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HOUSTON'S GAY & LESBIAN MONTHLY MAGAZINE



OUR GAY YOUTH

Just like a beautiful plant or uncontrollable weed, fully grown, mature adult gay men and lesbians don't crop up out of nowhere—they start as gay and lesbian youth.

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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 12 JANUARY 15-FEBRUARY 14, 1996

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IN SEARCH OF A GAY SOUL 30

Ancient Native American doctrine dictates that homosexuals possess spiritual dimensions and skills that heterosexuals do not. Alan Davidson explores alternative spirituality.

A SPIRITUALITY FOR MINORITIES 33

Loren T. Connell expounds on the Bible story of Philip and an Ethiopian eunuch.

GAY YOUTH: COME BACK WHEN YOU'RE 21 34

It is of utmost importance for today's youth to possess the same jeans, the same athletic shoes, and especially the same sexuality as their peers. For those who don't, there's H.A.T.C.H. By David N. Morales.

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Cover Photo
by Theresa DiMenno

FROM THE PUBLISHER...



Greg Jeu

Recently, the Texas Triangle, a gay and lesbian weekly newspaper, became the target of the American Family Association, a radical religious-right group based in Austin. Leading this crusade of stupidity is executive director Wyatt Roberts, who began his attack on the Triangle this past fall. Roberts began circulating gay-bashing letters to Austin-area churches and reading the names of Triangle advertisers on his weekly radio show, calling for a boycott of the gay-owned and gay-friendly businesses.

His plan backfired. As the saying goes, "What you fight against will weaken you. What you support will empower you." Maybe Roberts should have considered using that same radio time to support his own community rather than attacking ours.

Roberts' attack on the newspaper has not only thrust the Triangle into national headlines but also increased their advertising. A handful of advertisers have dropped out, but most have remained—and even more are renewing their contracts. On a lighter note, where else can you get a newspaper ad with a radio spot thrown in for free?

Roberts says his intention is not to put the Triangle out of business. He says he believes "people have a right to know if their purchases are going to promote a philosophy with which they disagree."

So, how can we take an active role against this sort of intolerance? Boycotting businesses that are affiliated with the religious right is one way to be effective. However, with the help of the newly developed Greater Houston Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, we can learn which businesses to support, rather than avoid. Membership in this nonpolitical business group is open to anyone who recognizes Houston's diverse population and who pledges a nondiscrimination policy regarding race, religion, gender, and sexual orientation. Frequenting these gay-owned and gay-friendly businesses is an easy way to use your purchasing power to support good business folk that respect you, not abuse you. And, as a smart community, we'll be spending more time planting flowers and less time pulling up weeds.

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The Name Game

Re: "What's in a Name" [OutSmart, 12/15/95, by Debra Hunt]. In 1990, I had my birth name legally changed from a conservative, middle-class, Catholic, white-sounding name to one that identifies who I really am with dignity and accuracy.

As a result of that 10-minute hearing in front of a judge—and the superlative support of Debra Hunt as my counsel—I continue to feel freer and truer to myself. I even celebrate my birthday now on my new name day, July 10.

Many of us feel confined and constricted in names someone else chose for us. Relabeling myself to comply with truth-in-advertising has helped me become the person I really want to be.

The process is almost effortless, and the subsequent changes on driver's and professional licenses, credit cards, and utility bills were easier for me than refusing to change my name when I married a man 25 years ago.

Thanks to OutSmart for a wonderful publication we can all be proud of, and thanks to Moore & Hunt for letting me be me!

—Esperanza Lavender Jazz Paz
Houston, Texas

If only we could arrest our aging processes to go along with changing our birthdays, the whole concept would be damn near perfect. Thanks for writing. —Editor

A Time to Tie

In response to last month's letter to the editor by S.P.T., "Christmas Rush," I would like to say, "Build a better mousetrap and the world will beat a path to your door." This is the philosophy on which a free-market economy is built. Rush Limbaugh has captured this spirit and created an amazing line of quality ties at around \$35 each. I love it when one of my liberal friends enthusiastically admires my "No Boundaries" tie, only to have their hopes dashed when I turn the tie over to reveal the Rush Limbaugh label. Although it is clear that S.P.T. thinks that Rush is an "...arrogant bigot

who constantly degrades women, those less financially endowed, African Americans, gays, Jews, the disabled, or any other person which he is not. ..." I would beg to differ.

In September of 1993 I wrote to the Rush Limbaugh newsletter, "I am writing to let you know you have many gay fans. We are hard working, self-motivated, entrepreneurial types who realize it will be our own individual efforts that will make the biggest difference in our lives and not some government program. I have wanted to write this letter for a long time, but was afraid, not of mainstream America, but of the left." His gracious reply (printed in his newsletter that goes to hundreds of thousands of his listeners who might have otherwise stereotyped ALL homosexuals as a bunch of whining liberals) was, "...You are correct

to be wary of the left, which would relegate you—and all other opposition—to the closet. Welcome, by the way."

I have found that the people that hate Rush the most are the people who have never actually listened to his show long enough to "get" his use of sarcasm, hyperbole and double entendre. I have consistently listened to his show for over five years now (around 10 hours a week on average) and have been thoroughly entertained and educated. I don't think he is anti-gay (although I have heard him criticize Queer Nation), I don't think he is anti-woman (although I have heard him poke fun at Bela Abzug), and I don't think he is anti-black (although I have heard him satirize Jesse Jackson). Rush has made one thing clear: His job is to obtain the largest audience he possibly can, so that he can charge confiscatory advertising rates. As a capitalist (albeit a gay capitalist), I have to admire that.

—Tirey B. Counts
Houston, Texas

Like the old cliché goes—give a conservative an amazing line of quality ties at around \$35 each, and eventually he'll hang himself with them. Thanks for writing. —Editor

Is Help on the Way?

In January of this year, our support of Annise Parker for City Council showed Houston that the day is coming soon that an openly gay or lesbian candidate will be elected to City Council. Her showing in the special election, far stronger than anyone expected, was a wake-up call that the gay community is active, organized, and willing to vote. Help us now to continue delivering this message.

In the summer of this year, a local Montrose business, frequented by many in our community, asked a lesbian couple to leave their premises. The reason: this business did not approve of a simple kiss between same-sex couples, yet had no problem with such behavior between straight couples. HGLPC stood up for this couple's rights when others in our own community remained silent. We launched the Houston Non-Discrimination Zone Project, asking that local businesses sign a pledge to not discriminate against our community. With our watchful eye on them, the offending business signed on and apologized for their behavior. The successful launching of this project brought attention from the national news media. Help us now to keep this vital project alive.

In early 1995, the Houston City Council, in a disappointing vote, denied funding to Brentwood Baptist Church to build housing for persons with AIDS. Our elected representatives capitulated to the moronic objections of persons who did not want AIDS patients in their neighborhood because "those people will lower our property values." Members of HGLPC stood firmly against this decision, making numerous appearances at Council meetings voicing our objections and supporting Brentwood's subsequent lawsuit against the city. Council is ready to reconsider the decision and will vote soon on new funding. Help us now to keep this issue and other AIDS issues alive at City Hall.

Also in 1995, the Texas Legislature considered a change in the hate crimes law to specifically

include language to cover crimes committed against gays and lesbians. HGLPC, working closely with the Texas Gay Rights Lobby, supported this legislation. Many caucus members travelled to Austin to personally lobby legislators. Ultimately, the legislation was killed in the House, having already passed in the Senate. The close vote gives us hope that we can pass this bill in the next session. The unfortunate fact is that we lost on the vote of a Houston area state representative. Help us now to lay the groundwork necessary to win this battle in the next session.

In City Council elections, many of our endorsed candidates won. In the District D race, our endorsement of Jew Don Boney stirred controversy. Yet, it proved to be the right decision. He won that seat with the help of this community. We will hold him, and all of Council, accountable for their votes which affect gays and lesbians. Help us now to accomplish this important task.

HGLPC celebrated its 20th anniversary this year as the oldest gay and lesbian civil rights group in Texas. As we have always strived to do, we encouraged growth of other groups also committed to protecting the rights of our community. We worked closely with the Texas Gay Rights Lobby, of which we are a founding member. We initiated a project between the caucus and Log Cabin Republicans to identify voters at the precinct level to run for precinct judge, giving gays and lesbians a greater voice in the workings of both political parties. We cosponsored community forums with the new African American Lesbian and Gay Alliance. Our members were instrumental in the creation of the Outvote Project, a nonprofit group registering gays and lesbians to vote and encouraging their participation in the political process, regardless of party or political affiliation. Help us now to continue our efforts to support the growing voices of the gay and lesbian community.

The new year brings us many new challenges. We have important elections in the spring and fall of this year. Keep gay and lesbian issues before both political parties by renewing your membership today. Please join us at our meeting on January 3, 1996, at the HGLPC office at 2700 Albany (third floor) at 7:30 p.m. as we kick off what will be, with your help, our third decade of work on behalf of gays and lesbians in Houston.

—Terri Richardson
President, HGLPC
Houston, Texas

Jewish Gate Open

Since religion has frequently been used to oppress gays and lesbians, your review of denominational policies on homosexuality ["Heaven's Gate," OutSmart, 12/15/95] is a real service to the community.

Your discussion of Jewish congregations, however, omits the most progressive branch of Judaism: the Reconstructionist movement. The Houston Jewish Reconstructionist Havurah is a small congregation of approximately 65 families. Our membership reflects the larger community in which we live. It includes families with children, singles, gays, lesbians, interfaith couples, Jews by birth, and Jews by choice.

The organization is run by volunteers with the help of part-time rabbinical leadership. During our 10-year history, rabbinical leadership has been both lesbian and straight; similarly, our member-

ship and officers have been some mixture of gay, straight, and lesbian (as well as married, single, female, male, young, old, etc.) working together to grow Jewishly.

Reconstructionist Judaism honors tradition, and we interpret tradition to create new forms and meanings. Our denomination was founded by Mordecai Kaplan in the 1930s; his daughter was the first-ever Bat Mitzvah in 1922.

All people are created in the image of our Creator. All are welcome in our congregation to study, pray, and perform acts of justice that can repair the world (tikkun olam). We organize periodic weekend Shabbaton (the next will be the first weekend in February), monthly Saturday services, holiday celebrations, adult and family study groups, and celebrate life passages together: births, deaths, sickness, marriage, divorce, etc.

Readers who are interested in learning more about our congregation should call 713/728-5050.

—Craig M. Oettinger
Past-President, Houston Reconstructionist Havurah
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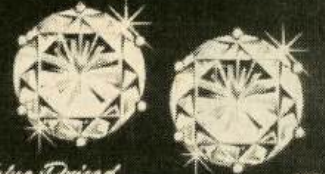


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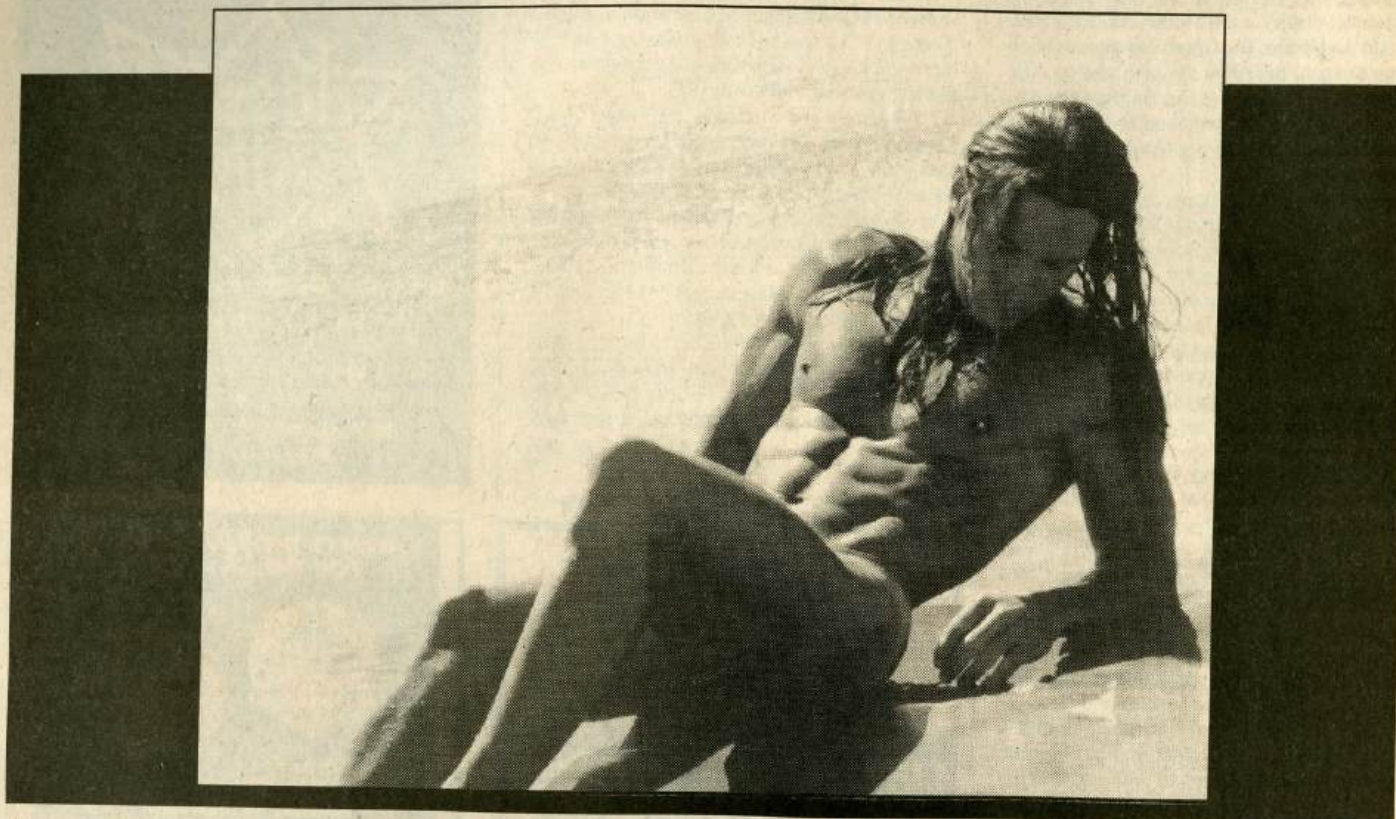
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OUTSMART CALENDAR



L'Art Erotique, the sixth annual St. Valentine's Day Romantic Art Sale, will feature paintings, watercolors, sculptures, and photography that pique one's romantic imagination in the grand tradition of Rodin, Rubens, and Renoir. Also available will be the 1996 AIDS Benefit Calendar with photographs by Jeff Palmer. The event, benefiting Omega House, will be held February 11 from 5-8 pm at R.E.F. Studios, 1305 Farview. Tickets: \$10. Details: 713/370-0595.

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

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND MEETINGS

January

16 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.

17 THE FITNESS CONNECTION, discussion and demonstration of personal exercise programs for all persons with HIV/AIDS at any level of ability, 7-9 pm, Metropolitan Multiservice Center, 1475 W. Gray, 713/524-2374.

MEN'S NETWORK for gay and bisexual men, topic: *Shame, Pride, and Points in Between* by Miles Glaspy, 7-9 pm, Montrose Counseling Center, 701 Richmond, 713/529-0037.

19 LESBIANS IN BUSINESS, 6 pm, Innova Building, 20 Greenway Plaza, 713/529-0077.

20 LESBIANS: TO YOUR HEALTH, workshops, breast cancer screenings, booths, refreshments, entertainment, 9 am-4 pm, Metropolitan Multiservice Center, 1475 West Gray. Call Inklings at 713/521-3369 for information or to schedule a mammogram.

20-21 AUDITIONS FOR GAY SOAP OPERA, Three Point Productions is producing a Houston-based gay soap opera and want actors ages 20-50 for a wide variety of gay and straight roles, Plaza 9200, 9200 Buffalo Speedway. For an appointment to audition, please send headshot and resume to: Three Point Productions, P.O. Box 70871, Houston, TX 77270-0871 or call 713/445-7500.

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

23 NAMES PROJECT VOLUNTEER MEETING, 7 pm, The NAMES Project Houston, 2410 Woodhead, 713/52-NAMES.

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

LOVE, 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.

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

25 SAFERSEX 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.

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

31 KEEPING IT TOGETHER (in a World Falling Apart), workshop on coping with stress and loss issues for people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS, 7-9 pm, Metropolitan Multiservice Center, 1475 W. Gray, 713/524-2374.

February

3-4 AN AWFULLY BIG ADVENTURE, starring Hugh Grant as a bitchy gay theater director in 1940s London, 7:30 pm, Rice Media Center, University Blvd. at Stockton Street (Entrance #8), 713/527-4853.

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

5 GREATER HOUSTON GAY & LESBIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, first official dinner/speaker meeting, membership is open to all, 6:30 pm, Doubletree Hotel, 400 Dallas, 713/523-7576.

6 HIV COMMUNITY CAUCUS, public round-table discussion of HIV/AIDS concerns for all affected individuals, 6:30-7:30 pm, 811 Westheimer, Suite 203.

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

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

MEN'S NETWORK for gay and bisexual men, topic: *Challenges of Gay Fatherhood* by Lawrence Katz, 7-9 pm, Montrose Counseling Center, 701 Richmond, 713/529-0037.

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

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

9-11 AIDS MASTERY WORKSHOP, confidential weekend workshop for HIV-positive individuals or their family encouraging self-expression and introspection, registration required, 713/523-8711.

11 TRACKS IN THE WILDERNESS OF DREAMING, Robert Bosnak, author of *Dreaming with an AIDS Patient*, will speak on his new book and on dream analysis and interpretation, 3-5 pm, Jung Center, 5200 Montrose, 713/524-8253. Co-sponsored by Montrose Counseling Center.

13 HOUSTON GAY & LESBIAN PARENTS Support Group, MCCR library, 1919 Decatur, 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.

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

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

Theater

A.D. PLAYERS, Grace Theater, 2710 W. Alabama, 713/526-2721. Feb. 9-March 17: *Summerhope*.

ALLEY THEATRE, 615 Texas Ave., 713/228-8421. Through Feb. 10: *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Julius Caesar*.

THE COMPANY ONSTAGE, 536 Westbury Square, 713/726-1219. Jan. 26-March 2: *Foxfire*.

COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE, 12802 Queensbury, 713/467-4497. Through Feb. 3: *The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940*.

ENSEMBLE THEATRE, 4212 Main, 713/520-0063. Jan. 25-March 10: *Miss Dessa*.

HOUSTON BROADWAY SERIES, Jones Hall, 713/629-3700. April 2-7: *Ain't Misbehavin' with The Pointer Sisters*.

HOUSTON SKYLINE THEATER, 1617 Fannin, 713/759-0701. Through Feb. 24: *Toyer*.

MAIN STREET THEATRE, 2540 Times Blvd., 713/524-6706. Through Feb. 4: *With and Without*. Feb. 7-17: *Pride and Prejudice*.

NEW HEIGHTS THEATRE, 339 West 19th, 713/869-8927. Through Jan. 28: *Piaf*.

RADIO MUSIC THEATRE, 2623 Colquitt, 713/522-7722. Jan. 18-Feb. 31: *Forever Hold Your Peace!*

THEATRE SUBURBIA, 1410 West 43rd, 713/682-3525. Through Feb. 3: *Murder in Green Meadows*.

THEATRE UNDER THE STARS, Music Hall, 713/622-TUTS. Feb. 2-18: *Carousel*.

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.

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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 MESSAGE 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 and general dislike of gay and lesbian people, harnesses support from a cross-section of the gay and non-gay population through the use of dialogue, educational workshops, and advertising, and by using effective activism based on non-violence, intelligence, and common sense. For more information, call 713/659-8181.

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, is the only gay-owned and -operated coffee roastery in Houston. Live music every Friday and Saturday nights. Thursday night is singles night/movie night. 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 713/597-2673 for more information.

DIGNITY HOUSTON, dedicated to the welfare of gay and lesbian Catholics and their friends, meets Saturdays at 7:30 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.

FIST (FEMALES IN SEARCH OF TROUBLE) is a social group of women who explore the S/M, B/D, and fetish lifestyle. Monthly meetings and social events. Write: P.O. Box 20127, Houston, TX 77255-0217 or call 713/781-3567.

GAY AND LESBIAN HEALTH PROFESSIONALS meets monthly, providing socials, speakers, networking, and practitioner referral line. For information or a referral, call 713/523-4700.

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.

HEARTSONG WOMEN'S CHORUS rehearses at 7 pm on Mondays on the third floor of the First Unitarian Church, 5200 Fannin at Southmore. New and former members welcome! Call 713/947-1488 for information.

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

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

LONESTAR 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.

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.

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 713/528-SAFE (7233).

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 ASSOCIATION FOR TRANSEXUAL SUPPORT (TATS) is a peer support group devoted to serving the emotional, social, and educational needs of TransGendered persons, their partners, families, and friends. For more information, call 713/827-5913 or write to TATS, P.O. Box 142, Bellaire, TX 77401.

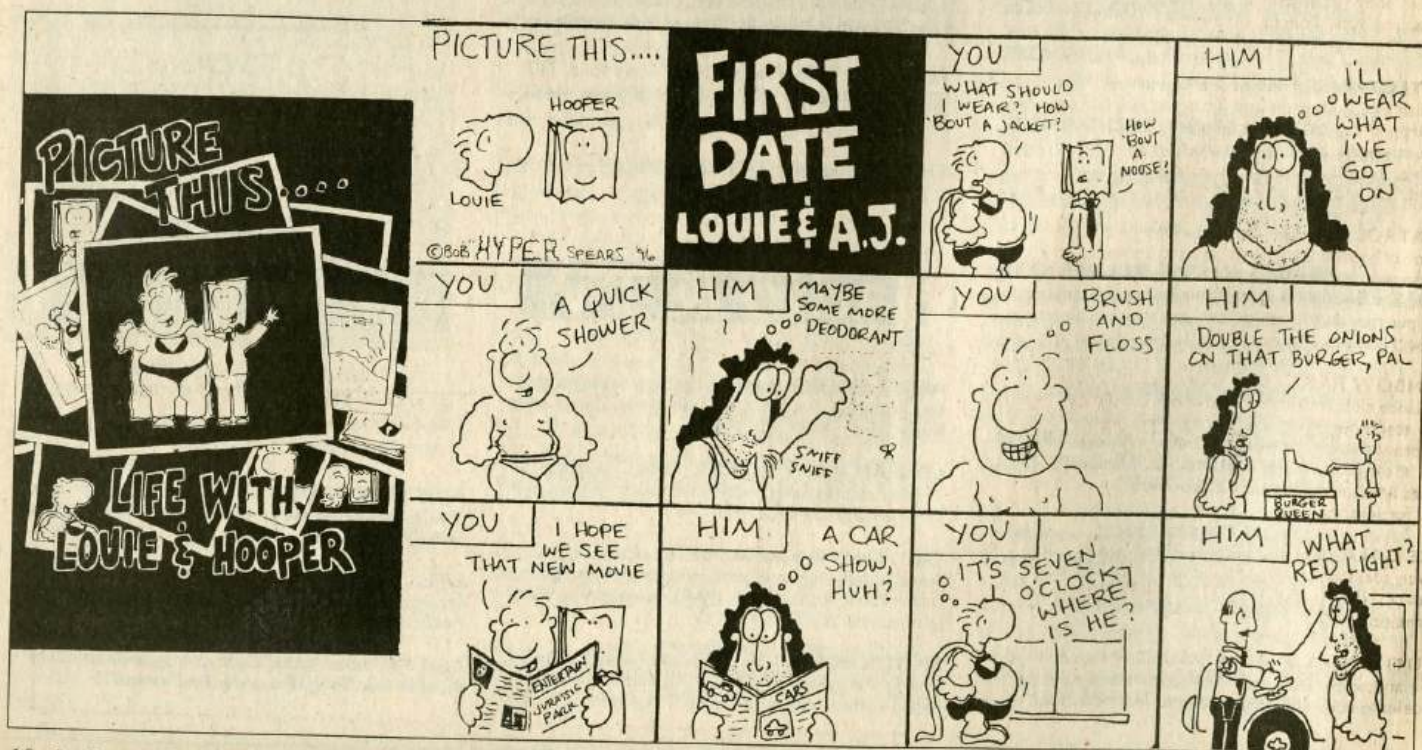
TEXAS GAY RODEO ASSOCIATION is a non-profit organization, with chapters in Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, San Antonio, and Houston, that promotes and stages an annual rodeo event as well as engaging in fundraising activities throughout the year. For more information on the Houston chapter, write to P.O.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

Don't miss OutSmart's SEX issue coming February 15!



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Gay Youth

(The H.A.T.C.H. Newsletter, Dec95/Jan96, information courtesy of Gay and Lesbian Stats)

- According to Kinsey, 28% of boys and 17% of girls have one or more same-sex experiences before age 20.
- One in four gay and lesbian youths are forced to leave home on account of conflicts with their families about being gay.
- Nationally, there were more than 100 gay and lesbian support groups in high schools as of 1993.

Sophomore at Memorial High School

(ANVIL, 3/10/95, Kamon Naddaf)

"Many heterosexual students have mixed feelings about homosexuality and gay teenagers at school. Some are bothered by the fact of being at school with gays and find it conflicts with their religious beliefs: 'I don't think homosexuality is right. God made two sexes so they could be together, not for two people of the same sex to be together. It surprises me that some people at our school think they are homosexual at such a young age. At their age, I really don't think they know what they're talking about.'" [1995]

Gay Kids

(The Advocate, 1/23/96)

"[In January 1995] A study published in the journal *Developmental Psychology* finds that boys who regularly play with girls' dolls and wear feminine attire have a 75% chance of growing up gay. Another study in the same journal suggests a link between exposure in the womb to the synthetic estrogen DES and lesbianism."

Wilson Cruz (the young openly gay actor who appeared on the now-cancelled *My So-Called Life*) practices what he preaches.

Matthew Modine

(The Advocate, 8&9/93, Linda Simpson)

"Modine grew up strongly influenced by his older hippie brothers, and his viewpoints have a definite '60s feel: open-minded, empathetic, wary of government and big business. A bonafide heterosexual (damn!), Modine is completely relaxed talking about gay people.

"I know from my childhood that people suspected of being gay are bashed and taunted. You would just think that as we get older that that sort of schoolboy behavior ends. It never stops; people carry that all the way to their political positions, all the way to the White House, that kind of stupidity.' ...'His commitment to the AIDS cause is, well, tribal: 'If we consider ourselves to be in tribes,' he says, 'and I'm in a theatrical tribe, my tribe has been decimated. Too many people than I care to count have died.'" [1993]

Matthew Modine (pictured here in 1992's *WIND*) doesn't practice schoolboy behavior.

Queer Notes

Compiled by
Blase DiStefano

Tommy Kirk

(teenage film star in the late '50s)
(*Movieline*, 12/92, The Hollywood Kids)

[1992] **Hollywood Kids: It's rumored that around 1964 you were fired by Walt Disney over some shocking scandal. True?**

Kirk: I've never spoken about this publicly before. [Long pause] I was caught having sex with a boy at a public pool in Burbank. We were both young, and the boy's mother went to Walt. I was quickly fired.

What was your social life like during that time, the mid-'60s?

All my social life was underground gay. It was my own life. I kept it separate from work, where I went on publicity dates with Annette [Funicello] and Roberta Shore.



Wilson Cruz

(*Art & Understanding*, Jun/Jul/95, Glenn Gaylord)

Glenn Gaylord: A lot of young people feel that getting AIDS is inevitable, so why should they practice safer sex?

Cruz [1995, at the age of 21]: That's the thing. They are seeing so many of their older peers, gay or lesbian, straight, whatever, dying...so many that it's almost subliminal that at one point you are going to die of AIDS.

How would you counter that?

Thae facts are that we can only look at the statistics of what has happened. We have the power to change those numbers. Statistics only tell you what has happened. They can't tell you what will happen. And that's how you have to go about it. Knowledge is power, and we have to use that knowledge to get rid of this already. Time to move on to the next struggle.

Cybill Shepherd
(pictured here with her daughter Clementine)
practices what she preaches.



Cybill Shepherd

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

"I couldn't live with myself if I didn't take the stands I've taken. It breaks my heart to contemplate the loss of human potential for reasons of skin color, religion, heritage, sex or sexual orientation. I want my children and America's children to be everything they can be. Practicing what you preach is the most influential lesson for children. I tell them, 'It's not the sex of the person you choose to love, it's how you choose to love that person.' I think our culture is so homophobic, that we all have to confront that in ourselves. There is no excuse for that kind of attitude." [1995]



Boy George (pictured here when he was with Culture Club in 1983) at one time practiced not being a father.

Boy George

(*People*, 9/19/94, Mary Huzinec)

"Citing insufficient evidence, British magistrates on Aug. 30 [1994] threw out a paternity suit against singer Boy George, 33 [now 34]. Last September [1993] an unnamed California woman, seeking financial support for her 8-year-old son, sued the lead singer of the 1980s group Culture Club. The singer, whose real name is George O'Dowd, is openly gay and said he could be the father only in the event of a 'virgin birth.'" [1994]

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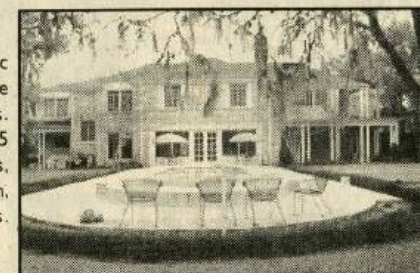


MONTROSE—New Orleans-style townhouse with large patio, 2-2½, french doors, parquet floors. Best Buy, \$90's.



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OUT-HERE

Update on Attacker of Two Houston Women

The perpetrator in the November 1995 daytime attack on two women in the Randall's parking lot at 11711 W. Belfort has been located. Although a referral to the Harris County District Attorney will be made by the Houston Police Department detective investigating the crimes, no charges have been filed because the man responsible is claiming that one of the women initiated the violence between the parties.

Anyone having additional information on this matter which occurred on November 26, 1995, around noon or 12:30 pm, is asked to contact attorney Clyde Williams, 1314 Texas Avenue, Suite 712, Houston, TX 77002. Phone 713/236-0064 or fax 713/236-0459.

"Hats Off to the Montrose Clinic"

If ever there was a good time to go outside the loop, it will be on February 11 at 6:30 pm. That's the date set for "Hats Off to the Montrose Clinic," a gala fundraiser at City Streets on Richmond Avenue in the former Windsor Plaza. In addition to a silent auction featuring hats donated by celebrities, entertainment will be provided by Robin Borthwick and Kathy Drake, Nancy Ford, Clay Howell, the Spectrum '96 Dancers, and a host of other Houston favorites. For sponsor tickets and information, call 713/520-2000.

Submissions Sought for Anthology of Lesbian "First Time" Stories

Alyson Publications is seeking contributions to *Early Embraces*, a new book of true, first-person stories by women describing their first consensual same-sex experience. The book is intended to provide an intriguing look at the myriad ways that lesbians begin the process of exploring their sexuality, whether at age 13 or 30.

The book is scheduled for release this year, with deadline for submissions being March 30, 1996. For guidelines, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to *Early Embraces* Guidelines, Alyson Publications, P.O. Box 4371, Los Angeles, CA 90078.

World's First Gay/Lesbian Medical Journal to Be Launched

The Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA), the bi-national gay and lesbian health advocacy group, announced today that it will launch the *Journal of the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association*. The publication—the world's first peer-reviewed, multi-disciplinary, scholarly journal dedicated to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered health—will begin publishing in early 1997.

The *Journal*, to be published by Plenum Publishing Corporation of New York, will specialize in original clinical research, but will also publish review articles, brief reports, topical essays, and news in the fields of lesbian and gay health. Topics to be addressed include HIV, gynecology, mental illness, sexually transmitted diseases, oncology, and a broad range of other issues covering the spectrum of medical and allied health specialties.

The *Journal* will be distributed quarterly to GLMA members and to others interested in subscribing. For subscription information, contact Susan Stone, development director at GLMA, 211 Church Street, Suite C, San Francisco, CA 94114; phone 415/255-4547 or fax 415/255-4784.

Lesbian Health Initiative Sponsors First Health Fair

In 1995, the Lesbian Health Initiative, a nonprofit organization, completed and distributed the results of an important survey of Houston-area lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered women of divergent cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The results of this bilingual survey voiced the opinion of more than 650 respondents with respect to their health and healthcare needs for the near future. From these responses, LHI has designed *Lesbians '96: To Our Health! Lesbians '96: A Tu Salud!*, intended to celebrate lesbian health in the new year of 1996. It will be held Saturday, January 20, 9 am-4 pm, at the Metropolitan Multi-Service Center, 1475 West Gray, in the Montrose area.

LHI's goal for Houston's first lesbian health fair is to address the healthcare needs of women in the Houston community, as assessed by the 1995 LHI survey. This includes providing a locally based

community service by organizing workshops on a variety of health-related topics, educating and providing literature on health and wellness, blood screening, natural and alternative health screening, risk factor screening, and a list of lesbian-friendly physicians.

All activities are drug free, smoke free, and alcohol free. Mammograms, recommended for women 35 and older, are available at a cost of \$5 by pre-registering at Inklings Bookstore at 1846 Richmond Avenue; spaces are limited to 70 women. Also available are blood tests, high blood pressure screening, panel discussions, musical and comedy entertainment, and refreshments. Most of these services are free, or a small donation will be suggested.

For more information, please contact Dr. Jackie Doval, LHI Health Fair committee chair, at 713/627-9355, or Virginia Miller, LHI treasurer, at 713/681-1309.

WORKSHOPS/TOPICS

9-10 am

- *Unexpected Cost of Alcohol, Drugs, and Sex*—Clyde Williams, Attorney at Law
- *Legal Issues of Lesbians Before a Health Crisis*—Connie Moore and Debbie Hunt, Attorneys at Law
- *Pump Up the New Year's Health Resolutions!*—Dr. Jackie Doval, Chiropractor

10-11 am

- *The Gift of Life: An Important Healthcare Decision*—Jackie Klieger, Registered Nurse and Reiki Master
- *Natural Alternatives for Your Body*—Judy Head
- *Prosperity Consciousness: The Path of Creating Abundance*—Dr. Joyce Gayles, Clinical Psychologist and career development coach

11 am-noon

- *When Diets No Longer Work*—a panel of women
- *Just Do What?*—Melanie Mayeaux, Certified Personal Trainer
- *The Risks of Breast Cancer: Early Detection and Self-Examination*—Dr. Allene King, breast surgeon

Noon-1 pm

- *Living Out at Work*—Annise D. Parker, community activist
- *The Lives We Touch: Grief & Loss in Relationships*—Becky Calvert, Licensed Psychology Counselor Intern
- *Zapping Stress: Enhancing Business Success Via Personal Development, Reserve and Irresistible Attraction vs. Promotion and Advertising*—Suzanne Anderson, Realtor, and Sherry Lowry, professional personal development and business coach

1-2 pm

- *Domestic Violence in the Lesbian Community*—Michelle Ostrander, M.A.
- *Bicycling for Women-101*—Cookie Davenport, founder of Rainbow Riders
- *The Dating Dance: An Overview of Romantic Relating in the '90s*—Dr. Joyce Gayles

2-3 pm

- *Integrate Your Health Through Tai Chi*—Cilia Teresa, Tai Chi practitioner
- *Mother Tongue*—Olivia Torre, writer/journalist
- *Healing Power of Reiki*—Jackie Klieger

3-4 pm

- *Spousal Equivalents and Taxation*—Kathy Hubbard, enrolled to represent taxpayers before the IRS
- *Unexpected Cost of Alcohol, Drugs, and Sex*—Clyde Williams, Attorney at Law
- *Laugh Your Way to Health*—OutSmart magazine's Nancy Ford and comedian Vickie Shaw, "The Blonde MomShell"

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11 am-1 pm—Pool Party—entertainment

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OUT IN OUR WORLD

From Gaynet Wire Service

Lesbigay High School Group Stirs Controversy

SALT LAKE CITY — Utah school and legal authorities, after two months, have agreed there is little or nothing that can be done to prevent a gay and lesbian club being formed by a group of students at Salt Lake City's East High School. A small group of students at the school asked for permission to start the club in October, and their request was passed from the school's principal to the city's school superintendent, then up to the state education office, and finally on to the Utah attorney general's office. Shortly before Christmas, the attorney general's office notified district officials that both state and federal law prohibit non-curriculum school clubs because of content. But activists with the Gay & Lesbian Utah Democrats say the head of the state anti-gay Eagle Forum, Gayle Ruzicka, has already indicated she would immediately begin lobbying the state legislature to keep the club from forming.

School Board Condemns Homosexuality

NEW HAVEN, Ind. — Homosexual activity is inconsistent with community values and should be discouraged in the East Allen County (Indiana) schools, according to a resolution adopted by the local school board. According to school district officials, the resolution only reflects the board's opinion and isn't a policy statement. But the resolution's language, some educators say, certainly sounds like an official school policy. The resolution, which was introduced in response to a statement earlier this year by the National Education Association endorsing teacher training around gay and lesbian student issues and recognizing a national gay and lesbian history month, says in part: "Homosexuality is contrary to the laws of nature, it's morally unacceptable to our community, and we should teach our children as such."

Study: The Kids (of Lesbian Moms) Are OK

CHICAGO — A prolonged study of the kids of lesbian moms that tracked the children's development for some two decades found that they had no more problems with sexual orientation or other developmental issues than the kids of heterosexual parents. The study, which was reported in the *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, found one noticeable difference be-

Hawaii Marriage Commission Urges OK of Gay Marriages

HONOLULU — A Hawaii state commission has approved its final report of recommendations on a 5-2 vote, calling on the legislature to accept the reality of same-sex marriages rather than be forced to accept it by the state's courts. The state Supreme Court ruled in 1993 that in order to refuse three lesbian and gay couples marriage licenses, the state had to demonstrate a "compelling interest" in refusing such marriages under the state's gender-neutral constitution. Few activists believe the legislature will take the advice of the commission, appointed by Gov. Benjamin Cayetano, but the report's recommendations add further fuel to the legal battle around the case. The legislature last year adopted a law prohibiting same-sex marriage following the state

high court's ruling, although it remains unclear whether that law can be considered constitutional. Thomas Gill, a former member of Congress and one-time lieutenant governor of the state who chaired the commission, said the state had failed to prove its case in court, relying on the legislature to block same-sex marriages. "The opposition can't come up with a compelling state interest other than Leviticus 18," he said, referring to an Old Testament verse that says, "Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind."

Same-Sex Marriage Group Forms in Washington State

SEATTLE — Activists in the Pacific Northwest have formed what is believed to be the first organization in the mainland U.S. to work for the right of same-sex couples to legally marry in their state with the formation of the Legal Marriage Alliance of Washington. Many activists believe courts in Hawaii are likely to extend legal marriage rights to same-sex couples in 1996, and the new group says it will "work within the state of Washington to achieve the right of same-sex couples to marry legally."

tween the children of lesbian moms and heterosexual parents: the offspring in the lesbian families were more uncomfortable talking with other people about their parents than the kids from the straight families. Another significant difference between the two groups was that none of the kids from heterosexual families reported having had any homosexual experience by their mid-20s, while some 25% of those from lesbian families said they had had at least one homosexual relationship.

Recruiting Cops for 'City of Brotherly Love'

PHILADELPHIA — The Philadelphia Police Department has begun recruiting gay and lesbian police officers through public employment notices in the city's two gay newspapers. The new effort is the result of a meeting Police Commissioner Richard Neal held earlier in December with leaders of the city's lesbian and gay community. Police Sgt. Fred Cotton said the department made a similar effort in 1989-90, but the department had no information on

how successful that recruitment program had been. "I've never had anyone come up to me and tell me their sexual persuasion," Cotton said. The department doesn't keep any data on the sexual orientation of officers, he added.

Lobbying for Educational Anti-Bias Protections

SAN FRANCISCO — The Lavender Youth Recreation & Information Center (LYRIC) started off the New Year with a political bang on Jan. 3 with a caravan of gay, lesbian, and bisexual young people to the state Capitol in Sacramento to lobby for proposed anti-discrimination protections. The California Education Code bans discrimination in the state's schools and educational services based on a number of categories, but does not include sexual orientation. The lesbigay youth group spent the first day of the legislature's new year, Jan. 3, lobbying in support of a measure introduced by Assemblywoman Sheila Kuehl (D-Santa Monica) that would add sexual orientation to the state education code.

Gay Teacher Allowed to Stay in Michigan School

BYRON CENTER, Mich. — Gerry Crane, a 31-year-old high school music teacher who told students he was gay after they asked about a new wedding band he was wearing, will be allowed to keep his teaching post. The school board in the town, about 16 miles from Grand Rapids, said, however, that it would keep Crane under scrutiny because of his sexual orientation. In a formal statement, the trustees said, "The school board firmly believes that homosexuality violates the dominant moral standard of the district's community. Individuals who espouse homosexuality do not constitute proper role models as teachers for students in this district." Crane had told his students he was gay after he and his companion had gotten married during a commitment ceremony and exchanged wedding bands, causing some of his students to ask about the wedding ring.

Gay Marine to Fight Discharge

DAVENPORT, Iowa — Corporal Kevin Blaesing says he will fight efforts by the Marine Corps to discharge him because he is gay. Blaesing, who has been named "Marine of the Month" and "Marine of the Quarter," was denied permission to reenlist in 1993 because of remarks he had made about homosexuality to a USMC psychologist. But early in 1995 he joined a Marine Corps Reserve unit in South Carolina without any difficulties and later spoke at a gay pride event there. Now the Marines have begun discharge proceedings against him, and Blaesing says he will fight the discharge "all the way to the Supreme Court" if he has to.

Colorado TV Station Dumps Talk Shows

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — John O. Gilbert, the president of KOAA-TV in Colorado Springs, has pulled the plug on two nation-

ally syndicated daytime talk shows, *Camie* and *The Jenny Jones Show*, which he called "crappy" and "garbage" in part because Gilbert said the two shows occasionally showed "homosexuals, transvestites, and lesbians," whom he said don't belong on TV shows. "These shows are not what they were represented to us. They're



James Dean in 1955's *Rebel Without a Cause*.

USPS Stamp Honors Actor James Dean

NEW YORK — The U.S. Postal Service has unveiled a new postage stamp honoring bisexual screen actor, James Dean, as part of its "Legends of Hollywood" series. Dean, born in 1931, was the idol of the American post-World War II generation for his portrayals of sensitive and tormented teenagers in his first two films, *Rebel Without a Cause* and *East of Eden*. A self-identified bisexual, Dean's principle emotional and physical relationships were with other men. Dean died at the age of 25 in a high-speed car accident just before his third film *Giant* was released.

garbage," Gilbert said, pointing to programs on crossdressing, homosexuality, and other sexual issues that have aired on the two shows. "As the person in charge," Gilbert said, "I have to ask, 'Are you proud to have this on your station?' The answer has been, 'No, I'm not.' I'm

embarrassed by the topics on talk shows. I don't want to have a problem facing people when I go shopping in the grocery store and when I go out with my family. I'm accountable to the public."

Lutherans Expel Two Churches Over Lesbigay Ministers

SAN FRANCISCO — St. Francis Lutheran Church and the First United Lutheran Church here officially became ex-members of the 5.3 million-member Evangelical Lutheran Church of America at the end of 1995 for ordaining two lesbians and a gay man as ministers in defiance of the national church's prohibitions. The two churches were suspended by the ELCA in 1990 and given until the end of 1995 to rescind the ordinations of the Revs. Ruth Frost, Phyllis Zillhart, and Jeff Johnson, or be officially expelled from the national church group. A spokesperson for St. Francis Lutheran Church said not one member of the congregation had left since the controversy started more than five years ago. But, ironically, one St. Francis Lutheran member who attended his last service at the church (at least officially) on Sunday, Dec. 31, was Bishop Robert Mattheis, the presiding bishop of ELCA's Sierra Pacific Synod of some 220 congregations in Northern California and Nevada. A long-time member of St. Francis, Bishop Mattheis now must officially leave the church's congregation.

S.F. Supervisors Halt Grant to Salvation Army

SAN FRANCISCO — The San Francisco Board of Supervisors has frozen—at least temporarily—\$65,000 in federal funds that had been intended to go to a local Salvation Army shelter for the homeless because of questions about the national charity's policies toward gays and lesbians. The board delayed approving the federal funding grant after it was informed of a letter to the editor from a Salvation Army

Continued on next page

In Memoriam Of Our Founder, Cecil Ray deLoach (1952-1991)

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Out In Our World

Continued from previous page

official that appeared recently in the *Bay Area Reporter*, a local gay paper, calling homosexuality "deviant behavior" that was "a serious threat" to society. In a letter to the board, Jerry Gaines, who heads the Golden State Division of the Salvation Army, said the writer of the letter to the editor was new to the San Francisco Bay area and that his letter confused the Salvationists' internal religious beliefs with the social practices of the Salvation Army. But the board said it wanted to delay approving the grant for at least two weeks to check into the whole matter further.



MGM Adds

Partners' Health Benefits

HOLLYWOOD, Calif. — Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Inc., parent company of MGM Pictures, United Artists, and several other entertainment companies, will extend health insurance benefits to the domestic partners of its gay and lesbian employees beginning Feb. 1. The benefits program will not apply to the unmarried partners of opposite-sex couples, according to an MGM spokesman, because "heterosexuals have the option to marry."

Two Youths Admit Brutal Killing of Gay Man

HOUSTON — Authorities say Daniel C. Bean, 19, and Rodney H. Gauthier, 21, two half-brothers who say they're members of a neo-Nazi organization, have admitted viciously attacking two gay men, one of whom died of multiple stab wounds. Frank Mangione, 46, was pronounced dead on arrival at a local hospital, and Kenneth Stern, a friend who had been with Mangione when they met the two young men at a local bar, had been beaten. Stern's condition was not serious, however. Police said Bean and Gauthier told them they had attacked Mangione and Stern after one of the men had touched one of the young men while the four were taking a drive earlier in the evening. The young men also told officers they belonged to a group called the German Peace Corps, which human rights activists say is a California-based neo-Nazi organization affiliated with the KKK. Several witnesses told authorities that the two young men had bragged earlier that they were "going to get a fag" that night and later boasted that they had "cut up this fag real bad."

Gay Rights Bill Withdrawn in Maine

AUGUSTA, Maine — Maine state Sen. Dale McCormick has withdrawn a gay rights bill that had been slated for consideration by the legislature this year, because a bitter fight over a proposed anti-gay state ballot measure in 1995 has left many in the state "exhausted." McCormick's measure would have added sexual orientation to the categories of individuals protected from discrimination under state law. But following the acrimonious ballot measure battle earlier in 1995, McCormick withdrew the bill, saying people in the state need "a period of healing and dialogue" first.

CompuServe to Reopen Banned Newsgroups

COLUMBUS, Ohio — CompuServe, which blocked access to more than 200 newsgroups on the Internet to its 4 million customers worldwide, now says it hopes to give its customers access to the groups everywhere but in Germany by the end of January. CompuServe had said Bavarian officials told them the newsgroups contained child pornography, but German authorities have repeatedly denied they told CompuServe to block any of the groups, including gay and lesbian discussion groups, support groups for teens, and even commercial wire service groups for Reuters and Associated Press news articles. The Bavarian prosecutor's office says it has been investigating kiddie porn on the Internet and did check CompuServe's Bavarian headquarters, but denied it ever told CompuServe to block any of the forums.

Transsexual Lesbian Endorsed for Parliament

SYDNEY, Australia — Julie Peters, a 44-year-old veteran of Australia's national broadcasting industry, would be controversial under any circumstances almost anywhere. Three years ago she changed her sex from male to female, and then declared herself a lesbian. Late in 1995 she tossed her hat in the political arena, deciding to run for a seat in the Australian Parliament in what is considered a "safe" liberal district. As the year started, Aussie politics took a quantum leap when the progressive Australian Democrats became the first major political party in the country—and perhaps in the world—to make such an endorsement.

Political Attacks Against Gays Increasing

SAN FRANCISCO — A report issued here by People for the American Way says attacks aimed against the political progress of gays and lesbians in this country increased at all levels. The report, the third of its kind the organization has issued, counted at least 180 anti-gay actions in 1995, an increase of 46 such attacks over 1994. The survey counted anti-gay political initiatives, legislative measures, executive ac-

tions by state governors, as well as open attacks by police and public and media figures against gay rights.

So. Dakota Gearing Up for Anti-Marriage Battle Again

PIERRE, S.D. — South Dakota state Rep. Roger Hunt, whose 1995 legislation to prohibit same-sex marriages in the state failed, has announced plans to introduce the bill again during the current legislative session. Hunt's 1995 bill passed overwhelmingly in the state's lower house by a 54-13 vote, but became stalled in a committee in the state Senate where it died. The proposed legislation would make any same-sex marriage "null and void from the beginning" in the state, and is aimed at making any such marriages that may be legal elsewhere illegal in South Dakota. It would, for example, have the effect of nullifying same-sex marriages if Hawaii courts validate them as many expect to happen this year.

Transsexual Identity Bill Proposed in Britain

LONDON — Among the backbench bills being offered in Britain's House of Commons as private members' legislation is a measure that would make it easier for transsexuals in the UK to establish a legal identity in keeping with their new gender after a sex-change operation. MP Alex Carlile has proposed a Gender Identity Bill which would allow transsexuals the right to be given a substitute birth certificate reflecting their reassigned gender after the operation is completed. Some 8,000 people in Britain have undergone a complete sex change but are not allowed the legal rights of their new sex, such as getting married, adopting, and enjoying employment rights.

Gay Credit Card Can't Use 'Rainbow' Name

TRENTON, N.J. — A federal court in New Jersey has enjoined promoters of a gay-oriented credit card from using the name "Rainbow." U.S. District Judge Mary Little Parell barred the Rainbow Card Foundation from using that trade name on the credit card it was promoting in the New York-New Jersey area in a suit filed by the Rainbow Foundation Inc., a Middletown, N.J., charity that offers medical assistance and other services to children in the state. The Rainbow Card had contracted with Martina Navratilova to act as spokeswoman for the Visa credit card that would have used part of its card charges to benefit gay, AIDS, and breast cancer agencies.

NGLTF Asks Justice Dept. Investigation of Oregon Murders

STOCKTON, Calif. — The National Gay & Lesbian Task Force has asked the U.S. Justice Department to examine the killing of Roxanne Ellis and Michelle Abdill, lesbian activists in Medford, Ore., because of statements made by

Robert Acremant, who is facing charges in the case. The Task Force formally asked Attorney General Janet Reno in a letter to investigate whether the killings were hate crimes because of a variety of statements Acremant has made to television, radio, and newspaper reporters during jail interviews. In one interview, Acremant said he had asked the women if they were lesbians and said they had told him they were. "It kind of made me sick to my stomach that she was someone's grandma," Acremant was quoted as saying in an interview published in the *Oregonian* shortly after his arrest. He also said in that interview that the fact that they were lesbians "made it easier" to kill them. In a letter to Reno, NGLTF Executive Director Melinda Paras said that gays and lesbians around the country were "very much upset and disturbed by these murders" and that statements by Acremant "have heightened the alarm and concern" that the killings were in fact hate crimes.

California's Hate Crimes: One-Fifth Aimed at Gays

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — In the first of its kind in California, state Attorney General Dan Lungren's office reports that hate crimes in the Golden State are generally concentrated in cities—and nearly one-fifth of them were aimed against gays and lesbians. During the final six months of 1994, the survey of local law enforcement agencies found there were 672 bias-based crimes reported in the state. Of these, 487 (72 percent) were based on the race or ethnic origins of the victims, while 119 (18 percent) were because the victims were lesbians or gay men—or were believed to be by the attackers. Some 64 incidents (or just under 10 percent) were based on the victims' religion. The largest number of reported hate crimes, 243 of them, were logged in the Los Angeles metropolitan area. The San Francisco Bay Area checked in with next largest concentration, 129 bias-based crimes in the four-county area.

Continued on next page



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Out In Our World

Continued from previous page

Federal Court Ruling on Georgian Same-Sex Marriage

ATLANTA — The U.S. Court of Appeals in Atlanta has ordered Georgia Attorney General Michael Bowers to explain in court why his withdrawal of a 1991 job offer to Robin Shahar after she had a religious marriage ceremony with her lover does not violate Shahar's free

speech rights under the U.S. Constitution. The ruling could force the state's attorney general into a difficult court fight since it would require him to establish a "compelling governmental interest" in changing his mind about the job offer. Bowers' office had argued that hiring Shahar after the commitment ceremony would complicate enforcement of the state's anti-sodomy laws and could be construed as an endorsement of same-sex marriages. The attorney general's office said it was "disappointed" in the three-judge panel's ruling and would ask for a higher review, either by the full appeals court or the U.S. Supreme Court.

Sparks Fly in U.S. Senate Race in Oregon

SALEM, Ore. — Responding to charges that he is an "extremist" for supporting the anti-gay agenda of the Oregon Citizen's Alliance, Republican U.S. Senate candidate Gordon Smith told reporters at a news conference that he is opposed to gay and lesbian marriages "because we should defend a marriage license" and that landlords who don't want to rent to gay tenants should not be required to by law. "That should not be a new category imposed in the private sector," Smith said, arguing that a landlord might not want to rent to homosexuals "for religious reasons."

California City OKs Partners Registry

PALO ALTO, Calif. — *OutNow*, the San Jose, Calif., gay newspaper, reports that Palo Alto's city council has approved by a 6-1 vote a domestic partners registration. The registration carries no direct benefits and requires a fee to the city clerk's office. The only vote against the proposal came from Dick Rosenbaum, who objected that the partners' registry also allowed opposite-sex couples to enroll. Rosenbaum said he believed the partners' registration should be just for gays and lesbians. ▼

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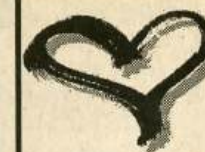
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What They Wouldn't Let P-FLAG Tell You

Once in a thousand years, a man like Adolph Hitler shakes the world. There is no one—perhaps other than his contemporary, Stalin—on whom more needless death and wanton destruction can be blamed. Besides dragging humanity into a planet-wide conflagration in which tens of millions of people died, and besides bringing his own nation to a state of unparalleled ruin and shame, Hitler pioneered a new form of terror: racial genocide. Hitler's name will forever be linked in history with the Holocaust and with the primary group the Holocaust aimed to exterminate—the Jews.

Yet not long ago, a friend of mine, who is a World War II history buff, told me that you cannot find a single passage from any of Hitler's writings or speeches in which the

German Chancellor directly advocated violence against Jews. To be sure, you can find many examples of hateful rhetoric and stereotype-based lies aimed at Jews in Hitler's essays and speeches. As do many leaders, Hitler set a moral tone for his nation. The moral tone he set was one in which violence against Jews was imaginable, even excusable for many listening to him. Still, six million Jewish lives later, not one jot or syllable had urged physical violence against them. Seizing on this curious fact, some revisionists say that Hitler never planned the eradication of Jews in Europe; still others deny that the Holocaust, as we understand it, even happened. Call it the Hitler Defense: "I may have said they were evil, dirty, and immoral, but I'm not responsible for what others did to them."

Enter Pat Robertson. For years, Robertson has been saying the most hateful and asinine things about homosexuals. Consider what he had to say during his failed 1988 run for the Republican Presidential nomination. Discussing the Equal Rights Amendment, a constitutional amendment to grant women full legal equality with men, Robertson spewed: "It is about a socialist, anti-family political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism, and become lesbians." On the 700 Club, a regular television show aired by his own network, the Christian Broadcasting Network, Robertson hissed: "Homosexuality is an abomination. The practices of these people is [sic] appalling. It is a pathology, it is a sickness." Try this hysterical historical lesson from Robertson: "Many of those people involved with Adolph Hitler were Satanists; many of them were homosexuals; the two things seem to go together."



by Dale Carpenter

Two months ago, Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (P-FLAG) unveiled a bold new advertising campaign featuring two television ads—one addressing gay teen suicide and the other dealing with gay-bashing. Both ads interspersed scenes of violence against gays with clips of Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, and Jesse Helms saying negative things about homosexuals. The implication of the ads was unmistakable: hate speech leads to hate violence and suicide. Stop the hate speech, and perhaps the suicide rate among gay teenagers would drop; stop the incitements and perhaps the violence against gays would abate. The P-FLAG spots were powerful and effective.

And for precisely that reason they were too much for Pat Robertson to bear. So he got his cadre of lawyers to concoct some legal theories to stop the television stations from running the ads. His lawyers threatened to sue any station that ran the ads on the grounds that the ads used copyrighted material from Robertson's show without his

permission, as if a public figure could shield his statements from public scrutiny by copyrighting them. If that were the law, President Clinton could copyright his every Presidential address and prevent his critics from using them against him. Perhaps realizing the razor thin strength of the copyright argument, Robertson's lawyers came up with a second. If the ads aired, Robertson might sue the TV stations for libel. Libel law is used to punish people for making false claims about others. But P-FLAG's ads were not false; they expressed the implicit opinion that Robertson's harsh words were responsible for the deaths of gay people through suicide and violence. If libel law allows a public figure to stop his critics from drawing bad conclusions about his words, then we might as well throw the First Amendment out with the old Christmas tree. In the event, no station ran the ads anywhere in the country (except, briefly, one station in the cosmopolitan metropolis of Tulsa, Oklahoma).

More telling, Robertson's publicist pointed out that Robertson had never advocated violence against gays. (Falwell's people made the same protestation.) In fact, said Robertson's mouthpiece, he condemns violence against anyone, including homosexuals. The Hitler Defense.

Moral leaders set a tone for the society in which they live. They set up the range of

acceptable likes and dislikes. They guide people's moral judgments, influencing the way they act and think about certain behaviors, certain events, certain people. In our society, religious leaders are the moral guides for a vast section of the people. They command a respect, an ad-

"Many
of those people
involved with Adolph
Hitler were Satanists;
many of them were
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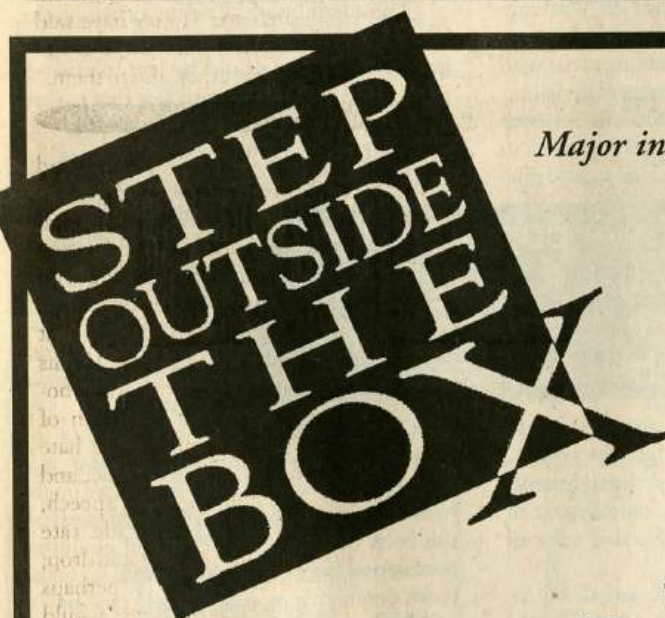
miration, and a following, in small part because of their training, and in large part because they claim to have the authority of the Almighty behind them.

P-FLAG is not saying that Pat Robertson or any other similar public figure explicitly incited the acts of violence that result in gay deaths. It is not saying that Robertson and company secretly ordered gay suicides or

murders. P-FLAG is saying that when moral leaders call a group of people "sick" and "appalling" and compare that group to "Satanists" and to people who "kill their children," they create an atmosphere of distrust and fear of that group. In that atmosphere of distrust and fear, some young punks are going to lose their heads, go looking for "queers," perhaps kill one, and then think that God will bless their crime. In that atmosphere of distrust and fear, some young girl is going to sit alone in her room wondering if she wouldn't be better off swinging from the end of a rope. Robertson and his cohorts partake in the blame for those horrors.

Christianity comes from the beautiful words and deeds of Jesus Christ, who never said one hateful thing about gays. We should not let Christianity fall into the hands of the scoundrels, the opportunists, the penny preachers, the Pat Robertsons. And when Robertson asserts the Hitler Defense, as he did recently against P-FLAG, he should get about as much credence as his predecessor. ▼

Dale Carpenter, a lawyer in Houston, is state president of the Log Cabin Republicans of Texas. He recently resigned from the board of trustees 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 Log Cabin or OutSmart magazine.



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LEFT OUT

In response to requests and concerns from our readers, OutSmart introduces "Left Out," a monthly column affecting those in our community who identify with liberal politics. Not a rebuttal or "counterpoint" reply to Dale Carpenter's "OutRight" column that appears each month in this magazine, "Left Out" is intended to further enlighten our readers to political trends, raise questions, and encourage communication. OutSmart welcomes Daryl L. Moore to its pages.

Black & White: Divide & Conquer?

by Daryl L. Moore

Racists in America had a banner year in 1995. After nearly three decades of apparent success in moving toward racial equality in the workplace, affirmative action suddenly became a political stepchild, and both the U.S. Congress and the United States Supreme Court hinted strongly that its days are numbered. Millions of Americans tuned into a celebrity murder trial only to hear one of L.A.'s finest deny using, and then use, the "N" word at a numbing rate. And, a million black American men marched on Washington to demonstrate racial unity at the beckoning of an anti-Semitic, gay-baiting racist with a history of promoting hatred and division.

Why has racism flourished in America when racial discrimination was outlawed in the '60s with the passage of civil rights legislation? It has flourished because those well-intended laws did not stop racism; they simply made overt racism in the form of discrimination illegal. Racists continued to discriminate, and black Americans continued to suffer at the hands of their white oppressors. Although justice may be blind, those dispensing it are usually not. And some appear to take an unusual interest in the skin color of those before them.

It is not propaganda, but statistically indisputable, that blacks receive harsher sentences and are substantially more likely to be sentenced to death than their white counterparts for identical crimes. In fact, some laws specifically target black Americans—case in point, the recent passage of a law that mandates stiffer prison terms for those possessing crack cocaine than those possessing powder. Is it merely coincidental that black Americans, at least statistically, are more likely to use crack cocaine than white Americans, who

are statistically more likely to use powder?

Is it any wonder then that so many blacks distrust white Americans and the institutions they mostly run, including the judiciary? Should we really be shocked when we hear that some Americans believe that the angry white males who hid underneath white hoods in the '50s have simply been replaced with angry white males hiding underneath black robes in the '90s. Indeed, to these black Americans, this form of white justice is not justice for all, only for some.

Considering the judicial unfairness blacks, like gays, have endured, one might think that gays and lesbians would be less tolerant of racist ideas and institutions. For that matter, one might think that one oppressed group, gays, would be naturally supportive of the struggle for equal rights by another oppressed group, blacks, and vice-versa. Historically, however, this has simply not been the case. Not all gays and lesbians have carried the banner for racial equality.

Our track record for equal rights for people of color is unsettling because as a group asking for a place at the table, we ought to know what it feels like to be asked to eat on the back porch. Nonetheless, on countless occasions, I have heard gays or lesbians make racist comments or voice purely race-based conclusions. I, too, am guilty because, although I rarely fail to contest such comments or conclusions, I have, more than once, sat silently in situations that I believed precluded me from speaking for one reason or another. This was a tragic mistake. Silence is what got us here, standing on opposites sides of the chasm and looking across a divided nation at one another.

Silence prevailed while George Bush ran his first campaign for president on a platform

of white fear using Willie Horton as the poster child for racism. Silence prevailed as he then appointed a black man to the Supreme Court who was clearly less qualified than his predecessor, irrespective of their ideologies. Silence prevailed when Pete Wilson endorsed and got an immigration bill passed that will assure persecution of people of color, whether they are here legally or illegally.

Ironically, many white gays and lesbians still sit silently as people of color fight for equal rights because it is not "our fight." Just as ironically, many blacks sit silently as we ask for gay rights. For example, consider the notable silence of many blacks while the gays-in-the-military debate raged.

Our silence is devastating, because it has always been our collective Achilles' heel. It has guaranteed success for those straight white males who oppose equal rights for all. How? By the oldest of methods, "divide and conquer." And, in so doing, cleverly reinforcing the "us" versus "them" mentality that causes us to lose our focus. Each of us, independently, has struggled for our own rights. But many of us have never struggled for equal rights for all—basic human rights.

To close the chasm that separates blacks and whites, and gays and straights, we must resolve to talk. Not with "us," but with "them." We must talk about our similarities, not just our differences. As Martin Luther King Jr. said, we must "realize that our freedom is inextricably bound to their freedom. We cannot walk alone." If we do, we will never have a place at the table. We will remain on the floor, fighting for the crumbs.

Daryl L. Moore is a lawyer in Houston, Texas. He has a general practice and is board certified in civil appellate law. The opinions expressed in this column are his own and do not necessarily reflect the views of OutSmart magazine.

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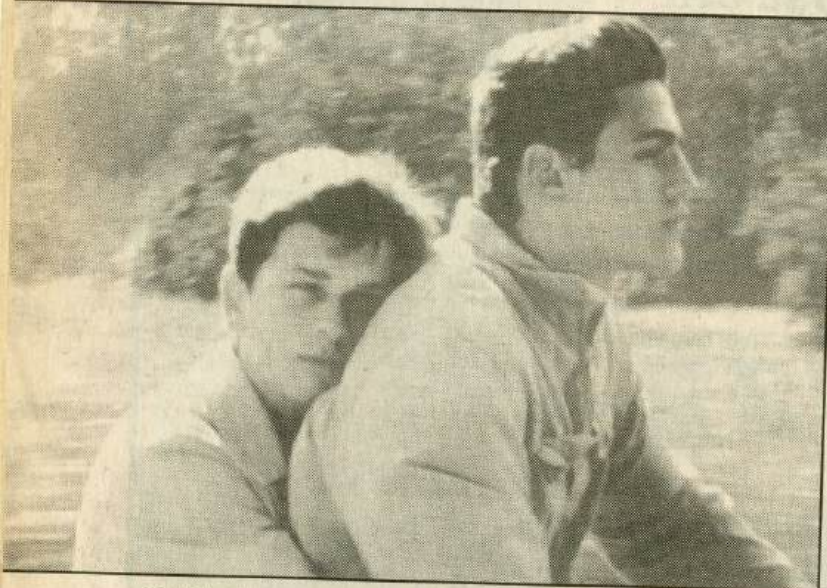
WILD REEDS

Reviewed by Eric L. Roland

As the official French selection for the Academy Awards' Best Foreign Language Film and 1995 Golden Globe nominee for Best Foreign Language Film, *Wild Reeds* has already accomplished something that few gay coming-out films accomplish—recognition for the compelling story it tells. Winner of four 1995 Cesar Awards (France's equivalent to the Oscars), including Best Picture, *Wild Reeds* presents the bittersweet story of a teenager who realizes his homosexuality through a crush on a heterosexual schoolmate.

Set in 1962 in southwest France at the end of the Algerian War, the film centers on the relationship of two teenage boys, Serge and François, and their female friend, Maite. In preparation for the Baccalaureate, François and Serge have become study partners, and one evening their studying turns to a conversation about masturbation and then to a brief, yet loving, sexual exploration. After that night, François realizes that, not only is he gay, but he is in love with Serge, who moves on from his fleeting intimacy with François to a relationship with a woman. François confides his homosexuality to Maite, who encourages him to come to terms with his orientation as well as his uncertain relationship with Serge.

Added to the tension are the political ideals of the students during a turbulent period in French politics, brought to a head by Henri, an older, militant Algerian-born refugee, who attends the same boarding school as the two boys. Maite faces demons of her own when she



Gael Morel as François (left) and Stephane Rideau as Serge travel through a friendship that briefly turns sexual in Andre Techine's *Wild Reeds*, now playing at Greenway 3.

discovers her physical attraction to Henri, whose nationalist politics conflicts with her strong Communist beliefs.

The contrast between François and the attraction he has for the straight Serge and Maite and the attraction she has for the political Henri, proves that love is often found in all the wrong faces. By the end of *Wild Reeds*, these individuals, through their internal identity struggles, have experienced the pain, exhilaration, and humanity of a teen's right of passage to adulthood.

An Awfully Big Adventure



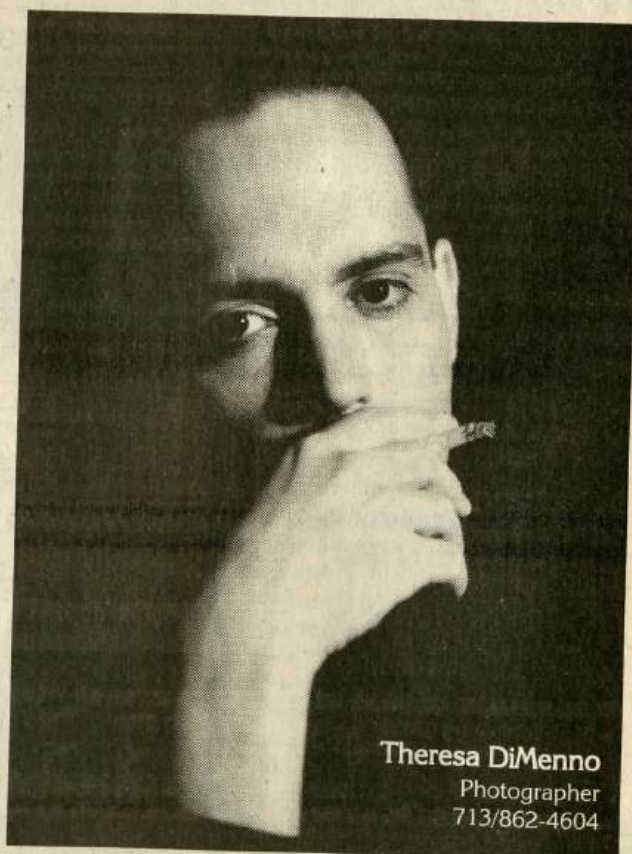
Hugh Grant, Peter Firth, and Georgina Cates discover the dark side of relationships in *An Awfully Big Adventure*, playing at Rice Media Center in early February.

The title of this film is rather puzzling. It just doesn't say much. It certainly doesn't give the feeling of post-World War II Britain in which this coming-of-age drama is set. And considering it was directed by Mike Newell (*Four Weddings and a Funeral*), it seemed like it might be a rollicking silly movie in the spirit of *What's Up Doc?* Guess what? It's not. In fact, there's very little that's *big* about this film unless you consider how big of a bitchy queen Hugh Grant plays, and there's hardly anything *adventurous* unless you consider it an adventure to sit through 108 minutes of tedious plot.

Debating at last January's Sundance Film Festival, rumor had it that this film's wide release was postponed due to Hugh Grant's illegal rendezvous with Divine Brown last summer—supposedly the studio didn't want America to see him playing a gay man in the wake of all of his heterosexual media attention. However, it seems more likely that it got postponed, and then released to a limited number of theaters, because it received little fanfare from preview audiences and critics.

The story follows Stella Bradshaw, a headstrong, starry-eyed young teenager, who joins a Liverpool theater company as an assistant stage manager in hopes of eventually acting. Played by newcomer Georgina Cates, whose charming performance will no doubt guarantee her work in the future, Stella is quickly initiated into the tempestuous backstage world of theater, full of manipulation, out-of-control egos, and, of course, sex. Stella believes she is in love with the theater's handsome, yet unscrupulous, gay director Meredith Potter (Hugh Grant), until she is seduced by an older actor (Alan Rickman of *Sense and Sensibility*), who wants to protect her from the predatory Potter.

As for Hugh Grant, his character is a definite departure from his usual bumbling, yet likable, lead male character seen in such films as *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, *Sirens*, and *The Englishmen Who Went Up the Hill But Came Down a Mountain*, and, along with Georgina Cates, his performance is one of the few redeeming qualities of this film. —E.L.R.



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Happy New Year to everyone in Fairyland! As we begin this new year, I am inspired to reflect.

It has been almost two years since I came out, late bloomer though I am. I remembered how I penned an article for *OutSmart* called "Coming Out in Public." I guess at that time I figured I had officially "come out."

Two years later, I realize that "coming out" is a process; I will probably always be coming out to someone. For me, though, I had no guilt. When I realized that I was truly a lesbian, I was delighted. I had always been a feminist, always preferred the company of womyn, and now I didn't have to use men for sex. Also, I have always been a bit of an outlaw, and I enjoy the idea of being outside the "norm"—whatever that may be.

Since the day I realized that I was a lesbian, I have never felt the need to duck back into the closet. I didn't realize I was in the closet named "Denial" when I

Closets With Revolving Doors

Do you come and go, leaving your closet only when it's safe and convenient?

by Martie Baillie

was; now that I have stepped out of that closet, why would I ever want to go back? What I am realizing at this point in my journey is that many people out there have closets with revolving doors. They come and go, leaving their closets only when it is safe and convenient.

I am having a great deal of trouble resolving my feelings about those people. I fully realize that someone has as much

right to stay in the closet as I do to come out of it. But, even though I rationally know that, I'm still having a hard time not being judgmental. It is hard to be a gay person in this society at times. There have been a couple of times that I have been tempted to rip the "queer" bumper stickers off my car. But I refuse to be intimidated by the heterosexual majority. I feel if gay people would stand up and be counted,

instead of revolving back into their closets at the first sign of adversity, we would make a lot more progress, especially in the mainstream business world.

What brought all of this to a head with me was a party I attended this past Christmas season. It was given by two gay men who had been together for 30 years. One of them was an executive with a prominent company. I was surprised to hear him admonish another gay guest about making sure his lover was not seen at the Gay Pride Parade, as he worked for the same company as our host. I couldn't believe my ears, but I didn't say anything. I was about to bust a proverbial gut, though. Now, these people had all been queer for many years. Are they operating under the delusion that no one knows? How many straight men or women buy a house and set up housekeeping together? None of my heterosexual friends ever did.

Then my date (during what

was to become our final date) announced that she was very discreet. It was okay to "be" it—you just don't "name" it. She went on to say that her former lover of seven years worked for the school system, and she always introduced her as her "roommate." At that point I had to comment. If my lover of seven years introduced me as her roommate, I would be offended. If someone loves me, then she'd better "own" me—as her lover and as her friend.

We argued all the way home.

She told me she was looking for a new job and was going back into the closet. How convenient to have a closet door that swings both ways. How convenient to come out only when it's comfortable, enjoying the rights that the people "on the front lines" are willing to get dirty to earn, but remaining in the comfort of your elegantly furnished closet when there is any flack! And let me tell you, the closets are nice among this group. They have some of the higher-paying jobs, and the power that goes with them—power and money that would greatly improve our status in society. If every gay executive "came out" at one time, there would be a stampede out of the closet. If every gay schoolteacher stood up to be

counted, there would be too many to count. But I suppose they will continue to avoid the fray.

I will never forget my date's final comment to me on the way home that night. I am an office manager for a small firm, and I guess my status—in her eyes—is not that high. She told me that it was okay for someone with my job to "come out," as if I had nothing to lose, unlike her and her high-powered friends.

I will work on my tolerance, but I love being a lesbian, because it is part of my identity as a womyn and a human being. It is as big a part of who I am as my name. I love womyn—politically, emotionally, and sexually. It touches every area of my life. How could I hide such a big part of me?

Yes, I have been hollered at by an ugly, rednecked man in a truck, who called me a f---ing dyke. And yes, it did hurt to see his face contorted with hate, and yes, I did have a momentary stab of fear that I could actually be harmed. May the Goddess protect us all from suburbanites who come to Montrose "slumming" to check out the queers. I can readily see, after only two years on the front lines, that the closet would be

Continued on page 57

How many straight men or women buy a house and set up housekeeping together? None of my heterosexual friends ever did.

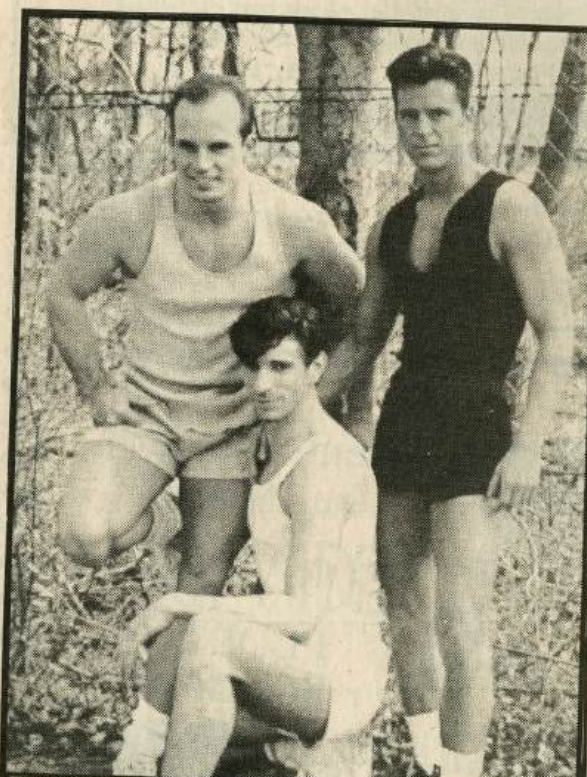
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In Search of a

Gay Soul

by Alan Davidson

Red and yellow, black and white,
All are precious in His sight...
...especially the queers.

Blaise DiStefano

Ancient Native American doctrine dictates that homosexuals, by their very nature, have spiritual dimensions and skills that heterosexuals do not. Alan Davidson examines these doctrines and their origins . . . and goes hunting for the ever-elusive Gay Soul.

Since the beginning of religious history, man has attempted to prove the existence of the human soul—the vehicle that allows God to interact with all that is humanly good in the body of man. Proving the soul as a fact has been ever elusive, however. Empirical science declares that there is no proof for the existence of such a soul, which leaves the possibilities of such spiritual questions to be relegated to philosophers, psychologists, and religious leaders. Some gay spiritual teachers assert that, yes, there is a soul and that homosexuals themselves have a soul which is distinct from their heterosexual brothers. These teachers also assert that this “Gay Soul” can offer elements of guidance and healing to our troubled world communities. Is there a soul unique to homosexuals? Or is this more intellectual pride and separatism? If there is any guidance and healing available from the gay community, then what is its source?

The model that many spiritual activists use to describe a distinctly gay soul is that of the berdache. Also called heyoka, the berdache were

American Indian males who dressed and acted within the tribe as females. The berdache were respected and honored for their differences, many times acting in positions of great power as arbitrators and shamans for the tribe. They were described as: “Not a man, not a woman, neither...something other...someone other.” The figure of the berdache is one of the few historical instances of honoring the homosexual within the greater tribe. Subscribers of this theory overlay and extrapolate the experience of the berdache onto that of modern gay men and women. Some of the general assessments made are gays as a third (and/or fourth) gender, gays having a natural (and often exclusive) spirituality, and gays as healers and mediators within society.

Proponents for a distinctly gay soul include Harry Hay, co-founder of the Mattachine Society and later the Radical Faeries, who calls the homosexual community “a separate people whose time has come.” Andrew Ramer, writer and teacher, says that “because we live on the

edge of gender and on the margin of society, we are consciousness scouts.” Ed Steinbrecher, a Los Angeles astrologer and meditation teacher, calls it “the very notion of potential—a latent quality capable of being but not yet fully realized.” Will Roscoe, author of *The Zuni Man-Woman*, says that “the berdache is a social, collective figure—a specialist, a cultural worker, a priest, an artist...a person who mediates the divisions and contradictions of the community.” These respected and prominent thinkers argue that homosexuals, by their very nature, have access to spiritual dimensions and skills that heterosexuals do not. Many gay men and women find this concept appealing, allowing for a feeling of specialness in a society that heaps them with abuse.

“It’s been my experience that gay and lesbian people who have fought through their self-hatred and their recriminations have a capacity for empathy that is glorious and a capacity to find laughter in things that is like praising God.”

—Paul Monette
Award-winning author who died last year of AIDS

Jean Houston calls this “The Sacred Wound.” “In this wounding,” says Houston, “the psyche is opened up, and new questions begin to be asked about who we are in our depths. These powerful questions need not lead to alienation and withdrawal, but can...contain the seeds of healing and transformation.”

Proponents for the potentials of psychic wounding are Andrew Harvey, author and Oxford fellow, who says, “From the deepest wound of my life grew its miraculous possibility.” He asserts that everyone on the planet is wounded in some way, but if you’re a gay man, your wound is particularly big. That’s why, he explains, there are so many gay men at the forefront of our spiritual movements—they’ve parlayed their pain into strength. Ram Dass, Freudian psychiatrist,

Continued on next page

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DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH BY REV. JANET PARKER



Beginning a New Year causes us to think about what is being left behind. We reflect on the accomplishments of 1995 and look at what is ahead. Some things we would gladly leave behind are grief, loss, financial struggles, pain and suffering, resentment, bitterness, broken relationships, loneliness, AIDS, selfishness, etc. In our own strength we try and muster up a plan to lick the negative this year. How do we do this? For some of us, the scars are too obvious, leaving a constant reminder of what we DON'T want to do again. Do scars have to necessarily be a negative reminder? Whatever happened to “Thank God, I’m healed! My wound is closed now. The skin has created a barrier to that old wound. It doesn’t have to open up anymore. In fact, I’m tougher because of that wound. My skin has learned to be resilient because I massaged the wound as it was healing. Now it is very pliable.”

Life for us in 1996 can be a year of bouncing back. It can be a year of health and wholeness. Let this be the year for a healing to become a trophy. Let it serve as a testimony of what God can and will do in your life. Learning from past mistakes, wounds, traumas, and disasters can propel us into a powerful life ahead. It's all in our attitude toward those happenings. We must seek to put ourselves in situations where healing can occur. Learn to move toward those places, gatherings and people who give you strength and encouragement. Telling others of how you were healed can be very rewarding. It continues to boost your faith as you share your victories. A good way to find out what to do to promote healing is to ask those who have been healed. Where do they go to find solace and comfort and help in time of need? What is your support system like for this New Year? Don't think that you can conquer the world on your own. Build those relationships this year that will help you through any trial or tribulation ahead of you this year.

Here is a recommended prescription for a healthy you this 1996. Read Proverbs on a daily basis to gain insight and wisdom. To share a few of my favorites: “A merry heart is like a medicine.” (Pro. 17:22) “The one who guards their mouth and tongue keep themselves from calamity.” (Pro. 21:23) “When a person's ways are pleasing to the LORD, God makes even your enemies to be at peace with you.” (Pro. 16:7) “A happy heart makes the face cheerful.” (Pro. 15:13) “Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors they succeed.” (Pro. 15:22) “Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will prosper.” (Pro. 16:3) “A generous person will prosper; the one who refreshes others will themselves be refreshed.” (Pro. 11:25) “The person of integrity walks securely, but the one who takes crooked paths will be found out.” (Pro. 10:9) “Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act.” (Pro. 3:27) “Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.” (Pro. 3:9) “God holds victory in store for the upright; God is a shield to those whose walk is blameless.” (Pro. 27) HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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In Search of a Gay Soul

Continued from previous page

author, and spiritual teacher, says that "being wounded refers to the personality, not to the soul. I'd say I've been...absolutely, deeply wounded. Anybody who is awake to the human predicament of being lost in separateness starts to yearn for the truth that they are not separate." Paul Monette, the award-winning author who died last year of AIDS, frames the wounding this way: "It's been my experience that gay and lesbian people who have fought through their self-hatred and their recriminations have a capacity for empathy that is glorious and a capacity to find laughter in things that is like praising God."

Just as empirically proving the existence of a soul is impossible, so will proving the existence of a gay soul. To explore spirituality within the gay community is a daunting and sometimes confusing prospect. The range of expression is as diverse as every race and culture that creates the gay community. Yet underneath this complexity of expression is the call for unity, basic to all humans, and the need to heal all the schisms of separation that are the source of pain, anger, and violence. Andrew Harvey calls this the "mystical process...entering into conscious direct relationship with the divine...having direct contact in the soul, the core of the being, with the Source." With the experience of this kind of rapturous soul making, distinctions such as, "If there is, or is not, a gay soul," seem unimportant. ▼

Alan Davidson, a state-registered massage therapist, has been a student of spiritual practices for 20 years and a very successful homosexual for about 30 years.

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A Spirituality for Sexual Minorities

by Loren T. Connell, OFM

I am a gay, Roman Catholic, German-Irish American man, who deeply loves the tradition expressed through the Judeo-Christian scriptures. Each of those personal characteristics of mine is a significant factor in my spirituality. Change any one of them, and you change my spirituality. My background may or may not parallel yours; my perspective may or may not reflect your thoughts or your theology. Whatever the case, as you follow my considerations, you may find some connections with your own.

One of my favorite Bible stories is found in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 8, the story of Philip and an Ethiopian eunuch. The eunuch holds an important position in the court of the Ethiopian queen. He holds that position in part because of his sexuality—castrated as an infant so as to be able to serve in the king's harem, he is no threat to the queen. Today he is riding impressively in a carriage, pulled by horses, driven by a servant. Great though his position may be, the eunuch knows in his heart—as

Castrated as an infant so as to be able to serve in the king's harem, the eunuch is no threat to the queen.

Along comes Philip, and he and the eunuch have a spiritual conversation. Going past some water, the eunuch, overwhelmed with the awareness of God's personal love for him, asks to be baptized. The carriage stops; Philip and the eunuch get out; and Philip baptizes the man, who then resumes his journey, no longer ashamed but rejoicing. We read nothing more of this unnamed visitor to Jerusalem. We leave him with his joy—joy in the knowledge that God loves him infinitely...and at the very core of his being.

This story shows me that no one person or group has an exclusive place in God's plan, but that everyone is privileged to share in God's love. You do not have to believe in baptism or in the theological discussion that Philip and the eunuch had, in

order to see the racial, sexual, and cultural inclusivity of the story. All people have a place in God's family. The scriptures, e.g., Deuteronomy 23, were no doubt cited by the religious zealots of the day to condemn the eunuch and his ilk. Philip and the eunuch capture in story form, however, another theme of those same scriptures; namely, the lavishness of God's love, aptly promised in this instance by the author of Isaiah in chapter

56: "Do not let the eunuch say, 'I am just a dry tree,' for thus says the Most High, 'To the eunuchs who keep my sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, I will give, in my house and within my walls, a monument and a name better than sons and daughters—I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.'"

The Judeo-Christian tradition is sometimes invoked—inappropriately, in my judgment—to marginalize and condemn us. On the contrary, I see that tradition as one which explicitly reaches out to those whose culture has marginalized and condemned them, including sexual minorities. I see that tradition as one which affirms and embraces us. I invite you to claim in your heart the place that your God has reserved for you...at the very core of your lesbian self! ▼

Loren Connell is the pastoral coordinator at Kolbe House, offering hospitality and spirituality in the tradition of Saint Francis of Assisi to sexual minorities and persons infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. He can be reached at Kolbe House, 1509 Fairview, 713/522-8182.

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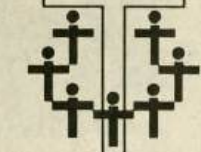
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GAY YOUTH:

Come Back
When You're

21

by David N. Morales

Photo by Theresa DiMenno

"It is an indisputable but not widely known fact that thousands of boys and girls of 14, 15, and 16 are fully homosexual and are making advances to other persons of their own age or older. It is these very young people who most critically need guidance, and they often ask for it.... It seems criminally irresponsible to tell them (in order to comply with the law), 'Go away. Come back when you're 21.'"

—Lyn Pedersen
JANUARY 1959

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years after this quote from an editorial in the seventh anniversary issue of *ONE* magazine was published, it is evident that some things have changed while others have not. Although gay and lesbian youths certainly have more avenues to turn to in 1996 than they did in 1959, those avenues, such as counseling services, gay youth organizations, and supportive authority figures, are generally only found in major metropolitan areas, leaving the majority of gay and lesbian youths struggling on their own.

Furthermore, it is still not widely known that thousands of teenage boys and girls are fully homosexual, in need of support and, oftentimes, guidance in order to come to terms with their sexual identity. Ignorance and denial are the primary reasons why the general public is unaware of these sexual minority youth, who are usually reluctant to come out, fearing hostility, discrimination, and rejection.

A 1989 federal study found that gay/lesbian youths attempt suicide three times more than heterosexual youths, accounting for 30 percent of successful teenage suicides. The study also found that one-third to one-half of drop-out, runaway, and street youths are sexual minority youths.

Gay Youth: Come Back When You're 21

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having been abandoned, neglected, or ejected from their homes and communities. Publication and distribution of this report was delayed over two years as two presidential administrations capitulated to threats of right-wing members of Congress that to announce such findings was to promote "the gay political agenda." The report only reached publication following a leak by an openly gay representative.

In the report, author Paul Gibson makes the point: "I think that in comparison with some of the other factors contributing to youth suicide, gay and lesbian kids might be one of the easiest groups to help. We know that once these kids get some acceptance and support around being homosexual, those suicidal feelings are largely reduced."

In a 1993 study, T.L. Hammelman reported that 29 percent of the gay/lesbian youths surveyed had attempted suicide, with the majority of the attempts occurring before age 20. Hammelman identified risk factors including: 1) discovering same-sex preference early in adolescence, 2) experiencing violence due to gay/lesbian identity, 3) using drugs or alcohol in an effort to cope, and 4) being rejected by family members as a result of being gay or lesbian.

H.A.T.C.H.—

Not Just Another Port in a Storm

These harsh, cold facts about sexual minority youths have prompted many individuals, both heterosexual and homosexual, to create organizations and support groups to help teens understand their orientation and to soften the effects of harassment by peers and the rejection many experience from their families. The goal of these groups is to help sexual minority teens establish and maintain high levels of self-esteem and to give them knowledge that will protect them from HIV infection, drug abuse, running away, internalized homophobia, and the threat of suicide.

Here in Houston, the Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals, better known as H.A.T.C.H., is a social and support organization for sexual minority teens. Under the supervision and guidance of adult homosexual and heterosexual facilitators, teens meet weekly to discuss their experiences and to offer each other answers to questions about issues they have in common.

Bob McLaughlin, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist in private practice and a faculty member of Baylor College of Medicine, is a facilitator for

H.A.T.C.H.'s new members' group and also provides training for volunteers who wish to become group facilitators.

"I'm struck that the availability of services and appropriate role models and so forth varies tremendously from one locale to the next," McLaughlin says. "Youth in the greater Houston area certainly have some advantages in terms of this being an urban area where there is a lesbian and gay community with some visibility in the media."

"There are also some supports available to them, either for youth who are still pretty conventionally socialized and living within their own homes or for youth who have for one reason or another had to leave their homes," continues McLaughlin. "However, not too geographically far from here, there are youth who don't have anything like that available to them. Even in Houston/Harris County most youth struggle in isolation for a long time before finding a place that can validate and affirm for them who they are as valuable human beings."

H.A.T.C.H. began in 1987 when a gay student came to the First Unitarian Church and shared his desire to form a support group for youth who identified themselves as lesbian or gay. The program lasted for about a year and then laid dormant until 1991 when Trish Kolodney approached the pastor and received permission to restart the program. Jay Asher soon joined Kolodney as co-director that year, and within a few weeks Dr. McLaughlin became involved as well.

H.A.T.C.H.'s mission is to provide safe social environments for homosexual youths, offering role models and peer support, and sponsoring educational and community outreach opportunities to empower homosexual youths to become positive contributors to society. To fulfill its mission, H.A.T.C.H. sponsors a wide variety of activities, including their weekly social/educational/peer support meetings.

Since its rebirth, H.A.T.C.H.'s attendance has increased dramatically, and the organization has enjoyed many milestones. In 1992 H.A.T.C.H. participated in its first Gay Pride Parade. In 1993 the group participated in the March on Washington, was featured in a front page article in the *Houston Post*, held its first prom at the Magnolia Ballroom, and appeared in an HBO special that still airs periodically. In 1994 the group participated in Stonewall 25 in New York and held its second prom at the Majestic Metro. In 1995 H.A.T.C.H. was the Honorary Organizational Grand Marshal of Houston's Pride Parade and hosted its third annual prom.

"Among the youth that I have had the honor of being able to work

with through H.A.T.C.H., I have seen some youth with all the conventional trackings of success in terms of academic success, and supportive families, and a capacity to engage in very healthy peer relationships," says McLaughlin. "But I have also seen a lot of other youth who, as a result of feeling so different and alienated from their peers, fall into other subculture groups who may be more supportive of drug involvement, running away, and living on the streets. Sometimes they are running from horrible circumstances, yet sometimes they are running away from traditional American families who cannot support who they are."

"There is a broad range of support, or lack of support, from families," continues McLaughlin. "More now than in any previous generation there are families who are willing to respect their children's emerging sexuality because the parents too have greater access to accurate information about the range of adaptations that sexual minorities make through their adolescence and adulthood. However, it's clearly still the case that the majority of parents have a hard time, at least initially, with the news that their child may be lesbian or gay."

When gay and lesbian youths fear rejection by their family and peers, they often seek out older gay men or lesbians to act as role models or mentors. However, McLaughlin says there is a hesitancy on the part of adult lesbians and gay men to even provide basic information and safe havens for youth because of the potential vilification from the broader community, like the all-too-common accusations of recruiting youth.

"Paradoxically, virtually all of those lesbians and gay men know that they were not recruited and recall their own personal experience of looking for exactly the kind of mentoring that today's youths are looking for," McLaughlin says. "Yet we are all a product of the culture that raised us, and we are subject to the same sort of naive concerns about homophobic notions. Sometimes that causes us to shy away from being the sort of healthy role models that people ought to be able to be."

Certainly there are laws about intimate contacts of a physical sort that could be interpreted as being violated if excessive sexual content were part of the verbalizations; however, McLaughlin feels that the possibility of being found guilty of any criminal charges by simply talking to youth, answering questions, and sharing experiences is improbable. "I would strongly advocate that lesbians and gay men should feel no more hesitant about providing those kinds of learning socialization experiences than any other person would."

It Starts With Education

Another sign that things are beginning to change locally is the Houston Independent School District's (HISD) willingness to conduct workshops for its counselors that are designed to make them more aware of and sensitive to the needs of sexual minority youth. Marcia Corn, Supervisor of Secondary Guidance and Counseling at HISD and the catalyst for much of the progress being made at HISD, has used

information compiled by Dr. McLaughlin in these workshops.

"I feel really good at how receptive the schools have been to the information provided to them by Dr. McLaughlin," Corn says. "We ask the counselors if they want the H.A.T.C.H. newsletter, we encourage them to continue attending conferences on the subject, and we encourage them to listen to the kids to find out what they need."

"My experience in working with counselors is that most of the ones who actually provide personal counseling are fully aware that these young people are out there and recognize their lack of training and their feelings of inadequacy about providing support for them," says McLaughlin. "I believe that, as specialized training is legitimized for these counselors, they will feel able to provide a safer environment for those youth."

"I also know that there are many teachers, both straight and gay or lesbian, who would gladly provide safe havens for these students in their schools if they did not feel that they would be stigmatized, ostracized, and possibly fired simply for standing up for their students," McLaughlin continues. "The one action that we could take within the state that would absolutely protect these young people would be to provide job protection for people who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual, in such a way that people would not fear for their own livelihood just by advocating for students who need it."

In addition to offering educational workshops to their counselors about the existence of sexual minority youth and the unique issues these youth face, HISD has updated their sexual harassment policy to include same-sex harassment. This enables

a student to file a complaint against someone who is harassing him/her because of their sexual orientation. Other schools have what are known as "honor codes"—agreements signed by individual students that state he/she will honor the dignity of other students. Under these codes verbal abuse of gay/lesbian students is considered a violation, and disciplinary action can be taken.

An administrator at a high school within the Lamar Consolidated School District recently disciplined a group of students, who were tormenting a young man with gay slurs, by having them sign contracts, stating they would leave the student alone. If any of the students violate the contract, he said they would be immediately suspended, and, if any of the students violate the contract again upon returning from suspension, the police would be called in and charges filed. "I was not aware of the serious consequences of this type of abuse until a year and a half ago when I lost a lesbian student to suicide," said the administrator. "Now I take it very seriously."

Unfortunately, not all school administrations are run by individuals supportive of gay concerns. An administrative secretary at an local unnamed Christian school responded to the question of harassment by saying, "Well, certainly we don't allow any of our students to harass others in any way. However, if a student is being harassed about his

Continued on next page

Making Schools SAFE Places for All Students

If you are a parent, youth, student, teacher, counselor, administrator, or community member concerned about the welfare of gay and lesbian students in this country, you won't want to miss this informative lecture.

Kevin Jennings, executive director of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Teachers Network (GLSTN) and editor of *One Teacher in Ten* (Alyson, 1994), will be discussing the work that led to Massachusetts becoming the first state in the nation to ban discrimination against students, including gay and lesbian students, in K-12 public schools. Jennings will also talk about the letter he wrote to his high school principal explaining what it was like for him to be a gay student and what you can do to enact change at your former school.

GLSTN, the largest national federation of local organizations that bring together gay and straight teachers, administra-



Kevin Jennings:
gay student, gay teacher,
gay activist.

tors, parents, and community members, works to create schools where respect for all is taught and where difference is valued for the positive contribution it makes in creating a more vibrant and diverse community. Since homophobia and heterosexism undermine a healthy school climate, GLSTN works to educate teachers, students, and the public at large about the damaging effects these forces have on youth and adults alike.

The free lecture, co-sponsored by P-FLAG Houston, P-FLAG Victoria, and H.A.T.C.H., will be held Saturday, Feb. 17, at 2 pm at Grace Lutheran Church, 2515 Waugh. For information, call 713/942-7002. To receive a copy of "What You Can Do," write: GLSTN, 2124 Broadway, #160, New York, NY 10023, or call 212/387-2098. GLSTN asks that people who write a letter to a teacher forward a copy of the letter to GLSTN.

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Gay Youth

Continued from previous page

sexual orientation, and that child is living that lifestyle, of course he would be asked to resign from the school immediately."

Anti-harassment policies and honor codes are a vitally important way to protect gay/lesbian youths from increasing amounts of harassment. Dr. McLaughlin feels that harassment is worse now than in the past as a result of the greater visibility of gays and lesbians through media attention.

"While integration into the larger culture may be easier for a lot of sexual minority kids in the '90s, there is also a backlash," says McLaughlin. "In the past there was less general awareness of just how many lesbians and gay men there are, and now that people are having to confront their realities, it brings the issue to the consciousness of the would-be harassers who probably would never had thought much of it in the past."

"What I hear from youths in schools concerning harassment ranges tremendously, and to some degree the reactions that youths get from their peers have a lot to do with their own personal strengths and resources," continues McLaughlin. "Youths who have strong personalities, tend to be academically and socially successful, and are able to negotiate relationships with a broad range of peers may find that, if they come out or if others suspect

that they are lesbian or gay, there is more curiosity than there is hostility. On the other hand, youths who don't have those kinds of personal resources available to them are much more likely to be ostracized by their peers and may suffer a terrible amount of verbal harassment and physical abuse."

As for the current state of affairs in regard to sexual minority youth, Dr. McLaughlin feels that there is broad range of support out there for youth—from those who are geographically separated from active supports but find access through the Internet, all the way up through youth who are actively involved in organizations like H.A.T.C.H. and StreetWise in Houston, or similar organization in other cities.

"I think there is hope for the future. It would be hard to be in this field without having hope. Part of the hope is based on the fact that other parts of the country have been able to address these issues in a more proactive way, and school districts are increasingly recognizing that a lot of young people's lives are being damaged, impeded, and, in some cases, are literally being lost as a result of their failure to provide adequate protection for these youths."

Anyone interested in becoming a member of H.A.T.C.H. or who would like to volunteer some time to its efforts can call 713/942-7002.



"StreetWise" kids with case manager Fred Reninger (sitting, far right).

Unlike for voting, drinking, and registering for the draft, there is no magical age at which an individual "turns gay." For some, the realization comes during adulthood. For most, it's child's play.

Where the Streets Have No Name

by Eric L. Roland

In an episode of the now-cancelled television show *My So-Called Life*, Rickie, the openly gay teenage character played by openly gay actor Wilson Cruz, wanders the dark, rainy streets of Pittsburgh, having fearfully fled an overnight shelter. He can't go home to parents who don't accept him, he's overstayed his welcome at his friend Angela's house, and he hasn't yet been accepted into a halfway house for gay youth. Fortunately, the gay teacher who has befriended him is just a phone call away, and Rickie ends up spending the night with him and his lover.

Rickie was lucky. Many gay and lesbian teenagers don't have a teacher to rescue them or a friend's family who will take them in. Instead, they have the choice of a home where they are not wanted or the streets, where drug use, prostitution, and crime are a way of life. For those who end up on the streets of Houston, though, there is a place to turn to where people care.

StreetWise Houston, formerly known as HIPY (Houston Institute for the Protection of Youth), is a place where these disenfranchised, homeless, throwaway youth are re-

spected and treated like human beings. At StreetWise's drop-in center located at 604 Westheimer in the heart of Montrose, kids can walk in to take a shower, wash their clothes, get a bite to eat, and, most importantly, get the empowerment they need to become healthy, self-sufficient adults.

"When I first started working here, it was very hard for me to see and hear kids whose lives were so horrible, and the way they looked at it they didn't even want to be alive," says Fred Reninger, one of StreetWise's case managers. "Then I started to see one of them finally start taking care of himself and feel that his life was valuable."

Besides giving them some of their basic needs, the staff at StreetWise help their clients in setting personal goals that will get them back on their feet and off the streets. They can help clients get a steady job and then help them get an apartment; they can refer them to an agency that will assist them in getting their Graduate Equivalency Diploma (G.E.D.), medical care, or drug/alcohol abuse treatment; and they can help them get food stamps, a Harris County Medical Gold Card,

or something as simple as an ID. Among other services StreetWise offers are facilitated support groups, peer counseling, and a supportive and understanding ear.

"We're not counselors or therapists, but a lot of times it's the first time some of these people have had anyone to listen to them without judging them," Reninger says. "Sometimes we are the last chance for these kids. Some of them have been through so many programs that you can't count where they've been, yet they are much more well-adapted than what a lot of people think. It's just what they've had to adapt to."

StreetWise was founded in 1992 as the Lewis-Scott Youth Center, a counseling center for gay and lesbian teenagers named after co-founders Lane Lewis and Bill Scott (also one of the founders of Montrose Counseling Center, Body Positive, and AIDS Foundation Houston). With only about 50 percent of the clients self-identifying as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered and with the need for counseling and programming for teenagers living with HIV (homeless youth have a high rate of HIV infection), the center evolved

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Where Streets Have No Name

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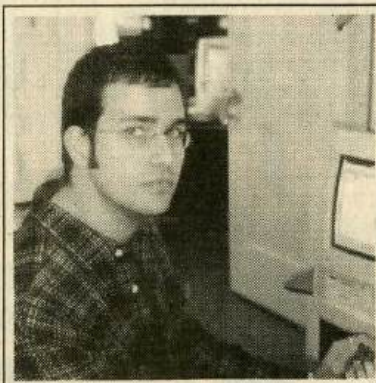
to help all street youth, changing their name to the Houston Institute for the Protection of Youth (HIPY). They began a street outreach program, educating street youth on HIV/STD prevention, distributing condoms, and informing them of outreach centers in their area, as well as opening their own five-day-a-week drop-in center then located at the corner of Westheimer and Montrose.

With the move around the corner to their current location on Westheimer, the center expanded their days of operation to seven days a week, 365 days a year, because homelessness is not just a Monday through Friday issue. This past fall HIPY underwent an administrative change when they merged with Sand Dollar, a local service organization, and their name changed to StreetWise Houston. The name may have changed but the services didn't.

Tracy L. Brown, director of development, knows that the problems the clients face won't change either. They will still be faced with the issues of prostitution, drug use, crime, and the risk of HIV infection. They will still get

harassed by the police, risk going to jail, and have to spend the night sleeping under a bridge.

"I think people want to believe that the simple answer is that these kids just have a wild hair and that they need to make up and go home," says Brown, who himself lived on the streets of Montrose as a teenager. "But



"If you're a single man or woman that doesn't have a baby, that doesn't have a serious mental illness, that doesn't have a substance abuse problem, or if you're not HIV positive, you don't get shit."

—Tracy Brown
StreetWise's Director of Development

sometimes the streets are better than home for these kids. They look no different, they don't wear little colored hats on their heads that say 'I'm Homeless,' but the reality is that at night they sleep in alleyways and in boxes."

The organization, under all its different names, has often been the center of controversy in the Montrose area. Civic associations

and many residents of the lower Westheimer area have continuously uttered that all-too-common phrase "not in my backyard" and have called the police to "control the problem." The police, in turn, give them tickets for hitchhiking and jaywalking.

"The police see it as being a prevention tool, but all they're doing is lowering the self-

esteem of the kids and reinforcing that they are worthless people," says Brown. "It doesn't make the prostitution and drug abuse go away—it has been going on for years and it will continue to go on for years until we start building self-esteem. Handing out tickets is not self-esteem building."

Many residents of the lower Westheimer area have said that the drop-in center draws street youth to the area, but Reninger argues that these kids have been there for years, which is why the center is in its current location.

"The kids aren't there because we're there; we're there because that's where the kids are," he says. "In order to target gay and lesbian youth, we needed to be in a neighborhood where they are and where they're going to feel safer. We could be in other parts of town where we wouldn't be bothering anyone, but the kids wouldn't feel safe going there or they just wouldn't have access."

"I can see why the residents of this neighborhood want to get rid of this organization and the kids because of the street hustlers, prostitution, and drugs," says one of StreetWise's clients, who goes by the name George. "But I think if, instead of driving by and seeing it, they actually came in here to listen to the people describe what they go through every day and every night and what StreetWise tries to do for them, they would understand why we're out here. A lot of these people aren't out here because they want to be. The ones that are out here are here because they have to make money because they can't go home. That's the ones they need to see that need help."

George himself is an example of someone who didn't choose to be on the streets. Two years ago, the 21-year-old high school drop-out, who got his G.E.D. by the time he

was 17 and an associate's degree in music and video business when he was 20, was living in a one-bedroom apartment working two jobs. When he lost one job and lost hours at the other job, George was forced to move into a rooming house. After losing another job, he ended up on the streets and a client of StreetWise.

"It's taught me how to love people. I used to hate everything—hate people, hate society," George says. "When I came out here I had to start loving to get to know people, to get to trust them."

Reninger says that each person's story of how they ended up living on the streets is unique. Some have come from families where drug and alcohol abuse is a way of life or where physical, sexual, or psychological abuse drove them to a "safer" existence on the streets. Many of the gay and lesbian kids, who either came out to their parents or whose parents suspected, were told they needed to change in order to stay at home or they had to leave. StreetWise also sees the occasional teen who, after spending a few nights on the street, returns home realizing that they can put up with whatever they were unhappy with at home or at school.

"What's a shame is that some of them get trapped here and stuck on the streets and then they start losing hope," he says. "It can take a long time to get them out of that loss of hope because they get sucked into it."

One of StreetWise's most crucial services is their HIV and STD education and testing program. They routinely conduct educational workshops for the clients that teach how to put on a condom and properly use it, how to protect themselves from HIV and other sexually transmitted disease, and the importance of getting tested. Several different organizations come in to do testing on the clients, and, although they don't require clients to have an HIV test, they do strongly encourage it.

"I really push HIV testing," says George, who remains HIV negative but did test positive for tuberculosis (TB). "I've heard a lot of people out here say that they don't use condoms. That shows me that they don't care about themselves—there's no love and no respect for themselves."

Unfortunately, there are a small percentage of StreetWise's clients who are trying to get infected with HIV, according to Brown. These clients see their HIV-positive friends get attention, in the form of easier access to housing, medical care, food stamps, and the welfare system in general. A similar circumstance happens with young women who try to become pregnant because they see their friends with children get help from WIC (Women, Infants, and Children).

"The way the welfare system works is that they want people to stay HIV negative, but they reward people for being HIV positive,"

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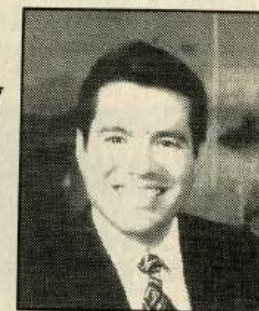
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Where Streets Have No Name

Continued from previous page

Brown says, "If you're a single man or woman that doesn't have a baby, that doesn't have a



**"For some of the kids,
honestly, if they just show
up alive the next day,
that's successful."**

—Fred Reninger
A StreetWise Case Manager

serious mental illness, that doesn't have a substance abuse problem, or if you're not HIV positive, you don't get shit."

Getting the kids to realize that becoming infected with HIV is not the answer to their problems is, of course, only one of StreetWise's potential successes. Keeping kids out of jail, getting them to stop prostitution and drug and alcohol abuse, and helping them find a job or an apartment are other successes in making clients of StreetWise former clients.

"When I first started here, I thought everyone would be able to show good change really quickly, but I've learned to measure

success in a different way," says Reninger. "For some of the kids, honestly, if they just show up alive the next day, that's successful." "The first success is getting them through the door," says Brown, "then getting them to continue to come, then anything is possible."

HELP

Although StreetWise is funded through grants from the state and federal governments and from organizations, such as Magic Johnson Foundation and AmFAR, none of their funding actually pays for the food served to the clients. If you'd like to help, StreetWise accepts donations of non-perishable food items (Ramen noodles are a bit!), toiletries (deodorant, disposable razors, bath towels), paper cups/plates/bowls, and clothing, as well as cash donations and in-kind services at their 604 Westheimer location.

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ORGANIZATIONS FOR GAY YOUTH

• LOCAL •

H.A.T.C.H. (Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals) is open to gays and lesbians age 15-21 and meets Fridays from 7:30-10 pm and Sundays from 6:30-9 pm. Call 713/942-7002 for location and information.

StreetWise Houston assists homeless, throwaway, and street youth with issues including discrimination due to sexual orientation or ethnicity, substance abuse, housing, and HIV/STD testing. Their outreach center is located at 604 Westheimer. 713/942-9884.

20 Something is a social group for gays, lesbians, and bisexuals age 20-29. For more information and meeting time and place, call 713/315-6786.

GLOBAL (Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Alliance at the University of Houston) is a social, political, and support group for the university gay/lesbian/bisexual population and its supporters that meets weekly. For more information and meeting time and place, call 713/743-7690.

• NATIONAL •

Hetrick-Martin Institute sponsors an outreach program and drop-in center in New York City, as well as running the Harvey Milk High School, a special high school for gay and lesbian youths that's part of the New York City School system. For more information on their programs and how they might be a model for activities, contact Hetrick-Martin Institute, 401 West Street, New York, NY 10014, 212/633-8920.

• PEN-PALS •

Alyson Letter Exchange Program organizes written communication between gay and lesbian youths (you must be 21 or younger) all over the world. To participate, write to Letter Exchange, c/o Alyson Publications, 40 Plympton Street, Boston, MA 02118.

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HIV/AIDS WATCH

From Gaynet Wire Service

Japanese Researchers Find HIV Antibody

TOKYO — A Japanese medical research team said it has found an antibody that kills cells infected with HIV, raising hopes of a cure for the deadly disease. The antibody, Immune Globulin M, was found in the blood serums of seven people who have carried HIV for 12 years but who have not become ill with AIDS, said Dr. Noriko Okada at Nagoya City University's medical school. She said four patients in the study who have developed AIDS did not have the antibody. "If we can cultivate it, the antibody would be an effective AIDS drug," Okada said. She said a limited number of people have such types of serum and that according to the team's survey, less than 2 percent of serum samples from the people with HIV studied contained the antibody. "A certain group of people with

special backgrounds or physical conditions seem to have the antibody, but we have yet to study what those conditions are," she said.

U.K. Researchers Testing 'Chemical Condoms' for Women

LONDON — According to a report in the *New Scientist*, researchers in the U.K. are working on developing vaginal virucides that they hope would protect women from HIV infection but still allow them to get pregnant. The scientists say the "chemical condoms" could, if successful, selectively block HIV from infecting susceptible body cells without killing off the male sperm cells. Research on the vaginal virucides initially started in the mid-1980s but was abandoned because of damage the substances caused to vaginal cells. The latest re-

search uses new combinations of the HIV-blocking substances that the scientists believe will not cause cell damage.

Baboon Cell Transplant Patient Leaves Hospital

SAN FRANCISCO — Jeff Getty, the AIDS patient who in mid-December was given baboon bone marrow injections in an experimental procedure doctors hope will bolster his failing immune system, left San Francisco General Hospital on January 4—a week earlier than he had been scheduled for discharge. Although Getty's physician, Dr. Steven Deeks, said the 38-year-old Oakland, Calif., man was well enough to be discharged, the scientists say it will be weeks or months before they can tell if the controversial new procedure has worked or not. His early discharge only means,

Deeks said, that his patient shows no signs of any initial infections transmitted from the baboon. Researchers from the University of California at San Francisco and the University of Pittsburgh involved in the transplant used the baboon marrow because the animals have been found to be resistant to HIV-1, the human version of the AIDS virus. But during the months to come, the doctors will test Getty to determine if the marrow is being accepted or rejected by his body, whether the cells have concentrated in the man's own bone marrow as they should, whether they are reproducing as they will have to if they are to be effective, and, most critically, if they are in fact fighting off the virus in Getty's body. "So far the only thing we can really conclude is that the procedure was safe," Deeks said during a press conference. "The more critical question about whether or not this procedure actually provided any benefit for Jeff remains unclear."

Canada to Issue AIDS Stamp

TORONTO — Canada's postal authorities will issue a special commemorative AIDS stamp later this year to coincide with the 11th annual AIDS Conference scheduled to be held in Vancouver this May.

Philly Female Condom Giveaway Program Popular

PHILADELPHIA — Officials with the Philadelphia health department say they've given away some 80,000 female condoms during the first five months the free distribution program has been in operation in the city. The female condoms, marketed by Female Health Company of Chicago under the Reality brand name, have proven to be fairly popular with women after being introduced in the U.S. a little over a year ago, because they can be inserted hours in advance, give women control over their own protection, and are significantly stronger than most male condoms. In initial marketing research, the Reality condoms also were popular among many gay men for anal intercourse.

Budget Battle Halting AIDS Programs

WASHINGTON — The budget stalemate between Congress and President Clinton that has led to the partial shutdown of the federal government is grinding a number of AIDS/HIV programs to a halt. The National Institutes of Health has been forced to freeze some 4,000 research grants until the budget battle is resolved, and its treatment facility in Maryland is accepting no new patients. More than half of its 16,000 workers have been put on furloughs during the budget crisis and all but critical research experiments have been suspended. The massive AIDS Clinical Trials Group, a government-funded effort at some 100 medical facilities around the country with about 13,000 patients, has also stopped accepting new patients.

Holistic HIV/AIDS Conference Expands to Six Cities

AIDS, Medicine and Miracles, a national nonprofit organization based in Boulder, Colorado, has announced its expanded 1996 holistic HIV/AIDS conference schedule. In 1996, AIDS, Medicine and Miracles will present conferences in Seattle, Washington, March 1-3; Denver, Colorado, April 12-14; Rhinebeck, New York, May 30-June 2; Vancouver, Canada, July 7; Washington, DC, October 10; and Houston, Texas, in November.

For the past nine years, AIDS, Medicine and Miracles has presented holistic retreats for people living and working with HIV and AIDS. The nationally acclaimed conferences explore both traditional western medicine and complementary therapies. For further information on the programs or to request registration or scholarship material, call 303/447-8777 or fax 303/447-3902.

HIV Showing Up at Chinese Universities

BEIJING — Newspapers in China have reported that during "spot checks" at universities, Chinese health officials found 10 HIV-infected students at two colleges in the capital city.

Health officials in the country say getting AIDS information and education programs to the country's schools is "extremely urgent" and estimate that more than 60 percent of those infected with HIV in the country are under the age of 29 years.

January AIDS Special on PBS

SAN FRANCISCO — In January, PBS will begin airing a four-hour television special *Positive: Life With HIV* around the country. Unlike many other TV programs about HIV and AIDS, *Positive* is aimed at people living with the virus more than at the general viewer. An eclectic mixture of styles, ranging from documentary to animation, there are also snippets of irreverent low comedy and a musical comedy spoof, some of which may even offend some viewers because of their irreverence. Methods of survival, not political correctness, is what *Positive* is about, according to the show's producer Janet Cole, and presenting the epidemic from the perspective of those stricken with AIDS was her focus.

AIDS Leading Cause of Death

Among Florida Prisoners
CHICAGO — Writing in the *American Journal of Public Health*, Adansi Amankwaa with the Florida prisons department says that a review of mortality data from 1987-92 in the state's

Continued on next page

Houston HIV/AIDS News

H.O.P.E. Resource Center Opens Hotline

H.O.P.E. Resource Center at Park Plaza Hospital, in conjunction with the Montrose Clinic, announces its new HIV/AIDS Information and Physician Referral Hotline. Questions will be answered regarding HIV testing information and locations, transmission risk, education, support groups, financial services, legal assistance, nutritional guidance, and physician referral. The hotline phone numbers are 713/285-1290 or 800/527-1551.

Model Volunteer Program Continues at Thomas Street

In addition to its many community service-related duties, People With AIDS (PWA) Coalition's Volunteer Program at Thomas Street Clinic recently conducted tours of the clinic during its early-January grand re-opening.

The volunteer program, considered a model for programs like it across the United States, encourages empowerment and seeks to build the self-esteem of both volunteers and patients alike. It is 90 percent staffed by persons who are patients at the

Women's HIV Coalition Conference Set

On Thursday, January 25, 1996, the Women's HIV Coalition will present its second annual conference, *Women Empowering Women in the Age of AIDS*. This gathering of healthcare providers, human service professionals, and interested public will be held at Temple Emanuel, 1500 Sunset Boulevard, from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. Although the registration fee is \$15, women who identify themselves as HIV positive may attend free-of-charge.

Dr. Patricia Salvato of Summit Medical Group, Meryl Cohen of Planned Parenthood, and other women experts will discuss medical and psycho-social aspects of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases from a woman's perspective, including sexual and emotional intimacy, legal and financial issues.

Continuing Education Hours (CEU's) have been approved. For more information and to register (anonymously or otherwise), call 713/935-8530.

clinic and/or clients of the PWA Coalition, and logs approximately 16,000 volunteer hours each year. Volunteers perform light clerical duties, act as patient buddies, answer telephones, staff the

information desk, work in social services, in the lab, and in other important areas.

To become involved with the coalition or for more information, call 713/938-1533.

Jimmerson Announces Resignation From Montrose Clinic

Chris Jimmerson, vice president of clinic operations, has announced his resignation from the Montrose Clinic, having joined the clinic's operation in 1990.

"While it was a very difficult decision, I remain very committed to the purpose of the clinic and Houston Clinical Research Network. It is gratifying to know I can pursue my personal and educational goals now that I know the clinic's administration is equally supportive of all programs." Jimmerson will continue to work with HCRN on a volunteer basis, as well as other clinic programs.

The Montrose Clinic is accepting résumés for position of vice president of clinic operation. Applicants can mail résumés to Montrose Clinic, P.O. Box 66308, Houston, TX 77006.



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HIV/AIDS Watch

Continued from previous page

prisons indicates that AIDS was the main cause of inmate deaths during the five-year period, accounting for more than 50 percent of all prison deaths in 1992. The study also indicated that inmate deaths from the disease were increasing compared with other causes of death in prisons and that most of the AIDS-related deaths were occurring among black prisoners.

Proposed Bill to Aid Partners Measures

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California Assemblyman Wally Knox (D-West Hollywood) will introduce a measure in the state legislature early in 1996 that would authorize the giant California Public Employees & Retirement System (CAL-PERS) to open its health insurance coverage plans to the domestic partners of municipal and other government agency employees in the state. Some 80 or so California cities and regional boards and commissions carry their employee health insurance through CAL-PERS. But CAL-PERS regulations governing the state-operated health and medical insurance plan specifically exclude "common law spouses" and "life partners" as eligible employee dependents, preventing the cities, counties, and special districts in the CAL-PERS program from offering partner benefits to their gay or straight workers even if they want to.

Moms' High HIV Levels Infect Newborns

WASHINGTON, D.C. — According to a study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, New York State health department researchers report that fairly high levels of HIV in the blood of women who are pregnant is required before the virus can be passed along to their newborns. The scientists found that women with levels of HIV in their bloodstreams at about 50,000 viruses per milliliter of blood had a 75 percent or greater likelihood of passing the virus on to their infants. At lower levels, the chances of the women transmitting the virus to their newborns was significantly lower, the researchers said. The scientists said the finding helps explain why some HIV-positive women give birth to infected infants, while other infected mothers do not.

Appeals Court Nixes AIDS Privacy Award

PHILADELPHIA — The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 3rd Circuit has ruled 2-1 that SEPTA (the Southeast Pennsylvania Transportation Authority) did not invade the privacy of an employee with AIDS by closely monitoring insurance claims for drugs through the man's policy. The ruling overturns a \$125,000 jury verdict in favor of the employee, who had filed the "John Doe" suit against SEPTA. Earlier this year a jury awarded Doe damages to compen-

sate him for emotional distress he said he incurred after learning that SEPTA's chief administrative officer discovered he was infected with HIV in 1992. SEPTA officials said they were examining insurance claims for medications for signs of fraud and drug abuse when they asked SEPTA doctors about Retrovir, one of the drugs Doe was taking, and were told it was for the treatment of AIDS. "We hold that a self-insured employer's need for access to employee prescription records under its health insurance plan, when the information disclosed is only for the purpose of monitoring the plans by those with a need to know outweighs an employee's interest in keeping his prescription drug purchases confidential," said Circuit Judge Max Rosenn in the majority ruling.

Drug 3TC Also Appears Effective Against Hepatitis B

BOSTON — Two preliminary tests of a newly approved AIDS drug, 3TC (also known as lamivudine or Epivir), published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, indicate the medicine also seems to suppress HBV, the hepatitis B virus, in chronic cases. One study, led by Dr. Jules Dienstag of Massachusetts General Hospital, found that after a 12-week course of 3TC, about 20 percent of chronically infected hepatitis B patients showed no traces of the HBV. Interferon is the only currently approved medication to combat chronic hepatitis B and has

been shown to be effective in about a third of those given the drug. But interferon must be taken for a fairly long period of time and has a number of very unpleasant side effects, which is not apparently the case with 3TC. Further studies will now be undertaken to determine long-term effects of the drug in combating hepatitis B, possibly in combination with other drugs.

Praying Against AIDS



SAN FRANCISCO — The "power of prayer" is being examined to see what — if any — impact it may have on people with AIDS. Backed by the Noetic Sciences Institute based in nearby Sausalito, 10 people around the U.S. with AIDS are receiving "intentions" or prayers daily from other people from coast to coast. Another group of 10 people with AIDS are also participating in the study as a control group but are not being prayed for. The institute hopes to find any significant changes in the T-cell counts in one group over the other.

AIDS Discharge Provision Passes Congress

WASHINGTON — The House of Representatives has approved the military reauthorization bill and sent it on to President Clinton, including an amendment that would mandate automatic discharge of members of the armed forces who test positive for HIV. The House passed the legislation by a 267-149 vote, even though Senate leaders tried to convince representatives to drop the HIV discharge amendment, introduced by far-right Rep. Robert Doman (R-Calif.). President Clinton has also said the Doman provision may make him veto the \$265 billion spending authorization. There are about 1,150 members of the U.S. military currently infected with HIV.

Vatican Denounces Safer Sex Programs

ROME — The Vatican has reiterated its objections to safer sex programs and sex education classes in public schools. The 60-page book for Catholic parents, organized by the church's Pontifical Council for the Family, urges parents to teach their children about sex at home to keep their children away from "negative influences." The publication also calls safer sex educational efforts "a dangerous and immoral policy, based on the illusory theory that a condom can provide sufficient protection against AIDS."

U.S. Firm Bought Misabeled, Untested African Blood Plasma

PHILADELPHIA — Blood plasma that was smuggled out of Africa between 1985 and 1987 was later sold in Europe to Armour Pharmaceutical Co. of Collegeville, Pa., and turned into blood products for human use, according to a report in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. The paper reported that documents obtained from the Commission of Inquiry on the Blood System in Canada indicate some 14-15 such shipments of blood were smuggled out of AIDS-ravaged Africa, disguised as animal blood by the firm that imported the blood to Europe, and later sold to Armour. The report says there is no evidence that Armour was aware the blood plasma had been illegally imported from Africa, and apparently had been told it was plasma from Canadian donors who had been screened for HIV.

KS-Linked Virus Found in Semen of HIV+ Gay Men

LONDON — According to a report in the British medical journal *Lancet*, researchers with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control have found a virus strongly associated with Kaposi's sarcoma in the semen of large numbers of gay men with HIV, but not in many HIV-positive heterosexual men. The scientists said that 64 percent of the infected gay men also had the Kaposi's Sarcoma Associated Herpesvirus (KSHV) in semen samples; of the non-gay men examined, less than 24 percent were infected with KSHV. The researchers said their findings explain why a disproportionate number of gay men may contract the cancer and suggests that KSHV may be sexually transmitted. The CDC scientists say further research is called for to try to determine if KSHV is latent and then triggered by an HIV infection.

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OUT ▼ TRAVEL

A la Recherche du Temps Perdu (REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST)

GAY. YOUTH. TRAVEL.

Ah, those three words conjure up delicious memories, thinking back to the dawn of my puberty, when by age 14, I pretty much knew I was gay because I so looked forward to Friday night slumber parties when all the girls would finally hit the sleeping bags and "tickle backs" for hours on end.

By the time I was a senior in high school, I was absolutely sure I was gay because I fell madly in love with a darling new sophomore English teacher, recently graduated from UT. I was one of three girls in the advanced biology class, and each year our cool teacher took us on an extended field trip in the ubiquitous yellow school bus, and that year we headed to Big Bend National Park for three days of hiking and camping. Of course the girls in the group had to have a chaperon accompany the group, to keep us separated from all those bad boys, and guess who agreed to this task? Yep, the darling new English teacher. I don't remember much about the park or the hikes or all the flora and fauna we were supposed to observe, but I vividly remember sitting next to Miss E. for nine hours between Andrews and El Paso and thinking I would surely die if she didn't love me back, which she eventually did.

After graduation, I went off to UT Austin where, for the next four years, my travels consisted primarily of spontaneous trips to Laredo and Juarez in the middle of the night in someone's Buick Riviera. The summer after I graduated from college, I was treated to the Europe backpack trip with three girlfriends, and lord we got in so much trouble and had so much fun. I'll never forget that month of Eurail passing and sleeping on trains, in cars, on the beaches, in a bakery truck, and in a brothel in Paris, as guests mind you, not patrons or employees!

I think some of our escapades in Italy provided the most hilarious moments of the whole six-week trip. Mind you, this was 20 years ago, and women college students during the "hippie" days had forever convinced all European men, but especially Italian men, that we were all complete sluts, ready and willing to pull down our panties at the drop of a hat. Well, sexual preference notwithstanding, I didn't take kindly to the leers, jeers, and pinches we encountered on a daily basis.



Sandra Wilkins:
ready to hit
the road at
an early age!

One night in Rome, strolling back to the hotel from bad lasagna and cheap wine, a group of three robust young Italian men started to follow us and heckle and whistle. The space between us kept shortening, and there was something in the tone of the incantations that frightened me, not to mention make me furious. As these guys got about six feet behind us on a dark, empty street, I suddenly had enough and reached down as we passed a doorway and picked up a large glass milk bottle, smashed it against the stone wall, and whirled around brandishing my lethal weapon right in their faces and started running toward them, screaming "don't fuck with us!" Never in my life have I felt so totally butch, and it worked because they turned tail and ran off.

We left Rome the next day for Naples, and from there caught a ferry to Ischia, the not-so-chic sister island to Capri. I guess the American slut image was destined to follow us everywhere, because no sooner had the boat docked than here came a hoard of admir-



by Sandra Wilkins

Continued on page 63

Lesbianities

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O U T ▼ M O N E Y

RESOLUTIONS, PLANS, PROMISES...

Are You Happy With Your Financial Life?

HAPPY NEW YEAR, EVERYONE! The holidays have come and gone, and another year is upon us. Have you made any resolutions, plans, or promises? Many people resolve to clean up the office, clean out the attic, lose some weight, get in shape, exercise regularly, stop smoking, bring their lover flowers more often, or obedience train the dog. Whatever yours might be, congratulations on doing something for yourself or someone else!

While planning for the next year, let me ask you one question? Are you happy with your financial life? I know there are some out there who can honestly say yes and really mean it. For the rest who say, "Well, no" or "Maybe," believe it or not, there is a way through the maze of financial information.

I am surprised with the amount of information available today that anyone can confidently make a financial or investment decision without being confused or afraid. Have you ever watched our local news and listened to them say, "The market plunged today! It closed 55 points lower!"

(Oh, no! Run and hide!) Or how about, "The market soared today on news about interest rates! It closed 45 points higher today!" (Yeah!) Up-down, up-down... Are you feeling like a yo-yo yet? And if that isn't enough, how about the

morning shows that you half listen to while getting ready for work. They'll have someone talking about how much life insurance you should have and what the best type is. They never say anything, however, about how this changes when it comes to you as a gay person. I can't tell you how many pieces of information I've read or heard this past year that were really poor advice for gay people. Don't worry, though, I've got a plan.

Exactly, a financial plan can

be the tool you need to sail on into retirement, accomplish college funding for your kids, save for that new home, or simply get out of debt. I like to think of a financial plan as a road map which helps you get from one place to another. Some people are afraid of a "professional" telling them what to

do with their money or that they will be "sold a product" which may not be best for them. As with mechanics, doctors, friends, and lovers, it's hard to know who you can trust, but hopefully, you'll find a financial advisor



by Julie LaRue, LUTCF

who is interested in you and can assist you (not tell you) in drawing out your map to financial security.

Let's talk about what a financial plan is and look at an example of how it works. Financial plans may include planning on any or all of the following topics: life, health, disability, property and casualty insurances (risk management), investments, taxes, retirement, estate conservation and preservation, college funding, and succession planning for business

owners. These can be big or small and can selectively address certain areas to match individual needs. This is especially important for gay people. We have different needs, issues, stresses, life circumstances, and outcomes than straight people. Unfortunately, many straight advisors may not fully understand the different rules and pressures placed on a gay person financially and may mislead them even though they have good intentions. The making of these plans basically involves talking with an advisor about goals, lifelong dreams, and what's going to happen when you're older. For many, it is the first time we actually stop running the rat race to think about the future and what we want out of life. That's what making a financial plan is all about: discovering within yourself what your desires are and finding a way to make that a reality.

Let's take a look at Marilyn and Debra. Marilyn is 38 and an internal consultant for a large corporation making \$43,000 a year. Debra, 36, is a computer software designer for a small computer company and makes \$55,000 per year. Together, they enjoy a quality of life which is satisfying to them. In the beginning, saving for the future did not really cross either of their minds. They soon had \$3,000 in credit card debt.

The new year had just begun, and they decided to work on paying off credit cards when Debra's brother needed minor surgery. Unfortunately, he did not have any insurance. They agreed to help him out. They used credit cards to cover what turned out to be a \$6,000 bill. They knew Debra's brother would eventually pay them back but not for a few years. Staring at those credit card limits and calculating how much per month was spent on credit, Debra was frustrated as to how they got there but realized it was time to do something to get them out of debt.

Debra called up an acquaintance who she remembered did something with financial stuff. As it turned out, Sally did financial planning and investment counseling. She met with Debra and Marilyn, and they shared their situation. First, Sally helped them set priorities on what they were spending their money on and worked with them to develop a budget they could live on. This involved setting out clearly defined objectives as to what they wanted to have in their lives now, such as vacations and a new car. In addition, Sally asked them about how they wanted to live in the future.

Thinking of the future surprised Marilyn who realized she had never really thought about getting old or even how long she wanted to work. As they talked, Debra and Marilyn decided they both wanted to have about the same amount of income each month in retirement as they did now. Debra also expressed a secret desire to have a beach house. Marilyn was surprised but pleased since they both loved the water. They also mentioned interest in some investing but did not know where to start.

Sally did some calculations for them and found that in about 6-8 years they would accumulate the probable \$15,000 they would need for a down payment on the beach house. They began investing a small portion each month, while paying down their credit card debts. As they reduced their debt, they would increase their investments. They talked about insurance and what would happen if either one of them died or became disabled. With Sally's help, they learned how to combine their company-provided life and disability plans with supplemental plans they could purchase which would cover the majority of their incomes. In addition, Sally encouraged them to seek out legal advice in planning their wills, powers of attorney, real estate documents, as well as a tax advisor to help them maximize any tax deductions they might be entitled to. Sally helped Debra and Marilyn with a well-rounded approach to outline their goals and to develop a plan to obtain them. She also provided them with information and

ideas on protecting their current assets. They now understand what they are doing, how they are doing it, and why they are doing it. Their financial road map has been plotted. They breathe a sigh of relief every day.

If you already have a plan in place—congratulations, you may be on your way to financial success. If you have planning on your list to do this year, plan on doing it later or never, please listen to this one piece of advice—*get advice from professionals who understand your problems and work with you to solve them.*

There is a lot of good and bad information available for gay men and women. You may need someone to help you organize and sift out what's important and applicable to you. When you need your car fixed, you take it to a mechanic, not the bike shop. Both are forms of transportation but get to their destination at different times with different risks. Financial planning may

be your ticket to financial security and may help you avoid lost time and costly mistakes. It may not be for everyone, but, for many, planning for the future may lead to success.

Here's to success and may your year be prosperous and happy! ▼

Julie LaRue, LUTCF, is a financial advisor with The Acacia Group. She specializes in helping gay men and women identify their financial goals and implementing plans to accomplish those goals. She is a Registered Representative and Investment Advisory Associate with The Advisors Group, Inc., the registered broker-dealer and investment advisor of The Acacia Group. Information is general in nature. Be sure to consult an attorney for specific legal advice. Julie can be contacted at 713/888-3500.

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BUSINESS BRIEFS

THE GREATER HOUSTON GAY AND LESBIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE announces its upcoming schedule of events. February 5, 1996 • 6:30 PM—FIRST OFFICIAL DINNER/SPEAKER MEETING with guest speaker RICK CERRILLO, Vice President Gay and Lesbian Affairs, **AMERICAN AIRLINES**. Meeting open to members and nonmembers. \$20 per person, check or cash only, please. Doubletree Hotel, 400 Dallas St. • 759-0202. NETWORK MIXERS: January 18 • 5:30 pm—network mixer hosted by **PRIDE MORTGAGE** at 4200 Montrose, Suite 300. 529-4488. February 8 • 6:30 pm—network mixer hosted by **HUBBARD FINANCIAL SERVICES** at 2615 Montrose Blvd. 522-9000. For more information regarding the GHGLCC, call 713/523-7576.

At the suggestion of several of its employees, **SHADOW BROADCAST SERVICES** has adopted a policy prohibiting harassment. Under this policy, in keeping with its commitment to provide a non-discriminatory workplace, Shadow prohibits harassment based upon sexual orientation, in addition to sex, race, religion, national origin, and disability. Shadow Broadcast Services provides traffic, sports, news, and weather locally to Houston radio stations and is based in Pennsylvania.

If you're looking for a lunch-time treat without the bitter aftertaste of political correctness, Sandy Bubbart at **THE ACADIAN BAKERS** offers these comic culinary suggestions:

SHUT-DOWN SPECIALS
Senate Special: Large Ham on Rye
Congressional Special: Beef Jerky
White House Special: Big Bologna on Wheat
Dessert: Sour Dole Fruity Newty
Cost as of today: \$45,000

ADVANCE DAMRON, in conjunction with Star Clipper Cruises, announces its first all-gay luxury yacht charter. The Star Clipper, built in 1991, boasts 36,000 square feet of sails, and sails from Barbados on October 26-November 2, 1996. Cruise prices start at \$1,395-\$2,395 per person. After 11 years and two dozen sold-out charters, Advance Damron Vacations still holds the exclusive contract to operate Windjammer Barefoot Cruises' all-gay charters and will continue to do so with the SV Yankee Clipper on April 20-26, 1997.

THE HOUSTON ANTIQUES DEALERS ASSOCIATION'S (HADA) SPRING SHOW AND SALE is set for February 15-18, 1996 at the George R. Brown Convention Center, and will benefit **Bering Community Service Foundation**. Approximately 10,000 antiques buyers attend this much-anticipated event, now in its 32nd year. With 150 exhibitors from the U.S., Canada, and Europe, the show and sale features antique furniture, silver, glass, porcelains,

Continued on page 53

O U T ▼ S M A R T

BUSINESS FEATURE

Mr. Roberts Goes To Gaytown

by Steven Foster

There's quite the little controversy brewing over at the Texas Triangle prompted by yet another (yawn) right-wing maniac going after supporters of the infamous Homosexual Agenda. Here's the rundown on the players, the priorities, and the surprising perks this little brouhaha has cooked up.

Thanks for all the press!...

The Texas Triangle, the Texas gay newsweekly, while in the midst of trying to seek out a respectable living writing good, timely news articles and interesting features, unfortunately finds itself under attack. The attacker in this case is Austin's KIXL talk show host Wyatt Roberts, and his strategy is naming advertisers on the air and sending letters informing them of just what kind of publication they're advertising in (like they wouldn't really know). Needless to say, the story's been picked up by the *Austin Chronicle*, the *Austin American Statesman*, *USA Today*, and UPI. Regional Director Kyle Young even appeared on KLOL's Stevens & Pruett morning radio show to talk about the battle. On the upside, all of this has made *Triangle* phones ring off the hook with media attention.

...Because we're just sick of all those press-grabbing crack babies, single moms, and deadbeat dads getting all the attention.

Roberts is executive director of the American Family Association of Texas (AFA). Now with a name like that, you'd think they'd spend their time busting child support-dodging daddies or giving some love and prayers to crack-addicted babies or preemies at county hospitals. Nope, they're heavily going after such evil threats to God and country as Walt Disney, Unilever, and our own *Texas Triangle*. What's in a name indeed! We suggest they name themselves something less subtle and more honest, say, the Attack Faggots Association?

While we were all appalled by the immoral content of the Triangle articles, we were more than a little

perturbed there were no randy 900 ads to criticize.

Good old Wyatt's next step appears to be sending a list of all advertisers to local area churches in an effort to establish a letter-writing campaign. That means all these church-friendly folk will have to read the publication to get, pardon the phrase, "a feel" for the *Triangle*. So, with this new readership demo, may we suggest some articles like "Love Thy Gay Neighbor: Jesus' Warnings of Judgment and Prejudice," and video reviews of *Priest*, *Showgirls*, and that racy *Toy Story*.

That's all it took was just one look. (And another... and... pant!... pant!... another...)

The ever-thorough Mr. Roberts claims he has issues of the *Triangle* dating back to 1994. You're right, Wyatt. Such a sin-soaked abhorration couldn't possibly have been evident after just one issue! Everyone who took PSY 101, please step forward with your interpretation...

And you just keep your nose out of our woofers and tweeters, OK?

Audio Concepts has made Roberts' hit list, and part-owner John Hicks is especially perturbed about it. Hicks is drafting his own letter to Roberts and was quoted in the *Houston Chronicle* that he found Roberts' "tactics abhorrent and disturbing." Added bonus? Hicks is a lawyer and is contemplating suing Roberts.

And the I'm-not-gay-but-I-know-a-good-market-when-I-see-one Award goes to...

All the new businesses who have called up the *Triangle* to (1) protest Roberts' nasty little attacks and (2) inquire about ad rates

and placement. Honorable Mention goes to the advertisers who would wind up getting free publicity when Roberts mentioned their names on the air.

Phil Gramm would have signed, but he was stuck in the editing room of Toy Box II: Barbie & Betsie Wetsie.

An anti-discrimination creed went out on November 8 to support First Texas Honda and the other supportive businesses who "resisted intimidation by the American Family Association, Talk Show Host Wyatt Roberts, and radio station KIXL, designed to force them to discriminate." Signed by such political heavies as Mayor Bruce Todd, former Mayor Roy Butler, County Judge Bill Aleshire, and numerous State reps, City Council members, and others, the letter strangely lacked signatures from such famous party boys as Newt, Jesse, and Bob.

And another thing, where's the fax on the much-rumored Lesbian Lunch Schedule?

In a stunning display of originality, Roberts stated that he wanted advertisers to know they are "helping subsidize the homosexual agenda" when they purchased ad space. Now everyone always mentions this "agenda," and we of the gay community just want to know: when the meeting took place to decide the agenda, why weren't we all invited, was it really catered by Toopees, and did it happen before or after *Rolling Stone* founder and publisher Jann Wenner came out?

We give Face Down one thumb up. Danny Does Dallas gets one. But for real homoerotica, we give Toy Story two thumbs up and then some!

Remember that Roberts is only a little league pawn on the bigger AFA game board. It's headed by the illustrious Rev. Don Wildmon, that nasty religious relic who's been trying to get his legion of polyester-

clad followers to boycott everything from the NEA to Snuggle Fabric Softener (I'm not making this up). His latest target? Disney's *Toy Story*, which he called "the most disgusting example of Hollywood's use of pornography...since *NYPD Blue*." And while Disney is crafty in their sly infiltration of a sexual subtext, they're not too cagey for that Wiley Wildmon! See what he has deciphered for poor, bumbling, and blind Middle America: both main characters' wicked monikers—"Woody" (sexual reference) and "Buzz" (drugs). Not even the poor Etch-A-Sketch was left alone. No, his sexual innuendo was most heinous, with his "knobs" that "must be adjusted to produce results." Thank God there wasn't an erector set in the movie. ▼

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

THE GREATER HOUSTON GAY & LESBIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

invites any working person to join its progressive professional group at its next meeting for new members in early February. Rick Cerrillo, national sales manager for the gay and lesbian community with American Airlines, is scheduled as guest speaker. Cerrillo will discuss the evolution of American Airlines' standard-setting employment policies, marketing strategies, and the work of its nationwide gay and lesbian employee association.

The meeting is scheduled for February 5, 6:30 pm at the downtown Doubletree Hotel, 400 Dallas at Bagby. Proper business attire is requested, as well as a \$20 fee (cash or check only, please). Additional information may be requested at the GHGLCC voice mail, 713/523-7576.



The Greater Houston Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce was on hand recently to help break ground for the new addition at The Lovett Inn. **THE LOVETT INN**, Houston's premiere inn and reception facility is adding a brand-new party space. Those who have attended one of the over 450 functions already held at The Lovett Inn will be pleased to know a grander facility awaits your next visit.

Continued from page 52

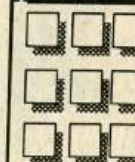
primitives, Orientalia, ivory, jewelry, linens, lace, quilts, pre-Columbian and American Indian artifacts, rugs, weapons, prints, maps, paintings, lamps, architectural items, and antique gardening furniture. For more information, call HADA at 713/662-4444.

Jill, is all work and no play making you a dull girl? Are you a lesbian seeking to learn how to have fulfilling and fun dating experiences with other women? On February 17, **JOYCE M. GAYLES, Ph.D.**, presents The Dating Dance Workshop, a safe, one-day workshop for women who want to learn about dating. Call 713/667-6047 for information and registration.

In late February, **CROSSROADS MARKET** is scheduled to relocate to the former Tower Theatre complex in Houston. The space, at over

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4,000 square feet, will be completely renovated to accommodate the new store. The new Crossroads Market/Bookstore & Cafe will carry a variety of gay and lesbian-interest titles as well as greeting cards, music, periodicals, and gifts. The store has expanded to include a cafe offering espresso, cappuccino, croissants, scones, and fine pastries. Crossroads Market currently operates stores in both Houston and Dallas.

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The Gay & Lesbian Yellow Pages®

O U T ▼ S M A R T

IF YOU RENT, YOU CAN OWN.

As a real estate agent, I get calls every day from people who want to rent. I respond by asking the caller questions that help me understand their likes and dislikes, needs and wants. Most often, I find they would love to own their own home, but feel they cannot afford the down payment and closing costs. I also find most people don't know that there are programs available to help them afford the home of their choice. Many times we can match individuals with a program that fits their needs, allowing them to purchase a home. There are many mortgage financing programs available, each with its own set of guidelines. Let's review a few and see if you qualify:

1. The Community Home Buyer Program (CHBP)

CHBP is the most widely available community-lending program. The program is intended to assist low- and moderate-income individuals in qualifying for a single-family, owner-occupied home. It is designed for first-time home buyers who have not owned a home in the past three years. CHBP buyers complete a home-buying workshop, which teaches them how to manage the home-buying process and provides them with an estimate of the costs of purchase.

With the CHBP, the borrower can buy a home with a minimum down payment of only 3% of the sales price. They can receive 3% of the sales price from the seller toward closing costs, and the lender can pay an additional 3% of the sales price toward the closing costs. This enables the buyer to purchase a home with a cash outlay of only 3% of the sales price. This program is available to individuals or couples whose combined income does not exceed \$45,300.

Credit profile: The borrower must have good credit for the last 24 months, with no charge-offs or outstanding bad debts. If the borrowers do not

have established credit, other credit sources, such as utilities and rent, can be used. Under the CHBP, the buyer of a \$60,000 home would save \$5,500 in down payment and other closing costs over traditional financing. The down payment would be \$1,800 with a monthly note of \$457.86, based on an interest rate of 8.5%.

Add on the homeowners insurance, taxes, and mortgage insurance, and for \$679.79 per month, you could own your own home!



by Rick Barnes

Not only can you buy a home for less than the cost of rent in most situations, but the tax savings on a loan of this type amounts to almost \$3,600 per year. This

is a tax advantage that renters currently do not have: mortgage interest is one of the only remaining tax write-offs individuals have retained.

When applying for the loan, have the following documents ready for review: last two years' tax returns and W-2 statements; last 60 days' pay stubs; last 90 days' bank statements for all banking accounts; and the completed loan application. In addition, the borrower must have 3% of the sales price from their own funds. The funds cannot be bor-

rowed or be a gift from anyone. These funds can come from the borrower's accounts, 401-Ks, or retirement accounts.

2. Government-Insured Mortgages: FHA And VA Loans

The Federal Housing Administration and the Department of Veterans Affairs offer loan programs with liberal income restrictions.

FHA: The primary advantage of the FHA loan program is that it requires a lower minimum down payment than conventional mortgages. Additionally, FHA loans also offer the buyer an advantage when they sell their home: a buyer who qualifies can assume the loan. The minimum down payment for FHA is 3-5% and may be gift funds from

**For \$679.79 PER MONTH,
YOU COULD OWN
YOUR OWN HOME!**

family members. A personal note: I have found mortgage companies who have accepted a same-sex spouse as a family member. The maximum amount FHA will loan in Harris County is \$101,500 for a single-family residence.

Homes needing rehabilitation can be purchased or refinanced with a program called a 203K, which enables home buyers to include important repairs and even certain cosmetic improvements in the original purchase transaction by combining the cost of the repairs with the mortgage balance. We will go into more detail about the 203K loans in a future article.

VA: The VA loan program guarantees loans made to veterans and reservists who have 90 days' wartime or 180 days' peacetime service and an honorable discharge, and to the unmarried surviving spouses of veterans who died due to service-related illness or injury. The veteran must request and obtain a certificate of eligibility to process their loan. This VA guarantee enables qualifying veterans to obtain 100% financing. It is important to note that an individual other than your spouse (as recognized by law) cannot be a co-borrower on a loan.

Closing costs are controlled by the VA, which charges a funding fee of up to 1.25% of the loan balance.

3. Bond Programs

Bond programs that provide lower interest rates and/or down payment and closing cost assistance are currently available for low- to moderate-income home buyers. The interest rate, income guidelines, and down payment assistance of the bond program will depend on the guidelines set forth by the housing finance agency who originates the program.

4. Houston Housing Partnership (HHP)

HHP is made up of participating Houston-area financial institutions, the City of Houston, the Houston Housing Finance Corporation, the Harris County Housing Finance Corporation, the RTC, and Housing Opportunities of Houston. Assistance is provided for the purchase of owner-occupied, single-family homes in the city of Houston and Harris County. It can be used with conventional community home-buyers programs or GHA loans. There are restrictions for income, down payment, closing cost subsidies, and sales price.

Rick Barnes is a real estate agent with Suzanne Anderson Properties, specializing in residential, commercial, and VA/HUD foreclosures. You can reach him at 713/529-8484 or on his voice mail at 713/709-1225.

—ADVERTISEMENT—

If having abundant health and prosperity is your personal goal for 1996, I'd like to tell you about a company that I feel not only offers some of the best nutritional products on the market today, but also provides an effortless way to make additional income.

For over 11 years, I've published Houston's *Uptown Express*, a holistic health publication, as well as *OutSmart* magazine. As a publisher, one of my personal missions has been to offer the latest information on health breakthroughs when I hear it. That's why I'm excited about Freelif International.

Freelif International was recently featured in the December 1995 issue of *SUCCESS* magazine. It is a 10-month old network-marketing company that teamed up with Dr. Earl Mindell, America's foremost authority on vitamins and nutrition. Dr. Mindell is the author of over 12 books, including *The Vitamin Bible* (which has sold over 7 million copies) and the newly-released book, *The Anti-Aging Bible*, published by Simon and Schuster.

Dr. Mindell's nutritional formulations contain natural immune-boosting ingredi-



Greg Jeu

Want Better Health and More Wealth in 1996?

ents, powerful anti-cancer agents, and the strongest antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, herbs and amino acids known for life extension and anti-aging properties.

Imagine a nutritional supplement that contains an antioxidant that is 20 times stronger than Vitamin C and 50 times stronger than Vitamin E!

The ingredients in his formulas have been featured in hundreds of reports and scientific research papers which show why these herbs and vitamins should be included in each of our diets if we want to obtain and maintain optimum health. I can tell you that I personally use these products and have honestly noticed great improvement in my health and overall well-being.

I believe that Freelif's products have the potential to dramatically improve health, and for

people who are looking for ways to supplement income, it can do that too. Even business mogul Donald Trump said if he had to do it all over again he'd do business through network marketing!

All that's required is to take these supplements each day and find a minimum of three people who will do the same. Then you're off to creating better health and more wealth in no time flat! Believe it or not, I do it in my spare time! It's almost like being paid to stay healthy.

Here's to your health and prosperity—may 1996 bring you an abundance of both.

Dr. Earl Mindell will be in Houston February 3 sharing his latest findings in the field of health and nutrition.

Join us Saturday, February 3, at 2 pm at the Holiday Inn Hotel, 7787 Katy Freeway. Seating is limited, but admission is free with this ad. For additional tickets or more information on Freelif products, call 713/808-5060.

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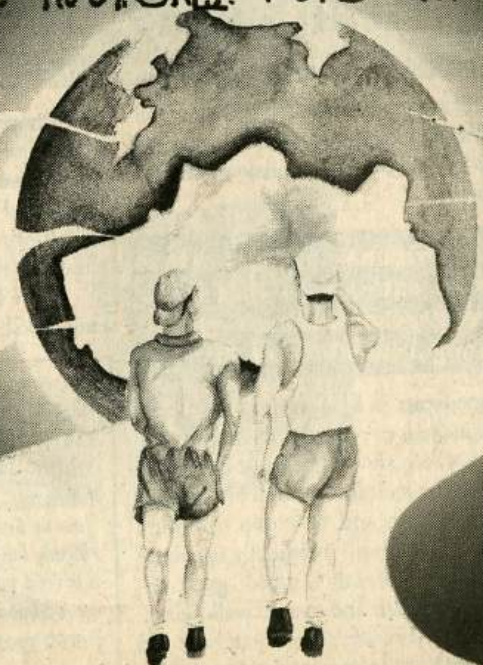
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Closets With Revolving Doors

Continued from page 29

safer. But in my opinion—at least for me—the cost of compromise would be greater than the risk of being open. Besides, for me there is no option. I'm here and I'm queer.

My friends know, my children know, and when the time is right, my grandchildren will know. My boss knows, the two women and the engineers who work with me know, and anyone who sees my car knows. Funny—no one who loved me before has stopped loving me. I didn't lose my job or my friends (at least, none that I care about). I am still me. I will leave the closet dwellers to their own devices, but I am free. I can wear my freedom rings anywhere I want. I don't have to put on a mask for anyone.

Praise be! I may never make it to the ranks of high-powered executive, but then again, I just might. Either way, I will be true to myself.

I embrace the new year as a chance to be all I can be. To all of you courageous lesbians and gay men, transsexual and transgendered human beings who have the guts to say *This is who I am*, Happy New Year! Wave your flags high and know that we really do make a difference.

Martie Baillie is a freelance writer who resides and works in Houston.

Comfortable in your closet and tired of militants haranguing you to come out? Here's your opportunity to tell your side of the story, anonymously sharing your experience with *OutSmart* readers as to why "staying in" is better for you. Please be sure to not include your name, address, phone number, or any other identifying information, and send your comments to "Out of the Question" c/o *OutSmart*, 3406 Audubon Place, Houston, TX 77006-4412.

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FUTURE OUT LOOK

by
Joseph Molina

THE WORLD

On the spiral path of evolution, moving as a flame heavenward, mankind must ultimately reach a cosmic checkpoint, as though standing in a hall of mirrors and reviewing the great book of the self. Here, as we begin a new cycle, shall we all become aware of the true essence of being that enhances and creates extensions of our persona or cripples our potential.

January, February, and March set the stage for the dramatic year's beginning. It is a gaudy production, designed to reaffirm the quality of life as is experienced on this earth. The focus of this year is centered around the I AM THAT I AM—selfless devotion to our choices, honoring the flaming soul within. Universal forces present to us a most challenging picture, one of trials and tribulations. These events will lead, like a ricochet effect, to the purification of our world. The signs that flow through the veil portend a very rude awakening, a lightning bolt upon the ego of man. Think of it, too, as a flower budding in the collective unconsciousness that will manifest itself in many ways. Our government

leaders shall wane in their authority, due to conflict between state and federal governments and the peoples of this nation. Our divided world shall pull together despite the unfortunate tyranny of others and begin the process that shall create a global nation as the higher consciousness begins to manifest everywhere.

This coming time will not be easy; deserts will become forests, and forests will become dry. Spirit urgently requests your assistance, in order for a higher way of being to be experienced. Individually, we must learn how to live in the joy of the present. Realize the blessing of truly enjoying good company, being totally engrossed in a good book, living free of unneeded worry and constant stressful mind chatter. Pamper yourself with some solitude, while contemplating the meaning of life.

We stand at the end of a millennium, closing this chapter of the great book that tells the story of creation. Before us, new pages appear fresh and clean in anticipation of our actions to come, to seal the ending of this story and to prepare for a new chapter written in the stars of the heavens.

ARIES (3/21-4/19)

To set the stage right and prepare for the coming year, Aries should put their goals into perspective. Filled with a restless nature and yearning to be set free from responsibility, you are liable to take on the role of the non-conformist youth as you restructure of your life. An extreme change in career could manifest, as you establish new boundaries. You will desire to be in full control and will order yourself so that this can be so. A comforting shell, safe haven, or a personalized space to allow for your creativity to flourish could be the solution to all your problems. For many, this opening vibration will represent a transformed life in the future, marked with independence, courage, radiance, and an established career. With this stable home and an inner sense of security, you may be well on your way to creating your own dominion. As a bit of encouraging comfort for things to come, a bright future ahead is foretold, but you will need to recognize opportunity and be prepared to actively pursue it once it's identified. Your present actions lay the foundation for the coming year. Whether

that foundation is solid or cracked all depends on the truth of your motives.

TAURUS (4/20-5/20)

The beginning of this year will mark a definite transition as you move away from ties that bind you to a spectrum of choices. Expect some of these choices to lead you toward an entirely different shade that colors your life, both emotionally and materially. You will be offered positive career choices that could manifest as empowering wealth. For some, the inevitable added responsibilities will be detrimental while for others they will be a distracting relief. You are warned not to collapse yourself into this new mask; take a revitalizing vacation soon. Give your soul the gift of empowerment as you rejuvenate your body.

GEMINI (5/21-6/20)

The start of this year, particularly January and February, will reveal to you a preview of the patterns that lie ahead. A relatively uneventful period during the middle of January influences you to do a swan dive into the marvels that wait ahead.

In many ways, for many of you, life is to change. You will move away from self-fulfilling destructive patterns, as well as your overall sense of unhappiness and stagnation. Your hope for gaiety and laughter will become more and more of a reality; a best friend or lover is soon to manifest. The choices made yesterday have set the mood for where your life will now flow, hindered only by your impatience and distrust of the truth of spirit to be present in your life. Remain optimistic in the face of turbulence; without the bad times, how would you appreciate the good?

CANCER (6/21-7/22)

The first part of this year, especially January through March, will be noticed by all born under this sign. Emotionally, your moods will fluctuate like the wind, reflecting an outer disharmony with life. For a time, life will appear to be in an extreme state of flux. A great deal of work could be laid at your feet, and a new career opportunity could be found. Your main goal is to experience freedom and joy within your life. Achieving this state of bliss will be a challenge; life will test your strength via minor upsets and disruptions. Through it all, you must remember that you are a teacher, and others learn from your actions. The circle of life always brings all things back to their origin. Remember, you are setting the stage for what is to come, writing the book as you go.

LEO (7/23-8/22)

The start of 1996 will offer success in the areas of art, music, dance, literature, or virtually any area in which your creative juices flow. It is a time when your own initiative will fund all your future success. You will be offered chances to make your dreams manifest, although your only reward may be the end result itself. Procrastination is your enemy, while motivation will promise success. You will become a student, perhaps of someone successful, or simply a friend who will aid you on your path. This is a time when the great outdoors will call, and you will come running. Honor your need to work in a garden or replant plants around your house, for this earthwork is an exercise to enable your abundant creative energy to open those channels even more. This is a year for Leo to truly be who you are and shine above the rest.

VIRGO (8/23-9/22)

Your focus at the onset of this year is pointed at money and the fact that you need more of it. The amount of power that emanates from you becomes more and more of an issue, as you desire to fill empty spaces present in your life. For some, this will manifest as a lover, while others simply want to be relieved of money worries. The cards show opportunities manifesting in the form of projects or promotions that will in some way give you the sense of power that you are searching for. Traveling could come with these opportunities, and whether they are long trips or many small ones will depend on the area of your work. The restless child within you has been

yearning to be set free—a little vacation would do you both a world of good. A partner or mate is interwoven in this air, and the love you've been waiting for could come. True loves will become stronger, while invalid ones will dissipate.

LIBRA (9/23-10/23)

Taking time to reevaluate and review your life is what January into February holds for you. New people and situations are being drawn into your life, but many of these things could cause you a sense of anxiety. Where am I truly headed? Have I made all the right choices? Many of your choices have been made sporadically and from the basis of Ego. The truth of them will cause the important situations to flourish and those which do not aid your better good to dissipate. Fighting this will only cause you much unneeded tension. You are urged to put some of this energy into a hobby or personalized project. You will become a role model for children or perhaps a friend, inspiring others to achieve as you have. The Hermit rules you now, offering you the peace you need to find comfort in the choices of your life, riding the crescent of this wave.

SCORPIO (10/24-11/21)

January sets the stage for setbacks and stagnation. You should be prepared with will power and strength. This year is a year in which you will find true happiness. In the past you have acquired material success and are now at a new beginning that will lead to many good things. You will establish a comfortable world of your own, but you must take action and initiative in order for these things to continually manifest. Your environment will change, and life will smooth out as a fear of failure will motivate you to succeed. You are offered a choice that will lead to an expansion of your life, well on the way to success. There will be a growth of your career; expect a change in the area of the arts or spirituality. Passion for life illuminates you and, for those searching for love, opportunities will abound. Focus is your key and the promise of your success. Peace and good luck.

SAGITTARIUS (11/22-12/21)

For many of you, the first few months of this year will be quite transitory. You could move, take a long trip, or transform your home. This will be an uplifting year away from the tension of yesterday. It is a time to reevaluate relationships and what they truly mean to you. Relationships that were important in the past will no longer measure up; new and more powerful relationships will be formed. You need to approach each of these situations carefully—rushing into them will only cause you to stumble. You are affected by a greater need to have many new and exciting experiences, and to break away from what seems to be a lack of control over your persona and professional environment. There is a comfortable home in your future, with a strong sense of attainment, but this should come as no surprise—you laid the foundation for your success.

CAPRICORN (12/22-1/19)

Establish yourself and prepare to achieve great success this year. New business propositions will present themselves, but you should give yourself ample time to evaluate them. Some Capricorns will change their careers altogether, while others will only supplement with additional employment. You will experience a great yearning to leave this city. Some will relocate, while others just need a vacation. Patience will be your strength, while excessiveness will delay you from achieving your goals. Ahead of you is a time of great potential wealth; you are urged to grasp prosperity consciousness. The more you project a sense of charity, the more money you will acquire. In essence, you will be more creative and have a noticeably stronger imagination. Use this to create new methods in your business and be well on the way to success.

AQUARIUS (1/20-2/18)

The opening vibrations of this year center around your home and finances. You've come to place where you feel quite comfortable. You are filled with a sense of achievement, free from past stress and worry. Now you are ready to move on to the next level of achievement. For many, this will mean upscaling the quality of your life and environment. You could move into a fancier apartment or to a more comfortable city. All choices center around pampering your personal needs, with possibly one major limitation being your finances.

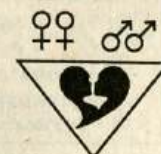
Be aware of how this yearning taints you and your actions; be conscious of your words and movements. Displaced emotion could cause you to lose friends, or at the very least create much unneeded stress. Toward the middle of March, the chill wind warms and your life re-balances.

DISCS (2/19-3/20)

The turbulent influences of the passing year are well on their way to leaving, and your life is finally in the process of rebalancing itself. Your attitude will be extremely goal-oriented and to not let anything stand in your way as you strive for achievement and success. You are put on notice to be aware of what you put in your body and to be conscious of your health. Although the material world is ordering itself, your body is still not adjusted. The inner stress that is buried deep within you could manifest on any level; learn to voice your emotions and many things could be avoided. Be aware of all new acquaintances: if you see fit to get involved with people who are using you, be totally conscious of that fact. Remember that this is your life—you are the one running the show.

Joseph Molina is a practicing psychic who 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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Travel

Continued from page 48

ing young men. We actually liked two of them, who happened to own a bakery, and offered to ply us with bread and pastry if we would go dancing with them. This seemed harmless enough, plus they had a broken-down panel truck as transportation, which meant we didn't have to hoist those back packs and walk forever to find a place to stay.

So, fools that we were, we cheerfully agreed to the deal. Things went smoothly for quite some time, the food was good, they were minding their manners, but before the promised ride to the cheap hotel they knew about came the attempt at hanky-panky. Words falling on deaf ears takes on a whole new meaning when you don't speak Italian and they don't speak English. Though not even written then, I'm sure I was trying with body language to shout "what part of *no* don't you understand?" However, the communications failed miserably, and there we were about to be ravaged by these guys when Carolyn remembered the van parked just outside the back door. We made a plan dancing around the pastry bags and, at just the right moment, fled out the back door, hauled ass into the van, and promptly locked all the doors, making faces and saying *naa, naa, naa, naa, naa* out the windows at our assailants. Furthermore, our trusty backpacks and sleep-

ing bags were inside, so we made ourselves comfy and slept the night inside the van, much to the chagrin of our hosts. I think we did the reputations for young American women a lot of good in Italy; it did however prejudice me against going further south than Florence when I visit that splendid country.

I think 20 years later that the no-definite-itinerary, pack-light, buy-a-rail-pass type of trip is still a wonderful way to enlarge one's world, all done with great innocence and a carefree spirit. It's still an economical way to start your world travels too, since a 15-day unlimited train travel pass costs \$398 if you are 26 or younger. A student I.D. also brings substantial discounts on lodging and admission prices to museums, galleries, and historical sights. There are excellent guides published for the student traveler, like "Let's Go Europe," which detail youth hostels and cheap accommodations throughout Europe.

Kemwell is an international travel company, specializing in short-term car leasing in Europe, and if two to four friends travel together, this option is more affordable than the rail passes, plus you enjoy the added benefit of complete flexibility with having your own car. The only condition governing a short-term lease is that you must have the car a minimum of 17 days, or maximum of six months. The cost for leasing a brand-new Peugeot 205, which will carry four passengers with one bag each in comfort, is \$250 per

person for the 17-day period, based on four people sharing the lease cost. This rate includes all insurance, roadside assistance, and taxes; all you pay for is gasoline and tolls.

Another reasonable alternative to doing it on your own is to join a tour operated by "Our Family Abroad," a worldwide tour operator, providing exclusive gay/lesbian tours all over the world at affordable prices. For example, a 10-day tour to England, Scotland, and Wales costs \$1510 and includes roundtrip airfare to London, full breakfast daily, sightseeing, and four dinners. They also offers great tours in the U.S., like "Canyon Country," eight days in Arizona, the Grand Canyon, Lake Powell, Bryce Canyon, and ending in Las Vegas for \$1048, and "The Pacific Northwest," a nine-day tour from Vancouver to San Francisco, priced at \$1178.

Perhaps the best value for any gay or lesbian traveler is the Club RSVP vacation week in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, scheduled for April 14-21, 1996. Prices start at \$695 per person and include a week of fun, all meals and alcoholic beverages, all sporting activities, and live entertainment. RSVP Vacations are the best in the business, and this week is one of the best travel values you'll find. ▼

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

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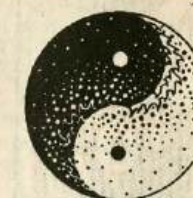
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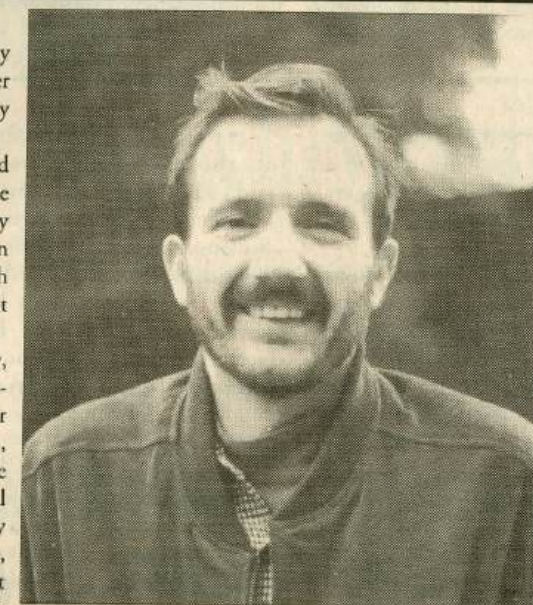
Donald Workman left his family
and a host of friends on December
20, 1995 after living courageously
with AIDS for several years.

Donny had the unique ability to find
the best in every situation, pointing out the
light, regardless of how bleak things may
have appeared on the outside. Donny was an
example to us all of how to live and die with
love, regardless of how many years he spent
with his "Seven Dwarfs" T-cell count.

Born in the farming town of Shelby,
Illinois, Donny lived in California, Tennes-
see and Texas. Besides a stint as a popular
bartender at the Kon Tiki in Galveston,
Donny was a valued employee wherever he
worked, including the Guardian Funeral
Plans, Dental World, and most recently
Uptown Express and *OutSmart* magazines,
where he cheerfully worked as receptionist
and general "man about the office." Donny's
spirit of gay pride led him to become one of
the original hosts of the Nellie Ribbons
Party. Sharing his beliefs in holistic health,
Donny attended and later directed The Self-

Healing Group at Spectrum Center founded by Michael K. Wilson.

Donny was an accomplished and talented man, and expressed
himself in many media through Patrick Palmer's HIV+ ART classes,



Donald Workman
January 23, 1961- December 20, 1995

the Art League of Houston, 1953 Montrose Blvd. Donations in his memory
can be made to the Patrick Palmer's HIV+ Art Program, care of the Art
League of Houston (713) 523-9530.

A memorial service in Donny's honor will be
held on Thursday, January 25, at 7:30 pm at

What a World, What a World...

Happy '96! Second only to a really good collagen treatment, there's nothing like a brand-new year to give a gal a fresh start on life. But, generally speaking, I have always believed the making of resolutions at year's beginning to be a somewhat shortsighted ritual, possibly concocted by those obsessed with their own inadequacies.

Actually, the ancient Babylonians are the folks responsible for the making of New Year's resolutions, according to Charles Panati's *Extraordinary Origins of Everyday Things*. Rather than longing for release from their collective weight problem or nicotine addiction, these upstanding ancestors of ours made it a point at the first of each year "to return all borrowed farming tools and household utensils and to pay off outstanding debts."

Admittedly, I know squat about farming tools, unless you count knowing how to operate a corkscrew. But has it occurred to anyone else that if all of us suddenly paid off all our outstanding debts, telephone collectors the world over would be thrown into the chasm of unemployment? To avoid worldwide economic collapse, I suggest that this is one Babylonian resolution that begs to be broken.

This year, at the gentle urging of a handful of well-meaning, self-help-seminar-attending friends, I've reconsidered my no-resolution policy. They've convinced me that those who do not learn from the past



by Nancy Ford

are indeed destined to repeat it, often not with the facilitator of our choice.

Therefore, in a sincere effort to avoid repeating various disasters-turned-learning-experiences wrought in '95, here is my personal list of resolutions for '96.

I resolve

- to remember that my car has been designed to serve as a mode of transportation, and I should not treat its interior as though it were a storage closet, purse, or aluminum can and newspaper recycling center.

- to not change my name to an unpronounceable symbol representing omnisexuality.

- to practice restraint when striking up conversations with women while performing in out-of-town nightclubs on the road. Even though these women may bear a very striking physical resemblance to Gloria Steinem in dim light, these same women may also have been, just that very weekend, released from prison.

- to not be surprised when these same women take it personally when I turn down their offers to slow dance.

- to remind those who choose to dine with me that, in my home, Nutrasweet® and Simplex® are considered instruments of the devil.

- to, conversely and at the suggestion of my physician, drop some weight.

- to do so cheerfully and willingly, undaunted by the fact that Keiko, the Acting Whale (you know, Willie, in *Free Willie*), is at this moment being cared for and pampered by marine biologists in Rhode Island until it gains a ton. We're not being euphemistic here; the ailing whale literally needs to gain a ton to bring it up to its recommended fighting weight. Some mammals have all the luck.

- to accept the fact that though a holistic approach to healing may work wonders for the body and spirit, from an automotive standpoint, it sucks.

- to remember that just because someone double-dares me to do something, it's immature to feel compelled to accept the challenge. It should be sufficient to visualize that, yes indeed, if closely shaven, my dog's butt would closely resemble Bob Dole's profile. It should not be necessary to put my dog through depilatory humiliation just to prove a point.

- to remember that God never intended for L'Oreal Moisturizing Cover Stick to be a permanent replacement for the cosmetic benefit of a full night's sleep.

- to drive around, rather than through, Columbia Falls, Montana, should I find myself vacationing outside the loop. Folks from Columbia Falls, Montana, seem to adhere to a severe Code of Conduct.

- to sit down and actually

watch an episode of *Home Improvement*, from beginning to end, in its entirety. Afterward, if I still want to trash it as an insidious piece of fluff designed to promote heterosexuality, so be it.

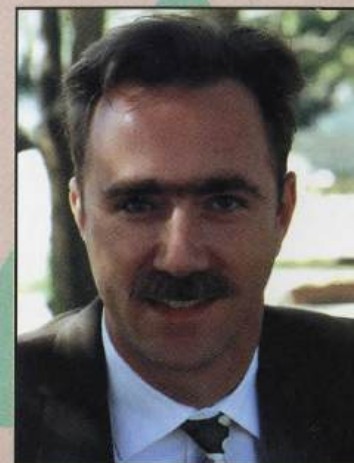
- to not be disheartened by the fact that a recent astrological reading revealed that my ruling signs—Leo with Aries rising—are identical to that of Amy Fisher.

- to stop pretending that the remote control for my TV doubles as a fitness device—you know, like one of those springy, grip-tightener things.

- that, even though she's no longer dating anyone, it's probably not safe to think of Paula Barbieri as available.

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

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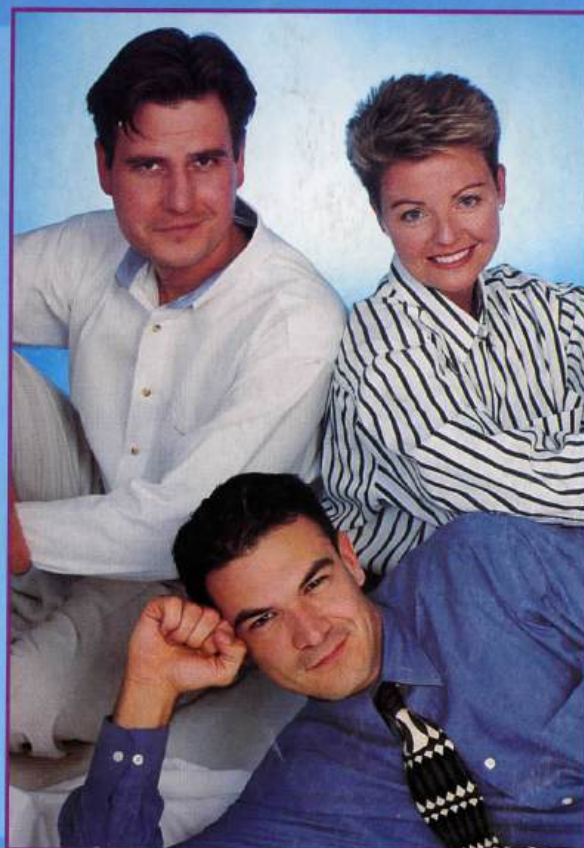
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