry paid for airtime and had a contract with Channel 20 for several more weeks of broadcasts.

KTXH management made numerous attempts to negotiate with Arms, including proposing disclaimers to be aired during Arms' broadcast that would clearly state KTXH did not endorse Arms' statements or assistance from KTXH's station manager to work with Arms in editing any offensive remarks. Arms refused, so KTXH pulled the broadcast from the air and cancelled his contract, saying Arms' statements were not in the best interest of the community.

Heartpath, a Christian fellowship started by Michael Jost to serve members of 12-step recovery groups, has repeatedly supported

Continued on next page



Michael Jost

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Seek and Ye Shall Find

Continued from previous page

gays and lesbians and has included same-sex wedding ceremonies in its platforms.

Jost's first personal exposure to homosexuals came from a lesbian who worked as his babysitter while he was in the seminary. As a result of that friendship, Jost became sensitive to the issues gays and lesbians face in church settings.

"The pain the church inflicts on lesbian and gay people is just staggering," he says. "That tapped into the same passion and compassion that was stirred in me during the civil rights movement earlier. The treatment of lesbians and gays by the institutional church was wrong, and it needed to be called wrong. It's a matter of selectivity and picking verses from the Bible to fit prejudices so that they can maintain their homophobic attitudes. And that's abuse of the Bible."

"I think that oftentimes religion works against spirituality," Jost continues. "A lot of churches teach faith in what they believe about God, rather than faith in God. And in both the Hebrew and Greek words for 'faith,' the essence means 'trust.' It's not a doctrine, it's trusting that I can make a mistake today and God will be there for me tomorrow. Heartpath states, 'We understand that God is larger than any one person's understanding and that good people can disagree and still be faithful to God. We welcome diversity of viewpoints in the spirit that challenge and widen our understanding of the gospel and our understanding of discipleship.'"

Jost points to John Spong—a bishop of the Newark, New Jersey Episcopal Church and author of *Living in Sin?*, which promotes the blessing of same-sex unions—as a supporter of gay and lesbian rights within the institutional church.

Continued on page 42

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Jay John the Baptist

The Baptist Church: It's not just for bigots anymore. Here's a pastor who is blazing—albeit not flaming—a path to Glory.

by Steven Foster

For Covenant Baptist Church pastor Jay Leach, deciding to leave the Southern Baptist Convention wasn't a queer thing to do at all. But that's what made him and his congregation do it.

"The Southern Baptist Convention met in Houston," begins Jay Leach, the trace of his South Carolina heritage gently accenting his words like a southern breeze. "They passed this resolution: 'Any congregation that affirms, approves, or endorses a homosexual lifestyle, will be ousted.'"

He offers a pearly, impish grin, happily guilty as charged.

"Well, we didn't know exactly what it meant to affirm, approve, or endorse, but as a church that had openly gay members, and that my predecessor had blessed a union, we suspected we were guilty of one of them. Maybe all three."

That grin. No malice, though. Perhaps a trace of good-hearted Christian mischief, yeah, but it's all part of his package. And, just like his words and his pearly whites, the remainder of his appearance contradicts so many

stereotypes of the just-out-of-ORU Baptist minister—trim mustache and beard, fashionably cut, shoulder-length light brown hair, sharp gray eyes, casual easy demeanor. With quasi-religious right-wing pundits such as Pat Buchanan or Pat Robertson throwing spiritual shade, it's as refreshing as Bethesda to see someone like Leach calling the church on the collective Christian carpet.

"The church voted unanimously to leave the Southern Baptist Convention and publish a statement which announced our need to do that on the basis of ideology. We now publish in every one of our orders of worship that we

welcome persons of all racial and ethnic heritages, all sexual orientations, and all faith perspectives to our Christian community."

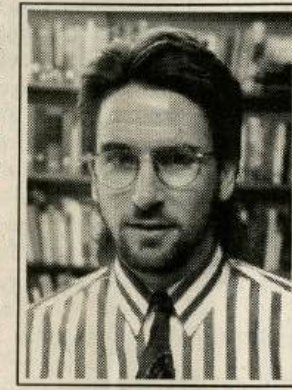
Leach smiles again. No mischievous grin, but the smile of a proud papa. "I've been very proud of this group. Even the people that had emotional ties to the Southern Baptists were proud we did

the right thing."

They did do the right thing. If you don't have a previous travel guide to this born-again world, it was a pretty bizarre thing that the Baptists decided to make a credo that said anything. Each church in the SBC was, for the most part, left to their own spiritual devices on issues. Just be a good boy and send in your money to join the SBC and everything will be alright. But things weren't alright. Not for Leach, not for his church, not for the denomination.

"It was unprecedented that a Baptist denomination would tell a congregation, *Here's a position you cannot hold on an issue.* Baptists now have a single determining statement whether you're in or you're out. It has nothing to do with God, it has nothing to do with Jesus Christ, it has nothing to do with the

Continued on page 43



Jay Leach

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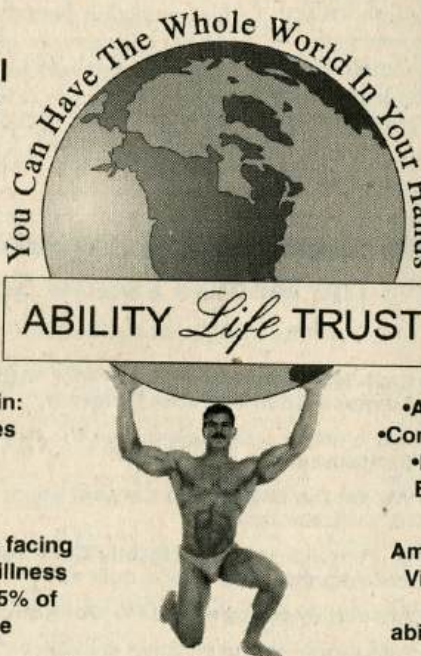
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Seek and Ye Shall Find

Continued from page 40

"Spong has had a tremendous influence, through his writings, on me," Jost says. "His book is excellent theologically and very compassionate. He helped me congeal my ideas around blessing same-sex unions."

"The way prejudice happens in our soci-

Dozens of Quakers Meetings have had same-gender marriages.

ety is that we set up a group to fail and then blame them for failing. Then we can be 'holier than thou' and point our fingers," Jost says. "So we can damage black people for 400 years, make sure that they get inadequate food, inadequate shelter, and inadequate education, and then turn around and say, 'Boy, they're lazy. They don't want to achieve.'"

"Now what we say about people in the gay and lesbian community," Jost continues, "is that they are all promiscuous. But we don't allow them to be married. And we have to look at the fact that marriages have a whole tradition holding the institution together, and even in that case, a little over 50 percent of marriages this year are gonna fail. To the gay community, we deny the glue that holds those relationships together and then blame them for not being able to maintain relationships."

Same-sex marriages have also taken place within the Live Oak Friends Meeting, a local progressive Quakers group with a mostly heterosexual membership. Last November, two female members of the group were married in a traditional ceremony. Live Oak Friends member John Murphys says, "Dozens of Quakers Meetings around the United States have had same-gender marriages."

He goes on, "Quakers have traditionally been very socially active and tend to be liberal in their bent. They've always had equal roles for women in their membership, for example. So, it's a very natural part of Quaker theology to feel that there really is no difference between gay people and straight people spiritually."

"It just seems to make absolutely no difference what anyone's sexual orientation is," Murphy concludes. "It's just recognized that everyone has equal rights and is equal in the eyes of God."

So, while gays and lesbians still most often experience rejection and prejudice from mainstream churches, some members of the homosexual community have found a home in the institutional church among allies and supporters.

John Jay the Baptist

Continued from page 41

Bible or the church, it only has to do with sexual orientation. Don't you find that a little ironic? All the other churches are saying we believe in God the Father, God the Son...and we're saying any church who affirms, approves, or endorses...."

While the argument could be made that Leach was the divining rod that brought the church to homo-friendly waters, it wouldn't be entirely accurate. Covenant had been pretty much a defacto stepchild of the SBC for years. Name a stand the SBC took and Covenant was the opposite. But when Leach came to the church in 1990, he asked the interviewing panel how they could continue to be part of the SBC if they didn't agree with any view the SBC held. To them, this was just another example of Leach being the right man for the job; they hired him and left the SBC shortly thereafter. But it was one thing to

withdraw membership from the convention on certain grounds, quite another to publicize it.

"I started raising the question here. As a congregation that can, in good conscience, say we are open to persons of all sexual orientations, shouldn't we be saying that?"

And that's when the statement of faith came in and, sure enough, there it is in their ad that they have in the *Houston*

Press that, basically, welcomes the homosexual community into their flock. It's a nice, gentle touch—and a far cry from the football stadium scream-weeping of any Promise Keeper, Osteen's lovingly local interpretation of Robert Schuller's gawdy Crystal Cathedral, or the famed Vatican on Voss, the mammoth Second Baptist. Granted, a small ad in the *Press* that affirms a pro-homosexual position doesn't carry quite the same caché as the grand media splash of the next fundie running for the school board, or a preacher-cum-politician going for the Presidential gold. But glamour, glitz, and Vehicle Will Be Abandoned in Case of Rapture bumper-stickered Range Rovers are not what Covenant Baptist is all about. Not in their humble, gentle, loving attitude, nor in their decidedly unfundamentalist interpretation of the Bible. And Leach knows his Good Book. More importantly, he knows how the Holy B. is being manipulated and interpreted to justify homophobia, racism, and separatism, and

isn't afraid to challenge the status quo that so many of our parents, friends, and political enemies adhere to. What makes matters all the more tender and, well, just so gosh darn Christian, is that Leach issues every stern admonition with this honest, centered balance of love and truth. Gentle as doves, wise as serpents, to paraphrase the text. He's living it.

"The fact of the matter is we all interpret," warns Leach. "Fundamentalists, as much as they tell you they're not doing it, are interpreting the Bible. I can pull out any number of verses that, even though they claim they follow the Bible literally, they're not doing it. I can pull out a verse that says women shouldn't cut their hair, or wear jewelry, or speak in church."

Phyllis Schlafly, are you listening?

"There's clearly parts of the Bible that are so culturally determined, and, I don't think this is an overstatement, irrelevant to us today. They would have meant something in

the culture, but they mean absolutely nothing to us. Now, we can act as if they still mean something, we can try to recreate the culture around the maxim, or we can say as *rational people* we recognize that (verse, pick one,) was a culturally determined thing."

Leach leans back easily in his chair, a man familiar and comfortable with the truth that is his God and himself. His hands make fluid, gentle motions through the air.

"Most of the citations that people will pull

out and say this is a clear, absolutely clear prohibition against any homosexual act, when you actually look at what's being said, there are hardly any that you couldn't find a serious group of biblical scholars raising very serious, honest questions as to whether there is a single text in the Bible that clearly speaks against homosexual acts. It may be speaking against an insensitive, abusive, immoral homosexual act. But that doesn't then say, if you're speaking against that, that all homosexual acts are abusive, immoral. I really don't think you can find a biblical basis for taking that stance."

The waters get murkier here. But Leach is no fool. If someone's going to stand on Paul's rabid homophobia or the famed angel-rapists of Sodom, then Leach is ready to go right to the top. Forget Abraham, pardon Paul, jinx James. Let's talk Jesus.

"I'm fully aware some people are gonna say, 'Oh, you're leaving out this.' What I can

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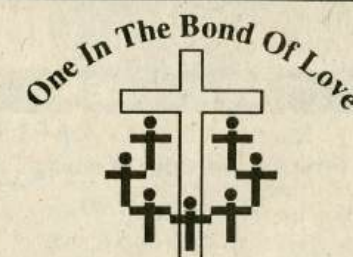
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John Jay the Baptist

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produce over and over again are texts which speak to the faith perspective that I think Jesus was talking about. If it was so critical, and if it's such a horrible, abhorrent thing in the church, why don't we have any record of Jesus ever addressing that issue? Wouldn't you think once he might slip something in about that?"

Bring this fact up to the zealots and watch them do everything they can to get back to the OT and begin immense justification. This Jesus tactic works better than any hair-cutting Scripture, or even that one about mixing fabrics being a big no-no. Spout Jesus and see their judgmental Jericho come crashing to the ground.

"In fact, over and over again, Jesus talks about the risk of judging other people. And already I'm thinking, *what's wrong with this picture?* There's a wonderful story Jesus tells about a final judgment where people are separated into what he calls sheep and goats, speaking metaphorically, and one of the really hilarious things about it is the people who were so sure they were right turn out, in fact, not to be so. And the people who were sort of bumping through life sort of unaware, and doing the good things they knew to do, turn out to be precisely the people who were on target all along. I think that counsels some caution on all our parts not to be too certain that by excluding these people we're doing the right thing."

Smart talk. Nice guy. Cool haircut. Great smile. Dresses nice. Gay-friendly. Single.

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"That's part of the sadness to me is the assumption," Leach comments quietly. "The prejudice that almost goes both ways, from the church to the gay community, but from

the gay community back to the church that we can, you know, draw certain conclusions about certain things. And one of them is that a seemingly single, unattached male minister of a church that has a [pro-gay] stance must be gay. I think it'll be a wonderful day when there are enough straight people on record that that wouldn't be the assumption."

Gray eyes twinkle. "Not because I'm threatened by that accusation. People have said to me, 'Oh I thought you were gay!' And I say, *no*. And they say 'Oh, I'm sorry!' And I say, *why would you apologize?* I mean it's like saying I thought you were left-handed or something, or that you're right-handed! Sorry."

It is probably here in this unabashed, unashamed, unprejudicial inclusion of gays and lesbians that Leach disturbs members of the traditional flock. This is not a time when pro-gay clergy are standing up to be counted. But there are some still, quiet voices out there crying out to be heard. Voices like Leach's. But it is hard to hear them above the belligerent, bigoted din.

"I try to take some hope that some of the things I hear which I think are the last gasps of a dying world view. It's rearing its extraordinarily ugly head right now. But I think it's also the pathetic dying gasp of a world view without much life left in it."

But Leach also knows that certain people of our persuasion have a hard time with church because of the traditional values the church has held and beaten people with for centuries.

"A lot of people in our church have been burned by churches. They've had negative experiences of church. They've grown up with judgmental religion...and I'm not talking about just Baptists, but among a whole spectrum of people who have largely found church a somewhat negative judgmental experience."

And there is no worse time when those age-old burns are remembered than on the holidays. But as the doom generation once again lurches toward turkey and trimmings and trauma, Leach's view is there's no better time to illustrate where true Christian charity can heal even century-old scars.

"I think one of the reasons the holidays are so stressful on everyone is that we're all trying to be a Norman Rockwell family," says Leach. "And none of us are Norman Rockwell families."

"One of the rituals we do around the liturgical season before Christmas, Advent, is we light an Advent wreath and that's been traditionally a thing for families to do. One of the things we try to do is offer a creative definition of what family means. And to have a gay couple light that candle, I think, is a powerful liturgical symbol. Rockwell may have never painted it like this, but *you* are a family and we want you as part of this community of faith, to appreciate the fact that we see you as a family. Now we can't speak for everyone else, but you're a family to us. I hope that's a significant statement. You may feel out of sync, but not to us. To us, you're a family."

That "us" is a unique and loving group of people. Leach knows it.

"I'm proud of this group. It's one thing to be liberal in Berkeley. It's another thing to take the stance this church has taken in Houston, Texas. And I'm proud of the group that I think has been courageous in some of its stances."

So's Leach. Handsome, wise, got all the traditional old values love requires. Could be something to this Jesus bit after all.

Girls (read: girls), he's 25, "looks 26" (according to him, jokingly, but he's right). So any straight young women reading this article, see you in church on Sunday afternoons at 1:30. Happy Holidays.

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Take Control of Your Life!

Wellness Learning Center provides positive information to people with HIV and AIDS through classes, workshops, and seminars.

by Eric L. Roland

Providing essential information that will help anyone take control of their lives, the Wellness Learning Center consists of ongoing classes, special programs, and community forums to educate people infected with or affected by HIV and AIDS. The free comprehensive program covers such topics as nutrition and exercise, traditional and alternative medicine, financial and legal matters, sexual communication and safer sex, and stress reduction techniques.

"This program is intended to introduce you to all of the different issues," says Bart Loeser, education director for AIDS Foundation Houston and coordinator of the Wellness Learning Center. "It's not going to teach you everything, because these are just introductory courses to give you the basics and let you know where you can go for more information."

Initially a listing of educational seminars sponsored by AIDS Foundation Houston, the Wellness Learning Center has truly been an evolutionary program that now encompasses seminars, lectures, forums, and mixers sponsored by other local HIV service organizations. Body Positive's HIV-positive social events and smoking cessation courses and HCRN's community forums are always listed among the center's programs, along with the new HIV/AIDS treatment mixer sponsored by The Center for AIDS Hope and Remembrance Project.

WELLNESS LEARNING CENTER

CORE CLASSES

Classes are held at 7 pm at the Metropolitan Multiservice Center, 1475 W. Gray. For more information and to RSVP, call 713/524-2374.

- **HIV/AIDS Treatment Mixer**—4th Tuesday of each month, 7 pm, 2700 Albany, Suite 205
- **HIV Community Caucus**—1st Tuesday of each month, 6:30 pm, 811 Westheimer, Suite 203
- **Safer Sex for Lesbians**—last Thursday of the month, 7 pm, Ms. B's, Plaza 9200, 9200 Buffalo Speedway.
- **Nutrition First! Nutrition and Exercise**—2nd Tuesday of each month
- **The Mind/Body Connection: Alternative Approaches**—2nd Wednesday of each month
- **Back to Basics: Understanding Medical Treatment**—2nd Thursday of each month
- **Love, Lust & Intimacy**—4th Tuesday of each month
- **Dollars & Sense: Money and Other Matters**—4th Thursday of each month

ELECTIVE AND ONGOING CLASSES

- **Dating & Mating: Erotic Choices in Safer Sex**—3rd Tuesday of each month, 7 pm, Metropolitan Multiservice Center, 1475 W. Gray

- **Keeping It Together (In a World Falling Apart)**—call 713/524-2374 for dates on this stress management workshop
- **AIDS Mastery Workshop**—call 713/523-8711 for schedule
- **HIV+ Social Event**—call 713/524-2374 for dates
- **Stop Smoking Course**—call 713/524-2374 for dates
- **Journal-Writing Class**—call 713/783-2553 to register
- **Self-Hypnosis for Improved Health & Attitude**—call 713/789-0713 to register

The basis of the program is its five core classes: Nutrition First!, a workshop focusing on nutrition and exercise; The Mind/Body Connection, a panel discussion of complementary health alternatives; Back to Basics, a cursory explanation of medical treatment for HIV infection; Love, Lust, & Intimacy, an entertaining discussion on communication and intimacy in relationships; and Dollars & Sense, a workshop reviewing legal and financial matters. The program also consists of elective classes, including workshops on safer sex and stress management, as well as the popular, weekend-long AIDS Mastery Workshop.

Under the Special Programs category are most of the sporadic events sponsored by other agencies, such as Body Positive's social mixers and smoking cessation courses, HCRN's community forums, a journal-writing class facilitated by Sally Hubbard, and a course on self-hypnosis taught by hypnotherapist T. C. LeNormand. Rounding out the center's program are the ongoing classes like the HIV/AIDS Treatment Mixer (4th Tuesday of every month), the Safer Sex for Lesbians workshop (last Thursday of every month), an HIV Community Caucus (1st Tuesday of every month), and weekly art classes at the Art League (every Thursday and Friday).

"What this is really all about is how to be active or proactive in your life—how to make the most of your life," Loeser states. "Anyone

has that as a goal—to live better, live happier, live healthier. This is not all about focusing on how to die, which is what a lot of people with HIV are thinking about. On the contrary, it's thinking about how to live."

Nelson Vergel, an advocate and workshop presenter for the program who travels around the country presenting seminars on wasting syndrome in HIV disease, says that very few other cities have a program like this one. While the concept of wellness is certainly not exclusive to HIV disease or to Houston, he says that the program, in order to continue to provide its services, needs the support of not only the participants, but also the medical establishment, AIDS service agencies, and case managers to refer clients to this unique program.

"What we're trying to do is give people the skills to be a long-term survivor," says Vergel. "It's about empowerment, it's about taking charge of your health.... This is a way to try to get people out of their houses, out of their isolation, out of their denial, and expose them to the skills it takes to be in that 14 or 15 percent of those who live up to 20 years."

"A lot of people with HIV are not social about their situation. They don't reach out for help, they don't tell friends that they're sick,

—Bart Loeser

"...this is really all about how to be active or proactive in your life—how to make the most of your life..."

Continued on page 63

IN SEARCH OF SANITY

Striking a balance of physical, mental, and emotional states is no easy task. The environment is changing around us at every moment, and, to complicate matters, we as individuals are in a constant state of change as well. It's the concept of perpetual evolution otherwise known as life. Somewhere in the midst of this, we find ourselves in search of something, never able to pinpoint just what it is until we finally focus on ourselves. It is here that the subject of wellness or balance in life arises.



by Ron Cummings

In the focus of self and wellness, one must confront the innermost being—sole-searching if you will—in an attempt to uncover your own dirt. Not an easy task, given the options of the day. Rather than deal with self, one can find distractions ranging from walking the dog to washing the dishes. At any rate, an initial step to wellness is to become cognizant of the

While society is gearing more and more toward low fat and sugar free, it still is prudent to scrutinize your intake on a regular basis. Really. You just might surprise yourself if you read the label closely. You'll feel much better afterward if you split the gourmet entree with someone else. Remember, carbohydrates and proteins are essential; the fat you can do without. Be good to your body and feed it at least three times a day. Consistent energy intake really will make a difference in how you feel all day long.

Don't forget rest. A fine-tuned body is a marvelous wonder. The primary piece of this puzzle is no less than sleep. Regardless of your sleep pattern, realize that requirements are different. Know what works for you—whether it's six, seven, eight, or more hours of rest. Acknowledge your personal need and be good to yourself. You'll feel more refreshed in the morning and you'll have you to thank!

Emotional wellness is perhaps the greatest challenge of today's society. We're fast paced and hard lined. There are deadlines to meet, relationships on the brink, and the car's in the shop. Can we say "counseling"?

Actually, it's the realm of relationships, religion, and career that tax our

concept. Take a look at your physical self. Are you content with your energy level? Are you happy with your appearance? Are you pleased with your fitness level? Actually, exercise can be enjoyable—it shouldn't be a dreaded task. If it is, it's time to change your regimer. Explore new options; if you're not into walking or running, try swimming or biking. Join the gym. The possibilities really are limitless if you'll expand your thinking to include the idea that gaining and maintaining physical fitness can be a pleasurable and rewarding experience.

Additionally, physical wellness encompasses nutrition: both quality and quantity.

Continued on page 63

HIV/AIDS WATCH

AFH PRESENTS 'GREAT SEX EXPECTATIONS' SERIES

AIDS Foundation Houston (AFH) has announced the expansion of its gay outreach program through a new grant from Texas Department of Health. The program will more than triple the amount of outreach efforts to increase safer sex awareness through such activities as bar runs, information tables, and workshops.

Increased funding in this area acknowledges the fact that gay and bisexual men continue to be at the highest risk for HIV infection—especially men of color and those under 30. With the epidemic well into its second decade, they represent a new generation of AIDS. These efforts will try to impact this new wave of infection.

"People today do not take sexual risks out of ignorance [about transmission]," states AFH program coordinator Bart Loeser. "Gay men are getting infected primarily for the same reasons they did more than a decade ago: DENIAL.

They don't seem to realize that they are having sex with HIV-infected partners... until they test positive themselves."

The new AFH program—entitled "Great SEXpectations"—is trying to reach the men before they become just another statistic. "We must develop innovative and interesting ways to get the attention of men who don't realize there is a problem," states Loeser. One of the most powerful tools for helping these men is through small workshops where they can sit and talk the issues that affect their sexual lives.

The Great SEXpectations program consists of two different types of small-group workshops, covering a broad range of topics that impact risk-taking—from basics about safer sex to the issues of intimacy, self-esteem, and relationships.

The "Erotic Choices" class focuses on basic facts about HIV and STD transmission and explores fun and erotic options for playing safe. It is next scheduled on Tuesday, November 21 at the Multiservice Center, 1475 West Gray from 7-9 pm. "Love, Lust and Intimacy" examines the quest for love and fulfillment in relation

to sex and intimacy issues. It is scheduled for Tuesday, November 28—same time and place.

These two classes can also be arranged as private "House Parties" for groups of 10 or more upon request. The program is looking for volunteers to help with outreach as well as prospective hosts for the house parties. Anyone wishing to get involved is encouraged to call Bart Loeser at AFH, (713) 623-6796.

H.O.P.E. PROJECT LAUNCHES NEW PROGRAMS

The nonprofit, volunteer-driven H.O.P.E. (HIV-Outreach-Prevention-Education) Project announces the start of several new programs to provide HIV/AIDS information to the African-American community. Offering HIV prevention techniques and other related AIDS services, the help line is "an opportunity for individuals in the community to be able to talk to a knowledgeable individual, anonymously, regarding HIV or AIDS and feel comfortable," stated Renaldo Dash, Public Information Chairman. The H.O.P.E. line is operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at (713) 935-2393.

More H.O.P.E. outreach has taken the form of condom and pamphlet distribution, along with a speakers bureau providing individuals offering training and answering questions regarding HIV/AIDS prevention techniques. The speakers bureau is available to churches, schools, and other organizations. For more information, to make a donation, or to become a volunteer, call the H.O.P.E. Project at (713) 935-2393.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD OFFERS FREE HIV TESTING ON WORLD AIDS DAY

On Friday, December 1, 1995, Planned Parenthood of Houston and Southeast Texas offers free and anonymous HIV testing at its 3601 Fannin clinic. A July testing day resulted in more than 100 persons being tested and receiving comprehensive education and counseling regarding HIV and AIDS.

Planned Parenthood routinely provides HIV testing and counseling at nine locations in the Houston and southeast Texas area. For an appointment, call (713) 529-8844.

CLINICAL TRIALS UPDATE

Research Initiative/Treatment Action! (RITA!) has announced that it has petitioned Gilead Sciences, Inc., the manufacturer of the highly active experimental antiviral drug *cidofovir*, to bring clinical trials to Houston for the treatment of CMV retinitis. Cytomegalovirus (CMV) affects 20% of persons with AIDS with CD4 cell

counts below 50. This major opportunistic infection most commonly attacks the retina and can cause blindness.

Houston Clinical Research Network (HCRN) has begun enrollment for a locally designed study of potential anti-HIV therapy known as hydroxyurea. The study, which will be open to persons living with HIV who have a CD4 cell count less than 500, will examine the safety and anti-HIV activity of the drug, which may have a different way of fighting HIV than drugs like AZT, ddI, ddC, and d4T. For more information on the hydroxyurea study, as well as other HCRN studies, call (713) 520-2000.

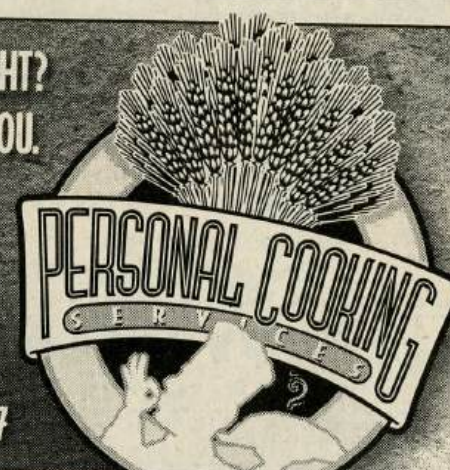
Baylor College of Medicine has begun a study to evaluate combination drug therapy for

HIV-positive individuals with CD4 cell counts of 200-500 and no prior antiretroviral therapy. All lab tests, clinic visits, drugs, etc. are free. All patients will receive AZT and ddI, and either nevirapine, 3TC, or placebo. Two-thirds of all patients will receive an active third drug. For details, call Joan Wilson at (713) 798-4720.

The AIDS Care and Clinical Research Program at the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) in Galveston offers many active clinical trials for antiretrovirals, as well as trials on treatment or prevention of tuberculosis, treatment of peripheral neuropathy, treatment of MAC infection, and more. To make an appointment or for more information, call (409) 772-1661 or (800) 392-6440, ext. 21661.

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TRAVEL NEWS YOU CAN USE

Part III:

THE EDUCATED GAY TRAVELER



by Sandra Wilkins

How important is the "gayness" of a company when consumers make a purchasing decision? Certainly a gay or lesbian consumer is more likely to support with their dollars those companies that acknowledge and support the community. So far there are no "gay" airlines, but several have come forward to recognize and tailor their advertising messages to the gay community. Further,

both American Airlines and Continental Airlines prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in hiring and all employment practices. American is also a member of IGTA, The International Gay Travel Association.

Continental, our hometown airline, provided discount travel to The Gay Games and actively supports gay travel events. The very gay-friendly attitude was displayed in a delightful way to me and my lover Kim when we flew to Paris last year.

Snuggled under our blanket and giggling away, the flight attendants presented us with a bottle of champagne, saying, "We want to congratulate a couple who looks so happy and in love." Don't we long for that kind of acceptance across the board!?

As mainstream American businesses clamor for the gay dollar, more and more companies are coming forward to recognize and validate our powerful community. Nowhere is this more true than in the travel business. Not long ago, there were just a handful of companies who provided exclusive gay and lesbian cruises and tours. Now, some of the biggest names in the industry are designing travel programs especially for us. MTI Vacations, Certified Vacations, TBI Orient Tours, Kemwell, Big 5, and Globus Gateway Vacations are some mainstream giants just

As mainstream American
businesses clamor for
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more companies are coming
forward to recognize
and validate our powerful
community. Nowhere
is this more true than in
the travel business.

waiting to serve the gay and lesbian traveler. The beneficiary of this movement is the traveler, who will enjoy greater variety, lower prices, and enhanced service in the days to come.

The travel industry is so volatile, and substantial changes can occur overnight. A \$430 airfare today can easily be \$210 tomorrow, and the ski package advertised at \$799 can be "firesaled" the next day for \$550. As a savvy consumer, always seeking value for your



hard-earned travel dollar, how do you stay on top of these issues? Use a professional travel agent. Developing a special relationship with your travel agent is every bit as important as that with your doctor, accountant, or lawyer. It is a relationship based on trust and accountability. Good travel agents know that the only real value their business has is their client base. The only way to preserve that value is to make sure clients come home happy from their trips. A dedicated travel agent won't just throw some brochures at you and tell you to come back when you've made up your mind. They will ask you questions about yourself, your lifestyle, and interests. By integrating personal information with your budget and preferences, travel plans will truly be tailored to suit your needs.

Are you maximizing every dollar you spend to earn frequent travel rewards? I am amazed every day at the number of clients I counsel who are unaware of the bonuses out there to enhance their frequent-flyer miles. First of all, whether you fly once a year or once a week, you should join the frequent-flyer clubs offered by all airlines. If you don't fly TWA, don't join the club, but if you fly Continental, Southwest, and American, you're crazy if you don't! Joining the clubs is painless and free. Often you will get bonus miles

Continued on next page

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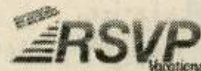
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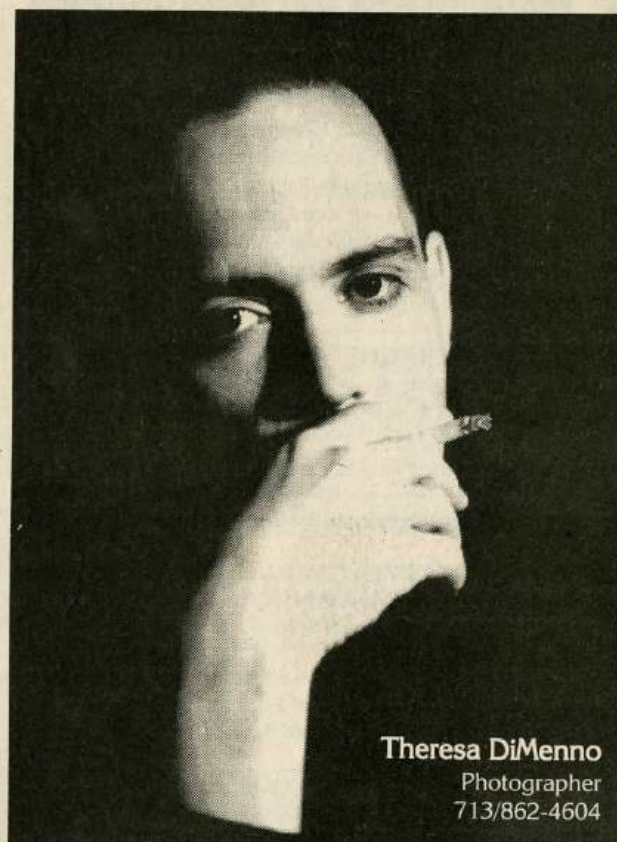
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Travel

Continued from previous page

just for joining. Then, each time you take a flight on that airline you will earn actual miles flown, or a minimum of 500 miles, per flight segment. Although the programs differ from airline to airline, you can start cashing in on the goodies usually around 25,000 miles accrued in your account. (On Continental, 25,000 will net you one free ticket in the 48 contiguous states!)

Now: how to legitimately double dip—clever use of your credit card spending. American Express has "Membership Miles," Diners Club has "Club Rewards," and several airlines sponsor their very own Visa and Mastercards. The beauty of using these credit cards is this: for every single dollar you spend on anything, it translates into a frequent-flyer mile in your account. So, let's say you fly from Houston to New York roundtrip, and the ticket costs \$430. If you charge the ticket on a recognized card, you will immediately get 430 miles for the cost of the ticket, plus the 2,830 actual miles flown, to total 3,260 for this one trip. Now, let's say you rent a car for a week at \$299, and cleverly choose Avis who rewards you with triple miles for a weekly rental, and again charge that rental on the appropriate mile-earning credit card: *voila*, you've earned another 1197 frequent-flyer miles. OK, so it's holiday season, you're going to New York to Christmas shop, see a play, eat a few fine meals, and, of course, stay at a midtown hotel. You spend \$600 at the hotel, \$350 on eating out, \$125 on the theater, and make friends and family very happy with the \$700 worth of Christmas gifts you purchase, of course charging all these items to that golden little card...and bingo, another 1775 miles gleefully races through cyberspace into your mileage account. In this example, you will have garnered a total of 6,232 frequent-flyer miles, just short of being one quarter of the way to a free airline ticket! I am serious: I use American Express for Craig's cleaners, Mastercard at Randall's, Kroger, and Fiesta, buy gasoline with the card, have burned my Foley's, Dillard's, and Macy's cards since they all take my magic-miles cards now, etc. Net result: I fly first class worldwide, not because I'm a travel agent, no siree, but because my mileage kitty bulges at all times from the judicious use of those credit cards that net me miles. Take that same \$430 fare to New York, kick in 20,000 frequent-flyer miles, and lucky you are confirmed in First Class, normally costing \$1638! I hope you get this important picture, and if you need help sorting out the details, give me a call...I am a master mile monger.

Christmas is coming, the geese are getting fat, if you don't make travel plans now, you'll be left flat! Enjoy Thanksgiving, and till next time, *adios*.

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The Gay Truth Will Set You Free

by Carl Richards

The view from the balcony of the Acapulco Princess Hotel was panoramic, tropical, and breathtaking, but I was so scared I could not see. All I could think about was why on this first day of being married was I still gay?

I wanted to jump off that balcony and end my life.

I knew I was different from all the other guys when I was 12 years old. I liked looking at guys, not girls. No matter how hard I tried to like girls, the guys were always my preference, and I thought I was the only guy in the world who had these feelings. I could not tell anyone what I felt or try to seek help in maturing and growing as a gay adolescent, so I faked my way through adolescence all the way to adulthood.

There were some homosexual experiences in junior high and high school. The other guys grew out of it and went on to girls. I never grew out of it, but went on to girls anyway because that was what I thought I was supposed to do. It was not what I felt, but it was the "normal" thing to do.

So, I found myself married and on my honeymoon in the most luxurious suite in the hotel, my high school sweetheart in the bathroom and me on the balcony scared of what had happened and scared of my



Out▼Tales

life and myself. I thought, just jump and get it over with. I told myself I was a fool for getting married and for thinking I could be heterosexual. Then I decided that since I have a tremendous amount of willpower, I could be a heterosexual, married, and be normal.

Wrong, wrong, wrong! The torment and the guilt were so overwhelming at times that I wished I had jumped off the balcony that honeymoon day.

After the honeymoon, we settled down to a "normal" life and routine. It was comfortable, it was safe, but I never stopped thinking, lusting, and wanting to be with a man.

Sex was not difficult with my wife because, as I said, I have a tremendous amount of willpower and could make myself do anything. It also helped to fantasize that she was a man—that took a lot of imagination as well as willpower.

Life went on. It seemed to the public, family, friends, and coworkers that we were the happy, content couple. I was a master at making things seem "normal" and making sure she was happy, content, and well cared for. But I was always thinking about men and watching men, but never having men. I made myself a promise that once I was married, I would never be intimate with a man again. I would no longer be gay because I could not be gay and married, too.

I kept my promise physically, but mentally I could not stop thinking about men. I did the X-rated video movie adventures, but never with anyone. It was always by myself. I would go into the little booth, close the door, lock it tightly, put in the quarters, watch the movie, masturbate, and leave riddled with guilt, shame, and loneliness. I wanted to be with another man, touch another man, and have another man touch me. I wanted to kiss another man and be kissed back. But I had made myself a promise, and I wasn't going to break it. By not allowing myself to be with another man, I conned myself into thinking I was not gay. I was only curious.

I continued the con job on myself, the video escapades, and an occasional porno magazine. This went on for years, along with the guilt, loneliness, frustration, and loss of self-respect. Every year it got worse.

Four years into the marriage my daughter was born. Now, I told myself, there is no way I can be gay because I have a wife and a child. I was trapped, and I decided there was no way out. I often thought my life was like eating oatmeal, "It's the right thing to do." The "right thing to do"? Is it right to stay in a relationship that is not right for you? At the time, I thought it was the right thing to do because it was right for my wife, child, and relatives. Who cares if I am happy? I sure didn't. So I made everyone else happy and myself unhappy in the process.

Seven years into the marriage, my son was born. There was no way I was gay; after all, I had a wife, daughter, and now I had fathered a son. Can a gay man do such a manly thing like father a son, yet still be gay? I knew for sure I could overcome the feelings I had had for 18 years.

I tried and tried and tried not to be gay. I joined Homosexuals Anonymous and read all the materials, did all the mental exercises, and attended church. I thought, "I will give my 'problem' to God, and he

will fix me. He will make me 'normal.' " All that happened was that I did another con job on myself and tried to convince myself I was not gay.

Wrong, wrong, wrong—again!

Now I was hiding behind the church. I was hiding behind God. I was so far from being true to myself that I didn't know who I was. I became numb, I became a "wannabe" heterosexual zombie who was trapped, and there was no way out.

The only person who noticed that something was wrong with me was my mother—mothers always know when something is wrong. I wanted to tell her, but I felt I could not tell anyone. I so desperately wanted to talk to someone who would understand and help me. I thought I was the only one with this "problem."

Ten years into the marriage I met an older man. "Sam" was probably 45 years old, and I was 31 years old. He had been married, divorced, and had two children. It was so great to meet Sam because I thought I was the only one who had these feelings. Sam showed me that I was not the only one; he also showed me a lot about myself and helped me to be who I am and accept me as I am. The affair with Sam continued for three years, on and off, with guilt, shame, ecstasy, fulfillment, and temporary happiness all mixed together.

I admitted to myself that I was a gay man, but I was a gay man trapped in a heterosexual life, and the biggest fear I had was the risk of being caught. My true identity could not be exposed. Fourteen years into the marriage: I know I am gay, a husband, a father, and now I am a daddy to two great children. There is no way out now, I am trapped. I am true to myself only sexually and secretly.

My wife also became involved with the church a few months after I started going to church. I was going to try to have my homosexuality cured secretly. She thought I was going because I was becoming a devout born-again Christian. After two or three years of trying to have my homosexuality cured, I did become a born-again Christian. When I did that, I realized God made me the way I am, he made me gay. I know that and accept it, and at that moment I was at peace with myself, and I know God loves me just as I am. Even though I knew who I was and God knew me, nobody else could know except a few secret friends.

My wife continued with a zeal and thirst for church, for Bible study, and for the spirit to be with her and in her. It was a slow transition, but after a couple of years, she became a spiritually walking, talking, church-going, Bible-studying tele-evangelist junkie.

Sex with my wife became infrequent. At this point I really didn't care, but I made myself perform every so often so as not to raise any suspicion. It took all the strong willpower I could muster up to do the "deed." I was like a robot performing a task.

January 1, 1995: 16 years into the marriage, my daughter is 12, my son is 9, I am 39. I cannot take another year, another month, another week, another day, another minute. How do I tell her? How? I prayed that if she ever asked, I would tell her the truth.

January 1, 1995, 8:00 a.m.: She asked me and I told her I was gay. Since then, it has been the best thing, the most liberating thing, and the truest thing I have ever done in my entire life. I always thought that if I ever came out, my life would end. Well, I am living proof that it is much to the contrary. I am happy, I love life, and, most important, I LOVE ME just as I am.

After two or three years of trying to have my homosexuality cured,

I did become a born-again Christian.

In the months following that New Year's Day, I came out to my father, mother, sister, brother, and a few select close straight friends. I have not come out to my children, but I plan to very soon. Telling the truth after so many years was like a ton of weight being lifted off of me. I learned how to breathe, how to smile, and how to feel again. The numbness wore off; I am awake and alive, and now I am 40 years old. Life does begin at 40.

All has not been smooth sailing, but I know everything is going to be OK. There are issues to be dealt with, like the legalities and stress of divorce, property settlement, and, to this day, she still thinks I could go to her charismatic holy-roller church, talk to one of their counselors, and be "healed," "fixed," and "cured" of my homosexuality.

I am getting on with the rest of my life, and I cannot look back and beat myself up. I am moving forward with a positive and happy attitude toward myself and my life—past, present, and future. I am "normal," and I always have been.

It is never too late. Come out now, get out now, do it now.

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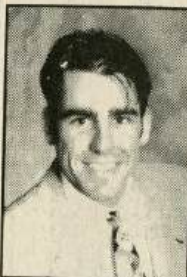
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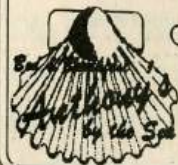
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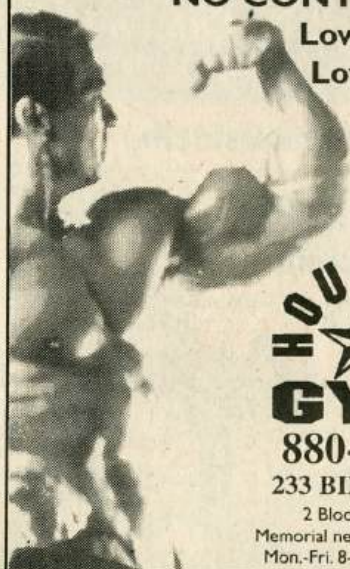
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O U T ▼ L A W

Starting a Small Business



Debra E. Hunt

Times are changing in the business world. Large corporations are down-sizing, and the average worker no longer has the luxury of believing that he or she will always have a job. More and more average citizens looking for alternative job security consider starting their own business.

Starting a new business almost always takes more than just a great idea. Besides that small percentage of inspiration, business owners have to be prepared to contribute the large percentage of perspiration that keeps a business alive. A certain amount of organization and planning ahead from the start can make a big difference.

Gathering Advice

Attorneys can be a great source of information for prospective entrepreneurs. Consulting an attorney before starting a new business can help an owner walk through in detail the requirements for getting the business up and running. An attorney can also advise the client of potential legal problems

once business is under way.

Another source of knowledge comes from owners who are themselves experienced in business. Even if the business sells a different product or service than the one being contemplated, all business owners share some of the same challenges in keeping their doors open.

Yet another resource that should not be overlooked is the variety of books giving advice on starting a new business. Many publications offer not only suggestions in getting off the ground but include checklists to help keep things organized and complete.

Small businesses represent the epitome of the American Dream.

Selecting a Business Entity

One decision a new business owner has to make is choosing the legal form that the business will take. The most common business entities are the Sole Proprietorship, the Partnership, and the Corporation.

Sole proprietorships are the simplest of the three. As the name implies, a sole proprietorship is owned by one person who receives the benefit of all profits and covers all losses. A partnership consists of two or more owners who share the management of the

business and divide all profits and losses between them. A corporation is an independent legal entity that has the ability to own assets and incur liabilities independently of the owners. Owners of a corporation own 'stock' or 'shares' in the business and, to a certain extent, have protection against liabilities of the business. The management of a corporation is controlled by a board of directors.

In addition to these basic forms of business entities, Texas is one of many states which recognizes a hybrid business entity known as a Limited Liability Company. This type of business combines elements of both a partnership and a corporation, affording owners direct management and sharing of profits and losses with protection against liabilities.

What's in a Name

Another task facing the new business owner is choosing a name for the business. Sole proprietors and partnerships have the ability to operate under the owner's name (or names) or an 'assumed name.' Corporations, being independent legal entities, may only use names not already in use by other corporations. For this reason, an incorporator is required to get name approval from the Secretary of State. All business owners doing business under a trade name other than their own should consider filing an assumed name certificate in all counties where the business operates.

Capitalization

It seems as if it would be common sense, but many small businesses fail quickly because they are under-capitalized from the start. Ideally, new business owners have personal capital sufficient to float the company until profits start rolling in. Prudent business owners make fall-back provisions with a good bank who will lend money to cover the lean periods.

Small businesses represent the epitome of the American Dream. The ability to strike out on one's own and make a living by owning a business tempts many people away from corporate America. Unfortunately, odds are still against the small business succeeding. In order to beat the odds and keep a small business alive, prospective owners are wise to seek out advice from those who know and plan ahead.

Debra E. Hunt is a partner at Moore & Hunt, a lesbian/feminist law firm based in Houston. Since graduating from the University of Houston Law Center, Debbie has concentrated on issues important to the gay and lesbian community, including personal and estate planning, relationship dissolution disputes, real estate and contract problems, and business organization for profit and not-for-profit entities. For more information regarding this article, call 713/522-4282.

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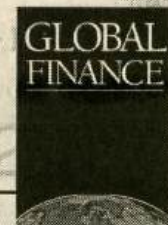
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O U T ▼ S M A R T

**FUTURE
OUT
LOOK**

by
Joseph Molina



THE WORLD

A purification of the world is taking place. You will notice this purification taking the shape of natural disasters that are hitting closer and closer to home. Through this turmoil, the gift of the spirit will be born within us. Watch for people who are imprisoned by ignorance to call out for help. The government of our land will come to their rescue.

Many significant incidents in the realm between the religious and the political will occur, or will at least be revealed more openly. The virtue of all things will be tested.

ARIES (3/21-4/19)

A window of awareness opens, admitting the light of truth. Life challenges you to keep your strong Aries head afloat, as it tests your strengths and weaknesses. You could experience these forces by developing a distrustful or suspicious attitude, or a pervasive air of opposing opinions, life perspectives, and/or political views. This will present minor turbulence as your life shifts in a new direction, responding to your restless soul. Providing you remain pioneering, willful and determined, a happy life is ahead of you—that restless soul of yours will be fed, your peaceful home will be filled with spiritual love, and you will dance with your partner in the flame of union. But until you experience a shift in the way that you have known life up until this point, you will not fully know what it means to be living.

If married, a test of the truth of your relationship is upon you. The future still remains to be seen. If single, a potential mate—if that is what you want—will present itself. This vibration does not lead to flings, so don't plan on toying with another's emotions.

TAURUS (4/10-5/20)

Approaching life with a detached attitude instead of being confrontational or meeting opposition head-on, will aid you in viewing your present circumstances with wisdom and objectivity. Some of these issues will be rather close to your heart and coated with a great deal of personal emotion. You will require private space to yourself to seek an oracle—be that oracle your inner voice, runes, or tea

leaves. You are urged to bring this about.

You will initiate a new routine into your life. This could take place in your career or in your romantic life. This will be peculiarly specific for some, as you reject traditional doctrines, family, and religious conditioning. You are forming your own philosophy of life. Some may notice a sense of pressure with your surroundings, or an attitude of separatism or disapproval projected by others. As your life flowers and begins bearing fruit, your future is vibrant, fertile and alive, and filled with gold and the sweet smell of roses. Your career is profitable, your romance is powerful, and your home is comfortable.

GEMINI (5/21-6/20)

Around mid-November you should become more conscious of your money and spending patterns. It would be very wise to watch your budget and where you invest your funds. Your money represents your hard work. Be very aware of what you empower when you feed it your own, hard-earned currency.

Be prepared to experience some outside interference, perhaps manifested as a broken heel, a flat tire, or your answering machine eating an important message. "Inopportune timing" is the catch phrase of the day. You are urged to have faith and courage in the face of this turbulence. Look for, and expect, a miracle.

If you are looking for love, catching up on old projects would probably be more fulfilling. If married, your challenge comes in the knowledge that you and your lover can become one—though not unlike a heavy stone in a turbulent ocean.

CANCER (6/21-7/22)

Prepare yourself for general upheaval—your life is about to change direction. This could manifest as a move, career change, or the breakup of a relationship. You will come to a realization regarding the power and strength you have kept in reserve until now. Take care to complete all tasks once you start them; overreacting to this new energy could cause you to overlook loose ends that need tying up. Tie them now—they could trip you later. You are prone to extremes. One afternoon you might not feel like returning to the office—so you don't! Or maybe you just stop

communicating altogether with a dating partner. You are determined to move your life into a more comfortable space, and you will do your best to let nothing stand in your way. Since you are so imbedded in your current vibration—the one you've been in for at least the last two years—give yourself some time to adjust to your new energy. Six months to a year is recommended. Whether you like it or not, the old energy is not about to let go willingly, nor will it be ignored. Remain truthful. Keep a strong will. Once you make your choices, stick with them. May the blessings be.

LEO (7/23-8/22)

Have you noticed a slight sense of confusion recently? This confusion could cause your future to appear to be much different than it really is. For Leo, the sunlight doth bear a promise—a promise of joy, success, love, and rewards for your hard work. You are surrounded by people who sense your success, and the love of friends past and present.

Your future holds much promise. This is written in stone for those Leos who have remained persistent and true to their path. However, this means complete success is yet to be won. Be extra aware of your attitude and its strength when forced upon others. You are prone to perfectionism at this time, and could become a bit temperamental. Your body needs a break and your ego needs reassurance that all your work has not been in vain. With a little push from above—perhaps like a book falling from a shelf or a message hidden in a dream—your spirit will be renewed and your courage revived. The glory of your life will be reaffirmed.

If single, the potential for love is planted. Whether it blooms and bears fruit or is pulled up by its root before it has a chance to grow is entirely your decision. If married, sometimes love—no matter how well-established—requires time to grow from one stage to another. The ability for two souls to flourish as one is the true meaning of union.

VIRGO (8/23-9/22)

You will take some time to observe your present direction. You will analyze your career and the methods by which you achieve security. You will become quite determined and focused on wealth and all those things that you can do to achieve more of it. You will make an active choice to supplement yourself. This could mean doing additional work, or perhaps simply finding a job. This will depend on the level of security that you require now. You will charge ahead with perseverance and constructively create change. Then you will have freedom from fear—fear of the unknown future—to allow you to rise again.

If single, it is highly possible that you may not be for long. A potent love could be offered, and dating could lead to romance. If married, remember that learning to be together takes adjusting at times. As you learn to communicate what you truly feel, you will discover how powerful love can be between two honest equals.

LIBRA (9/23-10/23)

At this time, life will seem calm, simple, and even lethargic. This pattern, though really quite routine and normal, is unnerving to you. A decadent itch begins to gnaw at you. The heaviness of your life becomes very pronounced, as you yearn for something spontaneously exciting and gay. You feel like working it. So work it! You go, girl! A rebellious spirit will come out in you and could effect you in a number of ways. You might rearrange your furniture. You might re-paint. Mini-vacations are recommended to lend clarity that's been sorely lacking in your life recently. Once experienced, this energy will make you feel tall, strong, and optimistic. Your pioneering strength returns to you, and once again you conquer the world to be the Diva that you are.

If single, anything is possible now. Use your head to keep yourself out of messy situations. If married, concentrate on excitement. This will stir passion in both you and your partner.

SCORPIO

(10/24-11/21)

For a time you will require some private space to find yourself. Build a wall between yourself and your environment: both career projects sitting on your shoulders, and the responsibilities of friends and lovers must be kept at arm's length. You need time to re-balance your emotions. Spend time with true friends so that peace can be restored. Develop a haven away from the outer world. Explore the deep calmness found nowhere but within the ocean of your own emotions.

Prepare yourself for some stress, taking the shape, perhaps, of disagreements or misunderstandings with a close friend or lover. Your emotions tend to be stifled. You will not be particularly creative, nor do you care to be. Anything that calls for great effort from you will be pushed aside in deference to just being.

If married, truth lies in the ability that two can work through their problems. This may be the truest test of the strength of your love. If single, not much luck in love is shown at this time. Enjoy your friends, clean your home, or read a good book.

SAGITTARIUS

(11/22-12/21)

Evolution, change, and transformation are the key words at this time. You are gaining knowledge of who you really are. Your life is about to change. There is movement in the direction of your wildest dreams. You uncover hidden talents, feel the true essence of spirit, and are more alive than you have ever been. But before you embark upon this path, reassessment of your chosen goals is called for to determine what is true and correct. You must till the soil so that it is filled with air, refreshed and revitalized. A burning inferno will destroy all the dis-ease present in your life.

A new beginning is offered. This is a chance to change your life. Get ready for a new career venture, an exciting romance, and/or a new identity. Whether or not you accept these changes is completely up to you. You are warned against impatience

and letting your baser urges control you. Do not be slowed on your way to good fortune.

If single, patience is a virtue. Giving romance time to grow is a must. This time is very powerful, however, for finding romance. If married, you will change the way that you look, be it your physical body or simply your hair. Believe it or not, this will help you renew your love.

CAPRICORN

(12/22-1/19)

November 15 marks the beginning of a noticeable shift in your life. You break away from mental turmoil, depression, and lack of motivation. You are free to accomplish a great goal. Your future is waiting for you to shape it, but a warning is indicated: beware of taking risks. You are liable to not be thinking straight. This could cause you to get involved in non-productive situations. These situations will only result in your being thrown off course and will impede your progress. Whether or not these forces are destructive depends on your level of self-control. When you remember to exercise self-control, anything is possible, and you remain Queen.

If married, issues with in-laws could become pronounced. Remember to think before you speak. If single, this is not the best time to look for love. What you may mistake for love at this time is probably nothing more than a passing fancy.

AQUARIUS

(1/20-2/18)

November 15-December 14 will be filled with issues that deal with your work, especially the financial rewards that you receive for all your energy. Some Aquarians may notice a heavy cloud hovering over their heads. This could manifest as a slight depression, or you may feel that you may not be able to find solutions to these passing worries. You will most likely blame your work, whether you are currently a member of the work force or a student preparing to enter it. You tend to be a bit

more critical than usual and could lean toward severity. Take some time to prepare for this incoming vibration so that you don't rip anyone's head off. The energy present has a tendency toward disagreements with anyone you deem to be an authority figure, whether he/she is your boss, teacher, parent, or lover. Issues concerning money, and the fact that you need more of it, could be at the root of these difficulties. You are urged to keep your cool, as not everyone is receptive to your neediness. Forewarned is forearmed, so consider yourself "weaponed." How do you choose to handle this vibration?

PISCES

(2/19-3/20)

In spite of your list of projected goals and hopes for the future, frustration overwhelms you. An impatient anxiety could cause you to become a little upset at this time. You are frustrated with having to wait for your goals to be achieved. The lesson of patience is a hard one for you now. To aid in alleviating this stress, let your creativity flow. Redo your yard. Paint. Write a poem. Enjoy the comfort of your home. Wishing for something will often help it come to you, but try to be patient; it's coming as fast as it can.

If single, admirers are abundant. They seem to appear from nowhere. Just watch your ego and keep your hands to yourself. If married, learn to get close again. Be nostalgic. Reminisce. Surprise your love with flowers or a meaningful gift.

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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Vaid in Vain

Continued from page 23

efforts will win some battles here and there, perhaps pass a statute or two.

But progressive coalition-building is more often a dead end, a bridge to nowhere. The last time we marshaled a "progressive coalition" to defeat an anti-gay initiative in Houston, for example in the 1985 referendum, we got 18% of the vote. The reason is simple. The real coalition we must build is with the vast majority of Americans. And that struggle requires a strategy very unlike the one Vaid suggests. It requires us to spread the truth about gay America and its diversity of lifestyles and ideas—a truth for which Vaid has little real understanding and even less patience. It demands that we reveal our deep moral values, which are not such trendy, revolutionary values after all: most of us, I believe, yearn for the stability of love and commitment and family and acceptance. The movement compels us to convince the nation that we really are "just like" them in every relevant sense; and that our only difference—our sexual orientation—is as inconsequential as Vaid's book will be.

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 and Lesbian Political Caucus. The opinions expressed in this column are his own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Log Cabin, the HGLPC, or OutSmart magazine.

The Doom Generation Review

Continued from page 25

and Amy having sex. But, while Jordan is clueless that another man is coming on to him, Amy asks no questions when X seduces her next to a sleeping Jordan. Their strange sexual relationship continues throughout the film, in and out of different settings, culminating in an ominous and extremely chilling conclusion.

Openly gay director, Greg Araki, continues his unabashed exploration of sex and violence that he pioneered in *The Living End* and *Totally F*cked Up*. Although he certainly has a style all his own, his bizarre sense of humor is sometimes reminiscent of John Waters, while his scenes of violence often mimic David Lynch. Despite the trite language in the script, the three main actors all fit well into their roles, especially Jonathan Schaech as X. While it may have been intentional, James Duvall as Jordan seemed too much like he was imitating Keanu Reeves in *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*, while Rose McGowan as Amy seemed to be a poor imitation of Uma Thurman in *Pulp Fiction*.

Many elements in the film, such as the obviously fake, splatter-film violence used in most of the movie and the unportentous, youth-oriented language and humor, make it a possible contender for cult-classic. Add to that the parade of cameo appearances—Amanda Bearse as a big-haired barmaid, Heidi Fleiss as a liquor store clerk, Lauren Tewes (remember, *The Love Boat*) and Christopher Knight (little Peter Brady all grown up) as TV anchors, and, not to be missed, Margaret Cho as the blood-splattered wife of a decapitated quickie mart clerk. So, if you get into quirky art house films that contain plenty of sex and violence, then there's a good bet you'll like this film.

Take Control of Your Life

Continued from page 47

they don't let anyone know what is going on—and that's devastating to one's health," adds Loeser. "What we're trying to do is to encourage people to make HIV more a part of their life, to be more active in doing something about this disease. We have to break through that denial, because it's that denial that's killing people."

As an incentive to attend the program, Loeser is offering complimentary dinner or theater passes, along with a certificate, for anyone who attends all five of the core classes. Those people who register for one class can denote whether they want to be called about upcoming classes, and this way their attendance is tracked. Loeser also encourages registering for every class you plan to attend, since programs are subject to cancellation when the minimum attendance goal of at least five people is not confirmed. (Register by calling Body Positive at 524-2374.)

The majority of classes, which are held at the Metropolitan Multiservice Center at 1475 W. Gray, are offered on a rotating basis, and there are several ways to find out when the classes are. The best place to get the calendar of upcoming events is through *Positively*, Body Positive's free monthly newsletter. If you're not on their mailing list and would like to be added, simply call Body Positive at 524-2374 to be added. Other ways to find out about upcoming events is by picking up one of the Wellness Learning Center flyers distributed at many doctor's offices, as well as Thomas Street Clinic and AIDS Foundation Houston, or by consulting the *OutSmart* calendar, which lists all of the events by date.

"We're responsible for doing everything we can to give ourselves the best chance for good health," Loeser concludes. "That's what wellness is all about—to build up your health and try to maintain your being well."

In Search of Sanity

Continued from page 47

innermost limits. One of many theories is that one lives for a relationship, a religion, or a career. We each must focus our energy in some direction. Religion tends for most to be a faith issue. Relationships are (optimally) based on trust. Career and financial survival pose inherent insecurities. Another part of the wellness concept is coming to grips with which applies to you.

Mental stability fosters the "in control of life" feeling. Stress management, sexuality, and perspective are all components of the mental maze. A person's mood changes many times through the course of a day, and this, of course, is acceptable. However, mood swings often flag a problem in another area of life. Sexuality is a vital part of self that deserves special attention. Mental issues can lead to a loss of sexual expression. Sexuality deserves recognition, considering it intimate relationship with self-esteem.

Perspective on life encompasses a recognition of the "big picture," with a sense of where and why you fit in. It involves an acceptance of yourself—your assets and limitations. And moreover, an acceptance of your place in life.

The reassuring note is that we're all in this together. Perpetual evolution can and should be fun. Grasping onto each new opportunity and maximizing it's potential is what life's all about. Accepting new responsibilities as a challenge, facing loss with dignity, searching for the true rather than the perceived meaning...this is wellness. This is a goal.

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Miles Glaspy New Counseling Center 529-1913
Seely M. Gerraughty, LMSW-ACP LMFT 526-4487
Dave Hopkinson, PC 526-3238
Barbara Levinson, PhD Center for Healthy Sexuality 785-2600
Odilia Méndez, MS, LPC 315 W. Alabama, #106 527-8800
Denise O'Doherty, LPC 3415 Graustark 529-1913
Montrose Counseling Ctr. 701 Richmond Ave 529-0037
Patrick Vachon, LMSW-ACP...New Counseling Center 529-1913

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Ron Duster (ReMax) 529-5026 528-1800
Richard Hill (Swilley-Hudson) 1505 Heights 869-0456

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The Community of The Reconciling Servant 1505 Nevada 462-7154
Dignity Houston 1307 H Yale 880-2872
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Houston Mission Church 1505 Nevada 529-8225
Jewish Congregation 748-7079
Kingdom Community Church 4404 Blossom 862-7533
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Lenny's Cleaning Co. 662-6446
Man Maid Cleaning Service/Tony Akin 993-9737

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Deer Park Funeral Directors 476-4693
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MEMORIALS

BRIAN DOUGLAS BRADLEY

March 27, 1961—November 5, 1995

Brian was born and raised in New Albany, Mississippi. He lived in New York, Hawaii, and finally moved to Houston with his lover, Josh Irvin, who died on October 10, 1989. After Josh's death, Brian began his illustrious career as both a gay and HIV activist. First, as a member of ACT UP and later as a founding member of Queer Nation, Brian was not shy about bringing the fight against bigotry to the very doorstep of the enemy and he waged his fight with outrageous humor, gay abandon, and pure guts.

In grim reaper drag, he disrupted a Baylor College of Medicine Commencement Address being given by Health and Human Services Director Louis Sullivan, chiding the secretary for a lack of attention to the issue of HIV. In that same costume, Brian later disrupted Jon Lindsay and Commissioner's Court, which was attempting to destroy the Greater Houston AIDS Alliance, of which Brian was an elected member.

Protesting the incompetence of Iva Sue Cooper, the Executive Director of the HIV Division of Harris County Health Department, Brian donned Sue Cooper drag and greeted guests attending a breakfast hosted by Ms. Cooper.

Brian also directed his ire against the voices of intolerance, trashing book signings by both Anita Bryant and Jerry Falwell. When David Duke held a rally in League City, Brian stood up in a sea of red-necks and unfurled a banner that read: "NAZI GO HOME." A Houston Chronicle photographer caught that moment on film and it won the Chronicle Picture of the Year.

While in Houston, Brian worked as a scrub nurse at M.D. Anderson Hospital until, in a newspaper article, he identified himself, as both a person with HIV and a nurse at the aforementioned hospital. When the hospital administration removed him from surgery and assigned him to a job as a clerk in the shipping department, Brian sued M.D. Anderson and took the case all the way to the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. In the process, Brian appeared

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PHOTOGRAPHY

Theresa DiMenno 862-4604
Gabriel T. 3407 Montrose, #204 582-7779

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Bicknell Plumbing 649-6161

PRINTING AND GRAPHICS

House of Coleman 901 W. Alabama 523-2521

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Absolute Video, Patricia Crago 786-4902

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SIGNS/BANNERS

Signs of Success 2360 W. Alabama 942-7446

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Sandra Wilkins/Travel Partnership 526-4471
Sojourns Travel 800-530-2299 528-2299

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Community Life...Today! 526-5807
Life Benefactors 252-3700
Medical Escrow Society 800-422-1314
NVR 800-932-0050
Viatical Benefits Foundation 800-871-9440

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Nancy Ford

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on *Good Morning America*, *Oprah*, *Rolanda*, and *Night Line*, where he spoke eloquently, not only for himself but also for every person diagnosed with HIV. Brian won many awards for his activism, but was proudest of having been selected as Grand Marshal of the Gay Pride Parade in 1993. Also in 1993, Brian ran for an At-Large position on city council and received nearly 28,000 votes.

Brian will be remembered by his close friends (too numerous to mention) for his kindness, his dedication, and his humor. Brian Bradley is survived by his father, Edward Bradley of Senatobia, Mississippi; his mother, Jeanne Bradley; his brother, Kevin Bradley; his sister, Kristel Erwin of Potts Camp, Mississippi; and hundreds of persons with HIV who will probably never know how much Brian cared about them or how much he did on their behalf.

MICHAEL COLL

December 28, 1958—October 20, 1995

Our dear friend Michael Coll made the transition to a different realm on the evening of Friday, October 20, 1995. A spiritual leader in the gay and metaphysical communities, Michael touched many lives and gave us rich gifts of humor, understanding, acceptance, and courage. He asked to be remembered as a person who saw beauty in all things. His passion and love for life inspired us and we will always be blessed by the memory of this angel who walked among us.

Michael's family asks that donations be made in his name to AIDS Foundation Houston, Inc., 3202 Wesleyan, Houston, TX 77027. A memorial service was held on Sunday, November 12 at Toohee's Coffees. In remembrance and celebration of Michael's spirit, why not walk in the Rose Garden at Hermann Park, visit the butterflies in the Cockrell Center, hug your mother, encourage a child, smile at a stranger, dance a dance of gratitude for the joy of living? We will miss you, Dear Friend.



What a World, What a World...

At press time, the winner of the recent \$21 million *Texas Lotto* had not been determined. As this column is being written, four lottery numbers are in my possession. I live with hope, considering the possibility that this might very well be the last pre-holiday depression I spend in financial obscurity.

By the time you read this column, we'll know for sure.

Twenty-one million dollars. That's a lot of cash. Heck, that's considerably more than I made last year. Even spread out over the course of, say, 21 years, that's still—what? About a million bucks a year till I explode from over-indulgence? Cool.

There are almost as many recipes for choosing lottery numbers as there are numbers—anniversaries and birthdays, favorite TV channels, upcoming parole dates of former lovers—whatever. Some folks prefer the *out-of-the-air* method: whichever six numbers pop into your mind and out through your squatty blue pencil, like a cosmic broadcast, are your numbers. Granted, they might not be winners, but they're yours. Just like family.

Some gambling spirits base their numbers-choosing on researched documentation and invest in one of those *How to Win Big in the Lottery* books. My question is, why aren't the authors of these books zillionaires? If they know so much about winning the lottery, why are they still supporting themselves writing those cheesy little paperbacks nestled at checkout counters between *Weekly World News* and *Auto Trader*?

Here's a quirky-yet-legal tip for choosing Lotto numbers when you're feeling karmically balanced and have at least a half-tankful of gas: Turn in your business (white pages) phone book to the long column of convenience store listings. Based on the unsolicited commercial endorsement thing, I can't specify the exact name



BY NANCY FORD

of which establishment I personally recommend. Let's just call the store "Pop 'n' Snow." Or "Bop 'n' Blow." Or "Mop 'n' Glow." You get the idea.

Next, place the phone book, open to these listings, on the floor. Take your favorite color Magic Marker, think pure thoughts, chant something (optional) and drop the pen (uncapped) onto the open phone book. The resulting dot will mark where you are destined to purchase your lottery ticket.

I know what you're thinking. I do *not* have too much spare time on my hands, Smartie-pants. I'm just quirky.

Although I have yet to win Dime One using this method, I've found it can be a productive way to pass an afternoon: Not only does it give one's couch a rest, it also presents the opportunity to wear freedom rings in an unfamiliar neighborhood.

Regardless of how you choose your own personal magic numbers, always get a Quik-Pik, too. Winning on a Quik-Pik is the ultimate illustration of being in the right place at the right time, never to be a day late and a dollar short ever again. Literally.

Okay. Your lottery ticket is in hand. Your numbers are drawn. You regain consciousness after absorbing the startling reality that you have become a millionaire without having to marry one, à la Anna

Nicole Smith. Now what are you going to do?

A friend once promised if she won the lottery, she would throw a huge party. She would invite any and all persons with whom she had shared a period of her life, regardless of however brief or extended, ecstatic or chaotic that period may have been. These friends, associates, coworkers, teachers, cult/family members, rivals, ex-lovers, and role models alike would be treated to a lavish, all-expenses-paid, three-day/two-night fiesta, the likes of which

would parallel a Jackson Hicks-meets-Sтивен Spielberg Mardi Gras.

At the end of those three days, each guest would be given \$1,000 in cash, and graciously asked to not *ever* approach my nouveau riche friend with any requests, ideas, sob stories, or schemes that would not have been presented to her prior to her receiving her windfall.

And thank you for coming.

My personal karma dictates that all of my potential Lotto winnings be given to appropriate, worthy organizations to further AIDS research. All winnings. All. It's a deal I made long ago with the Big Lottery Number Picker in the Sky. Yep, *all* winnings—that's the deal. Give me strength. Aside from perhaps helping to expedite the end of the plague, it would be worth it to never have to listen to another round of *That's What Friends Are For*. You don't have to be psychic to know that Dionne Warwick and pals didn't intend to still be singing this song at the end of 1995.

Twenty-one million. I land me a Magic Marker and wish me luck. If my friend wins, I'll see you at the party.

If I win, I'll see you at the party.

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

Breakfast, 6:40 am. Too much caffeine.

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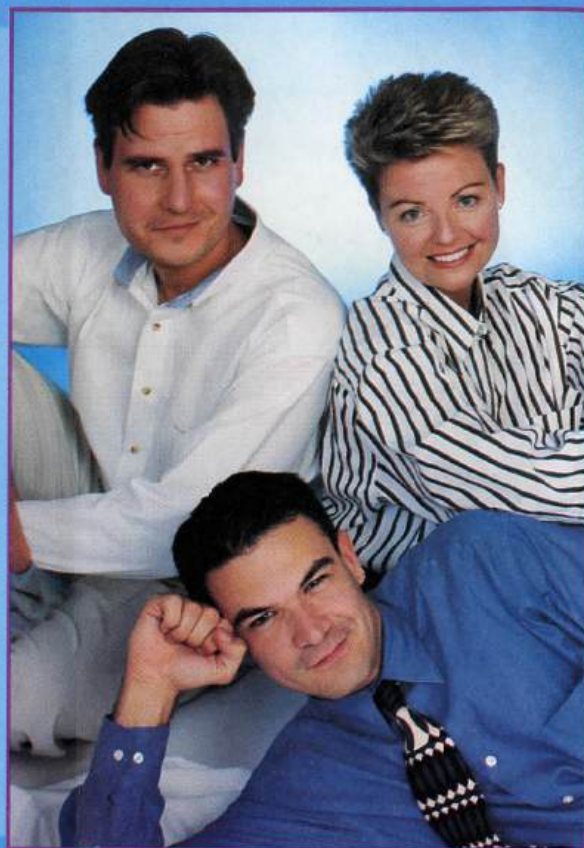
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