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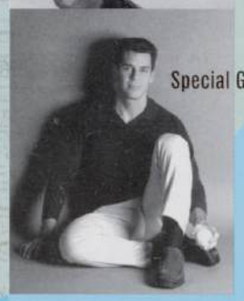
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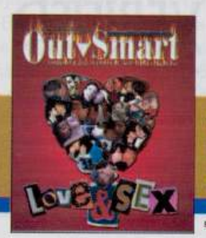
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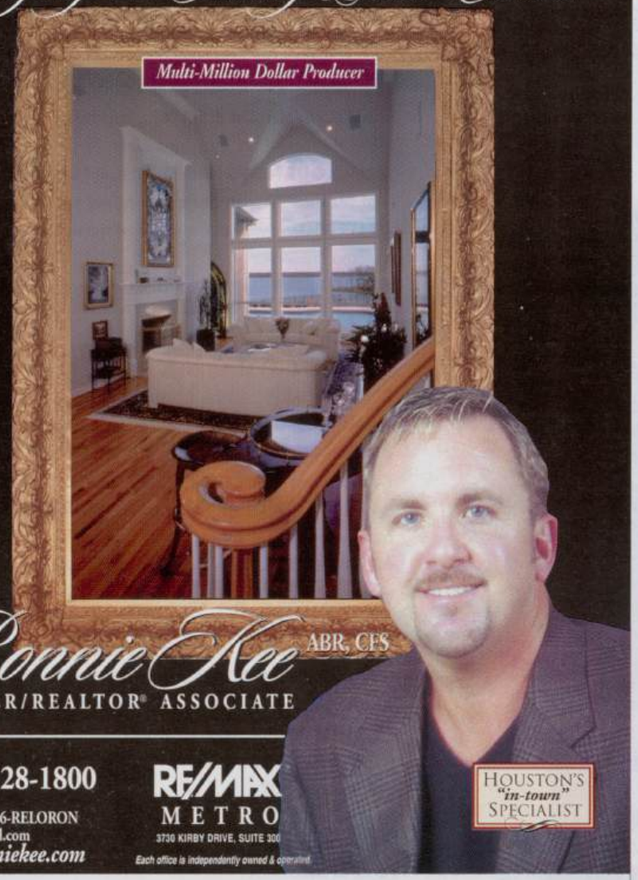
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From the Editor


Ann Walton Sieber

With amazement, we note that *OutSmart* is celebrating our seventh anniversary. As we launch into our eighth year of publishing, we'd like to announce a change in our masthead.

Since our inception, we've called *OutSmart* "Houston's gay & lesbian monthly magazine." Now we are going to change our tagline to read: "Houston's gay, lesbian, bi, and trans magazine." We hope this description better fits who we are.

In truth, we've been working to include the transgender community in the magazine all along, for we believe that what you call yourself is less important than what you do. The world of transgender issues and considerations is new territory to many of us, and so we're learning. I'm thankful to several members of the T community who have been patient with me and helped me get over my feelings of awkwardness and understand better what being transgendered is all about. In particular, I'd like to thank Lilly Roddy, our astrologer (who graced our cover last month, pictured at right), who has been a patient teacher to myself and many others in the office. "Sometimes being an activist is just being who you are" (as eloquently said by Jose Niño, an out staff member at MECA [Multi-Culture Education and Counseling through the Arts]). Thank you, Lilly, for just being your wonderful self, and thereby being a leader to us all.



When one starts taking pains to be inclusive, we know the laundry lists of subgroups can get a tad ridiculous. We'll admit that, word types that we are, just the awkwardness of the lengthly "gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered" (gay is such a neat short word) gave us pause, politics aside. When we announced last month the excellent decision by the chamber to include B&T in their name, I couldn't repress the joke that their new acronym GHGLBTCC almost spells "gibbligook." But we will also say that we were inspired by the chamber's leadership, and decided it was time to move on this item we'd long discussed. Ungainly as laundry lists can be, I think we probably need to start with some clumsy acronyms so that we can spell out that we really are inclusive—as all the subgroups in the list get to know each other, then we can go back to just being people.

Why haven't we changed the *OutSmart* tagline before now? The debate is not a simple one. I'd argue that all generalizations and boundaries are to some degree false, misleading. To put out a gay (or a GL or a GLBT) magazine is already a bit of a tricky proposition: Why focus just on this one aspect of the rich and whole people we are?

But we also know, and know in a deep way, that it is important to state clearly that we are gay . . . or lesbian . . . or bisexual . . . or transgendered. *Because* being queer has not been okay, it's important to explore in the light of day what one's sexuality/gender is all about. I see it as a pendulum swing that many groups go through who have been oppressed—first the dark ages when we are persecuted and suppressed, then a revolution in which we take the pendulum in the opposite direction and proclaim loud and clear, "We are queer and we are here!" And then . . . and then the pendulum will eventually seek a place of rest at the center, when being gay is seen as no more denigrated or noteworthy than the many other aspects and roles that make up a person—having black hair, being an older sister, loving music. And I suppose there's nothing wrong with having a speciality magazine to explore this one facet of our wonderful selves. We've always strived to make *OutSmart* much more about wholeness than about separation.

So all this is to say that drawing these lines of definition is artificial to begin with, and fraught with the context of the oppresion we're fighting. Should the gay movement embrace the transgender movement? Lord knows that's a huge issue—with intelligent arguments on both sides—and I won't try to adequately address it here. But this quandry has a familiar ring, as familiar as that pendulum I discussed, for it comes up whenever there are groups fighting against oppression, and groups even more oppressed seek to use the momentum to gain their own justice in the world. It reminds me of when the fight for the abolition of slavery was gaining widespread momentum in this country in the 1800s—because women were taking leadership roles in the anti-slavery movement, the issue of women's rights started gaining attention. As women fought for the rights of African-Americans, it was only natural to say, "Wait a minute, what about my rights too?!" And against this argument was made the objection that lumping women's rights in with rights for African-Americans would endanger the cause. I don't have an answer on that one: These aren't simple cut-and-dried questions.

Likewise, should the transgendered movement be included in the gay movement, even though one is a question of sexual orientation and the other is a question of gender orientation? I don't know for sure. But my heart says that in our magazine, it feels right to try and be as open as we are able. If I'm going to err, I'd rather err on the side of inclusiveness.

So, *OutSmart* welcomes a few more labels to its masthead. Actually, we hope to not keep them there for very long. We'd like to move toward a tagline such as, "Celebrating Houston's diverse community." For instead of breaking people down into categories, we'd rather bring everyone together. But we decided on this step because we felt it was important to say, and say specifically, that we are proud to include the transgendered members of our community. ■

Ann Walton Sieber

Letters

DALTON, OUR DALTON

Thank you so much for the great article by Ann Walton Sieber on Dalton DeHart ["Dalton's Social Year: Preserving memory, loving people through the lens of a camera," January *OutSmart*]. She captured his charming and genuine nature perfectly. In 1999, the chamber (Greater Houston GLBT Chamber) gave Dalton a Community Service award because one of the most important things we have in the GLBT community is our history, and Dalton has taken it upon himself to capture that for us. He is a treasure, quietly preserving the images of our life and growth in Houston.

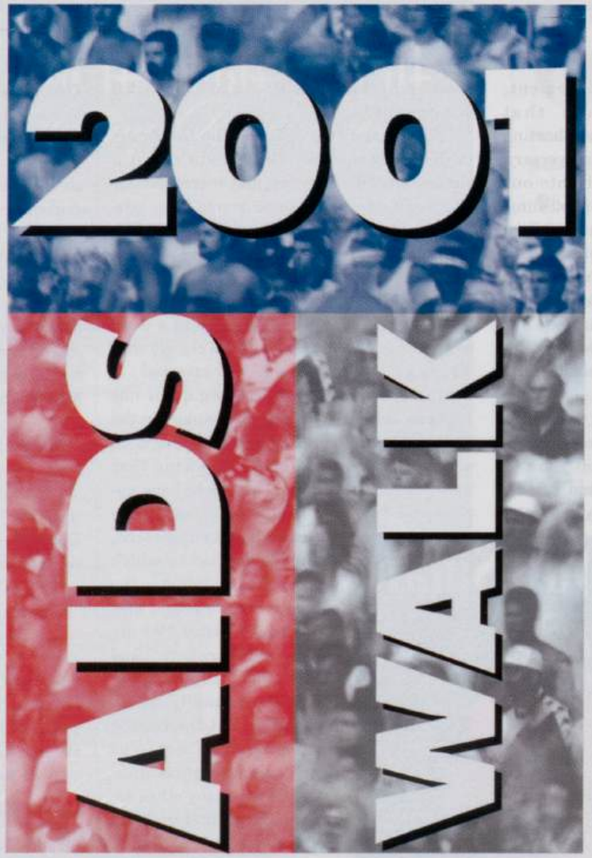
—Anita Renteria
Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce

What a wonderful article—I hate to say it, but I think you [Dalton] are even busier then ME!!!! Congrats—it was great fun to relive a wonderful year!

—Ernie Manouse
Co-Host/Producer, *WeekNight Edition*
Houston Public Television

Greetings! I just wanted to let you guys know I love the photo of the Poetry Passion & Politics series. Mr. DeHart has a great eye, and I personally appreciate his work for the community.

—Simone A. Cunningham & Amerada Hess



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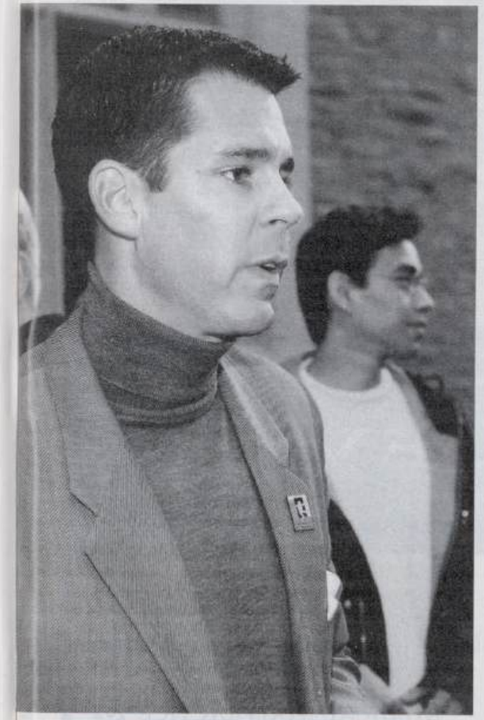
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OutSmart
Houston's Gay & Lesbian Monthly Magazine

Briefs compiled by Ann Walton Sieber

THREE STRIKES, BUT YOU'RE NOT OUT



Out baseball player Billy Bean—keynote speaker at the HRC Black Tie gala—talks about the repressive world of major league sports teams

The Human Rights Campaign's annual black tie gala will be Sat., March 3, at the Westin Galleria. This year's keynote speaker is Billy Bean, a former major league baseball player who is one of the very few openly gay male athletes from professional team sports. Bean's story is a compelling one, for he tells of a realm where coming out is still not an option.

"To know that you can't tell the truth under any circumstance is terrible," Bean said in a December 1999 interview with *The Advocate*. "You always feel you are doing something wrong or bad or criminal. In the locker room everyone was always talking about girlfriends or wives and what they did last night. My teammates would say, 'Let's go, Beaner. Let's go pick up some girls tonight.' They wanted me along because I am confident and outgoing. To them it was fun, but to me it was constant cold water splashed on you. . . .

"Every minute I was on the field I knew I was different. I could never figure out why I felt so out of place. I wasn't sure I was gay at first, but I knew I was this close to being outta there with my shirt ripped off my back. I knew I was one step away from someone yelling, 'Get the f— out, you don't belong here!' That's not a warm feeling to work under."

Unlike solo sports like tennis or golf, in team sports an athlete knows they are much more indispensable, and that the homophobia of their teammates will make or break their careers. Because of this, no professional baseball, football, or basketball player has yet come out until after they retired.

By popular demand, the incredibly funny Georgia Ragsdale is returning as MC to the HRC Black Tie Gala. The family of James Byrd Jr. will also be honored.

Individual tickets can be purchased by calling 800-494-TIXS. For additional information, contact this year's co-chairs: Bret Baccus at 713/807-7408 or Dalia Stokes at 713/522-2224. ■

Georgia on My Web: HRC Black Tie weblinks



• *The Advocate*'s amazing cover story interview with Billy Bean: http://www.advocate.com/html/stories/801/801_cvr_stry_bean.html.



• *OutSmart*'s interview with James Byrd's sister Louvon Harris: http://www.outsmartmagazine.com/issue/i09-00/byrd.html.



• *OutSmart*'s interview with Georgia Ragsdale before the 2000 gala: http://www.outsmartmagazine.com/issue/i03-00/georgia.html.

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A Letter from the Co-chair of GLSEN

GLBT LESSON PLAN

The next superintendent of HISD needs to do a better job than Dr. Rod Paige for gay students and staff

by Andrea Washington

Now that President-elect Bush has nominated Dr. Rod Paige as Secretary of Education, where does that leave Houston ISD? More specifically, what does the future hold for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) students and staff of HISD? During Dr. Paige's six-year tenure as superintendent of one of the largest school districts in the nation, very little consideration was ever given to the issues of GLBT students and staff. No policy was ever suggested or made that would protect these students and staff from discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation. No training was ever given, or even available, to teachers and administrators on GLBT issues. Nor were there any curriculum that was inclusive of GLBT historical figures or current issues. There was, and still is, a pervasive atmosphere of fear for GLBT students and staff of being harmed or fired. For the nation, my greatest hope is that Dr. Paige will broaden his mind and his approach to GLBT issues and support the passage of policy and legislation that will protect GLBT students and staff from sexual orientation-based discrimination and harassment.

Now our eyes turn toward home and the appointment of a new superintendent. Will Dr. Kaye Stripling, as interim superintendent, perpetuate the legacy of Dr. Paige and continue to ignore the needs and issues of GLBT students and staff? Or will she commit herself to helping the board of trustees select a future superintendent who will ensure that all schools are safe for all students and that the emotional well-being of all students is a top priority? But more important, how fair-minded will Stripling's successor be?

We, the GLBT community of Houston, have an opportunity to start fresh and make our voices heard with the school board trustees as they search for and select a new superintendent for HISD. Parents of GLBT youth, GLBT teachers, staff and administrators can call, write, e-mail, or even phone your school board trustee and let her/him know you are concerned about GLBT issues and the safety of GLBT youth in HISD schools. You can also attend the meetings of the local Houston chapter of the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN). It is important that our future superintendent know that silence in the face of GLBT issues will no longer be acceptable nor tolerated. It is imperative that the school board trustees know that the parents of GLBT youth, their constituents, want their children to be treated with dignity and respect, and for them to be

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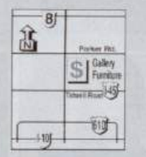
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able to attend school without fear. To find out your school board trustee, call HISD Board Services Office 713/892-6121, or visit http://www.houstonisd.org/board/trusteemap.htm. For location/time of GLSEN meetings, e-mail www.glsenhouston@yahoo.com.

Lastly, some very important legislation is going before the state legislature concerning this very issue: legislation to protect GLBT students, teachers, and state workers from sexual orientation-based discrimination and harassment, and a state hate crimes bill. Now is the time to contact your state representatives and senators demanding the passage of these bills. Our voices must be heard, and we must demand that our civil rights no longer be ignored and denied. Our children should not fear being harmed while at school because they are GLBT. We should not be afraid of losing our jobs, our homes, or even our lives because we are GLBT. If we do not stand up for our rights and the rights of our children, who will?

Andrea Washington is a former teacher with HISD, and is co-chair of Houston's chapter of the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (GLSEN). Contact at glsenhouston@yahoo.com.

State & Local Briefs

PROGRESS IN THE LEGE

Two long-overdue bills for basic gay and transgender rights were introduced into the Texas Legislature on January 16, the first day the legislature met after Martin Luther King Day.

First, Representative Debra Danburg filed HB687, a bill that would simply remove from the books the Texas sodomy law, Section 21.06 of the Texas Penal Code. On June 8, 2000, a three-judge panel ruled in the case of Lawrence and Garner v. Texas that the Texas sodomy law violates the Equal Rights Amendment of the Texas Constitution.

"This law has already been ruled unconstitutional. The Texas sodomy law is not enforceable and it's quite simply archaic," said Rep. Danburg, who has long worked on repealing the sodomy law. "Keeping this type of law on the books and in the courts will only continue to cost Texas money in appeals and other challenges. For the benefit of all Texans, we should remove this law now."

Next, Representative Glen Maxey (a Democrat from Austin) filed HB 668, a bill that would prohibit workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The bill would protect employees from discrimination in hiring, firing, promotion, and treatment. Currently, federal law provides basic legal protection against employment discrimination on the basis of race, gender, religion, national origin, or disability, but not sexual orientation or gender identity. Those who experience this type of discrimination have no recourse.

"Qualified, hardworking Texans should never be denied job opportunities, fired, or discriminated against at work for reasons that are unrelated to job performance," Rep. Maxey said. "The ability to get and hold a job should be a fundamental right for all Texans."

The bill would not allow preferential treatment or quotas, nor would it pertain to small businesses or religious organizations.

The Texas Non-Discrimination in Employment Act (TXENDA), like the proposed federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), has nationwide support from corporations and nonprofit organizations.

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From the street you can tell this home is awesome! Front door opens to huge living room (27x19) with cathedral ceiling and wall of windows overlooking backyard and pool! Spacious kitchen with granite counters opens to family room. Bleached hardwood floors! Master has vaulted ceilings and huge walk-in closet! 2823 sq. ft. located at 10215 Willowgrove in Willow Meadows just a few blocks outside the loop near Meyerpark. ...$365,000



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State Capitol in Austin, with a training session in Austin the evening before.

We hear TG Lobby Day can be a wonderfully empowering and positive experience, giving participants a sense of truly being active citizens. You do not need any experience in lobbying, although you do need to make an appointment with your representative in advance. (If you don't know who your house or senate rep is, search by zip code at Texas Legislature Online, www.capitol.state.tx.us/.)

In the lobby training session, instructions will be given on what to do and say, including all the pending legislation and the educational packet you'll be leaving with your representative. Everyone will be matched with a partner, so no one will be facing a legislator alone.

Anyone can attend. "Quite simply, this is a gathering of the clan (transgender/gender variant/intersexed/spouses, significant others/family members/friends)," writes Sarah DePalma of the Texas Gender Advocacy Information Network. "Anyone who wants to attend Transgender Lobby Day and wants to work on behalf of our civil rights is welcome. Please don't send us e-mails saying that you are 'just a cross dresser' or 'I'd have to come in drab.' We aren't the Human Rights Campaign. TGAIN is a totally inclusive organization.

"Wear business clothes for the gender you are presenting. Legislators are our employees. There is absolutely no reason to feel intimidated. (You will be surprised at how well you remember the training and how well you will be received.)"

For more information, call 713/779-4662, or e-mail sarahdepalma@ev1.net. Lobby Training 101 will be held Mon., Feb. 21, 7 p.m. at The Cheshire Cat, 612 W. 34th St., Austin, 512/452-1145. (If you can't make the training, there will be a crash course on the actual day.)



BOLD & BRIGHT PRIDE

The Pride Committee of Houston unveiled the logo for this year's Gay & Lesbian Pride 2001 celebration and its theme "Embrace Diversity." Designed by Houston graphic artist Diane Jolley, the logo was presented at a Pride party on Jan. 18 at the Art League of Houston. For more information or if you want to get in on the Pride excitement and join the Pride Committee of Houston, you can call the PrideLine at 713/529-6979 or e-mail info@pridehouston.org.

AIDS WALK HOUSTON

The 13th annual AIDS Walk Houston will be held Sunday, March 4, to raise funds for AIDS Foundation Houston and 10 partnering Houston HIV/AIDS service organizations. Starting in Sam Houston Park, the AIDS Walk is one of the most pleasant ways to spend a day helping fight AIDS. Working with Chase Bank as the Title Sponsor, last year's AIDS Walk raised $325,000 with 4,000 participants. For information, call 713/623-6796 or e-mail walk@aidshelp.org or see their website at www.aidshelp.com.

FORUM ON BISEXUALITY

There will be a panel discussion on bisexuality at First Unitarian Church, 5200 Fannin, on Feb. 18, 1:30–3:30 p.m. Everyone is invited to attend what should prove a lively and intriguing discussion. Call First UU at 713/526-5200 for more information.

PFLAG FOR SPANISH SPEAKERS

PFLAG has added a Spanish-language small support group to its regular support groups at Christ Church Cathedral. The meetings start with a one-hour general program, then a 10 to 15-minute break, then small support groups of 8-10 people with a PFLAG facilitator. (These are strictly support groups and the facilitators are not therapists.) In addition to the regular small groups for parents, gays, transgendered, and friends, PFLAG will now have two special small groups: One is the Spanish group and the other is a "spouses" group for those who have concerns with a gay spouse.

PFLAG meetings are held the first Sunday of every month at 2 p.m. at Christ Church Cathedral downtown, 1117 Texas Avenue. For information about the downtown meeting, or to find a PFLAG meeting near you, call 713/807-7878.

MEAT'S A DRAG!

We love cooking. We love vegetarians. We love PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals). And we love Lypsinka. So, of course, we love PETA's latest funny right-on ad.

Drag icon Lypsinka is the latest of PETA's wonderful public service announcements in the cause of saving our souls (and reducing our guts) by going green in the kitchen.

The PETA website at GoVeg.com shows that vegging out can be a lot more zippy than an endless endurance race of steamed cauliflower. We especially like the "Cosmic Zings" from Kate Pierson and Fred Schneider of The B-52's (funky little corn cups with mango, lime juice, corn tortillas, brown rice syrup, and jalepenos).

Lypsinka took time out from her critically acclaimed *Boxed Set* show in Manhattan to shoot the ad free of charge.



PHOTO - RUSSELL MAYNOR, HAIR/MAKEUP - LOUIS BRAUN

MTV TAKES A STAND

Television history was made Wednesday, January 14, when MTV aired *Anatomy of a Hate Crime*, the story of Matthew Shepard. Immediately following the groundbreaking show, the network held a live discussion group made up of high school students and members of GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network) and GLAAD (Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation). While the discussion proved enlightening, the events that took place afterward sent a powerful wakeup call to millions of viewers. In an unprecedented move, MTV dedicated the next 18 hours of commercial-free airtime to the reading of truthful accounts of hate crimes in the U.S. The historic programming, aimed at youth, kicked off a yearlong anti-discrimination campaign by the network en-

continued on page 17

Mission Accomplished!
Introducing New Videx EC
Ask Your Doctor!
BMS 400 mg 6674
(actual size)
VIDEX® EC
(didanosine) delayed-release capsules enteric-coated beadlets
Please see following page for brief summary of prescribing information, including **boxed warnings**.
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VIDEX® EC
(didanosine)

℞ ONLY

VIDEX® EC (didanosine) Delayed-Release Capsules
Enteric-Coated Beadlets

Brief Summary of Prescribing Information, 12/00. For complete prescribing information, please consult official package circular.

WARNING
FATAL AND NONFATAL PANCREATITIS HAVE OCCURRED DURING THERAPY WITH DIDANOSINE USED ALONE OR IN COMBINATION REGIMENS IN BOTH TREATMENT-NAIVE AND TREATMENT-EXPERIENCED PATIENTS, REGARDLESS OF DEGREE OF IMMUNOSUPPRESSION. VIDEX EC SHOULD BE SUSPENDED IN PATIENTS WITH SUSPECTED PANCREATITIS AND DISCONTINUED IN PATIENTS WITH CONFIRMED PANCREATITIS (SEE WARNINGS).

LACTIC ACIDOSIS AND SEVERE HEPATOMEGALY WITH STEATOSIS, INCLUDING FATAL CASES, HAVE BEEN REPORTED WITH THE USE OF NUCLEOSIDE ANALOGUES ALONE OR IN COMBINATION, INCLUDING DIDANOSINE AND OTHER ANTIRETROVIRALS. FATAL LACTIC ACIDOSIS HAS BEEN REPORTED IN PREGNANT WOMEN WHO RECEIVED THE COMBINATION OF DIDANOSINE AND STAVUDINE WITH OTHER ANTIRETROVIRAL AGENTS. THE COMBINATION OF DIDANOSINE AND STAVUDINE SHOULD BE USED WITH CAUTION DURING PREGNANCY AND IS RECOMMENDED ONLY IF THE POTENTIAL BENEFIT CLEARLY OUTWEIGHS THE POTENTIAL RISK. (SEE WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS: PREGNANCY.)

INDICATIONS AND USAGE

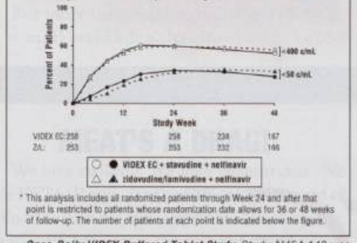
VIDEX EC (didanosine) in combination with other antiretroviral agents is indicated for the treatment of HIV-1 infection in adults whose management requires once-daily administration of didanosine or an alternative didanosine formulation. (See **Clinical Studies, PRECAUTIONS: Frequency of Dosing,** and **DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION.**)

There are limited data to date to support the long-term durability of response with a once-daily dosing regimen of didanosine.

Clinical Studies: Once-daily dosing of didanosine produces a pharmacokinetic profile that is substantially different from that observed with twice-daily dosing of didanosine (see **CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY** in full prescribing information). Further, VIDEX EC and the VIDEX (didanosine) buffered formulation produce substantially different pharmacokinetic profiles when dosed once daily. Therefore, controlled clinical trials were conducted with both formulations to evaluate the safety and efficacy of once-daily dosing of didanosine. There is no evaluable long-term clinical information that directly compares the efficacy of the two once-daily didanosine formulations. A small clinical study that was conducted to address this issue was not interpretable due to the small number of patients who completed the study.

Once-Daily VIDEX EC Study- Study AI454-152 is an ongoing, 48-week, randomized, open-label study comparing VIDEX EC (400 mg once daily) plus stavudine (40 mg twice daily) plus nelfinavir (750 mg three times daily) to zidovudine (200 mg twice daily) plus lamivudine (150 mg twice daily) combination tablets plus nelfinavir (750 mg three times daily) in 511 treatment-naive patients, with a mean CD4 cell count of 411 cells/mm³ (range 39 to 1105 cells/ mm³) and a mean plasma HIV-1 RNA of 4.71 $\log_{10}$ copies/mL (range 2.8 to 5.9 $\log_{10}$ copies/mL) at baseline. Patients were primarily males (72%) and Caucasian (53%) with a mean age of 35 years (range 18 to 73 years). The percentages of patients with HIV RNA <400 and <50 copies/mL and not meeting any criteria for treatment failure (eg, virologic failure, discontinuation for any reason, or AIDS-defining event) through 48 weeks are shown in Figure 1.

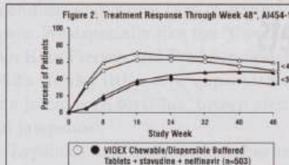
Figure 1. Treatment Response Through Week 48*, AI454-152



* This analysis includes all randomized patients through Week 24 and after that point is restricted to patients whose randomization date allows for 36 or 48 weeks of follow-up. The number of patients at each point is indicated below the figure.

Once-Daily VIDEX Buffered Tablet Study- Study AI454-148 was a randomized, open-label, multicenter study comparing treatment with VIDEX Chewable/Dispersible Buffered Tablets (400 mg once daily) plus stavudine (40 mg twice daily) and nelfinavir (750 mg three times daily) versus zidovudine (300 mg twice daily) plus lamivudine (150 mg twice daily) and nelfinavir (750 mg three times daily) in 756 treatment-naive patients, with a mean CD4 cell count of 368 cells/mm³ (range 80 to 1568 cells/mm³) and a mean plasma HIV-1 RNA of 4.69 $\log_{10}$ copies/mL (range 2.6 to 5.9 $\log_{10}$ copies/mL) at baseline. The percentages of patients with HIV RNA <400 and <50 copies/mL and not meeting any criteria for treatment failure through 48 weeks are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Treatment Response Through Week 48*, AI454-148



* Percent of patients at each time point who have HIV RNA <400 or <50 copies/mL, are on their original study medication (except stavudine-zidovudine switches), and have not experienced an AIDS-defining event. For the differences between treatment groups at 48 weeks, p<0.05 Cochran-Mantel-Haenszel test.

CONTRAINDICATION

VIDEX EC (didanosine) is contraindicated in patients with previously demonstrated clinically significant hypersensitivity to any component of the formulation.

WARNINGS

1. Pancreatitis

FATAL AND NONFATAL PANCREATITIS HAVE OCCURRED DURING THERAPY WITH DIDANOSINE USED ALONE OR IN COMBINATION REGIMENS IN BOTH TREATMENT-NAIVE AND TREATMENT-EXPERIENCED PATIENTS, REGARDLESS OF DEGREE OF IMMUNOSUPPRESSION. VIDEX EC SHOULD BE SUSPENDED IN PATIENTS WITH SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS OF PANCREATITIS AND DISCONTINUED IN PATIENTS WITH CONFIRMED PANCREATITIS. PATIENTS TREATED WITH VIDEX EC IN COMBINATION WITH STAVUDINE, WITH OR WITHOUT HYDROXYUREA, MAY BE AT INCREASED RISK FOR PANCREATITIS.

When treatment with life-sustaining drugs known to cause pancreatic toxicity is required, suspension of VIDEX EC therapy is recommended. In patients with risk factors for pancreatitis, VIDEX EC should be used with extreme caution and only if clearly indicated. Patients with advanced HIV infection, especially the elderly, are at increased risk of pancreatitis and should be followed closely. Patients with renal impairment may be at greater risk for pancreatitis if treated without dose adjustment.

The frequency of pancreatitis is dose related. In phase 3 studies with buffered formulations of didanosine, incidence ranged from 1% to 10% with doses higher than are currently recommended and 1% to 7% with recommended dose.

2. Lactic Acidosis/Severe Hepatomegaly with Steatosis

Lactic acidosis and severe hepatomegaly with steatosis, including fatal cases, have been reported with the use of nucleoside analogues alone or in combination, including didanosine and other antiretrovirals. A majority of these cases have been in women. Obesity and prolonged nucleoside exposure may be risk factors. Fatal lactic acidosis has been reported in pregnant women who received the combination of didanosine and stavudine with other antiretroviral agents. The combination of didanosine and stavudine should be used with caution during pregnancy and is recommended only if the potential benefit clearly outweighs the potential risk (see **PRECAUTIONS: Pregnancy**). Particular caution should be exercised when administering VIDEX EC to any patient with known risk factors for liver disease; however, cases have also been reported in patients with no known risk factors. Treatment with VIDEX EC should be suspended in any patient who develops clinical or laboratory findings suggestive of lactic acidosis or pronounced hepatotoxicity (which may include hepatomegaly and steatosis even in the absence of marked transaminase elevations).

3. Retinal Changes and Optic Neuritis

Retinal changes and optic neuritis have been reported in patients taking didanosine. Periodic retinal examinations should be considered for patients receiving VIDEX EC. (See **ADVERSE REACTIONS**.)

PRECAUTIONS

Frequency of Dosing: VIDEX EC should only be administered once daily. There are no data on the use of VIDEX EC dosed more frequently than once daily.

There are limited data to support the long-term durability of response with a once-daily dosing regimen of didanosine. Therefore, the preferred didanosine dosing regimen is twice daily with a VIDEX (didanosine) buffered formulation. Once-daily dosing with VIDEX EC should be considered only for adult patients whose management requires once-daily administration of didanosine or an alternative didanosine formulation (see **Clinical Studies**). **Consult the prescribing information for VIDEX buffered formulations and Pediatric Powder for Oral Solution for information on twice-daily dosing.**

VIDEX EC should be taken on an empty stomach.

Peripheral Neuropathy: Peripheral neuropathy, manifested by numbness, tingling, or pain in the hands or feet, has been reported in patients receiving didanosine therapy. Peripheral neuropathy has occurred more frequently in patients with advanced HIV disease, in patients with a history of neuropathy, or in patients being treated with neurotoxic drug therapy, including stavudine (see **ADVERSE REACTIONS**).

General:

Patients with Renal Impairment- Patients with renal impairment (creatinine clearance <60 mL/min) may be at greater risk of toxicity from didanosine due to decreased drug clearance (see **CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY** in full prescribing information). A dose reduction is recommended in these patients (see **DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION**).

Patients with Hepatic Impairment- It is unknown if hepatic impairment significantly affects didanosine pharmacokinetics. Therefore, these patients should be monitored closely for evidence of didanosine toxicity.

Hyperuricemia- Didanosine has been associated with asymptomatic hyperuricemia; treatment suspension may be necessary if clinical measures aimed at reducing uric acid levels fail.

Information for Patients (see **Patient Information Leaflet** in full prescribing information):

Patients should be informed that a serious toxicity of didanosine, used alone and in combination regimens, is pancreatitis, which may be fatal.

Patients should also be aware that peripheral neuropathy, manifested by numbness, tingling, or pain in hands or feet, may develop during therapy with VIDEX EC. Patients should be counseled that peripheral neuropathy occurs with greatest frequency in patients with advanced HIV disease or a history of peripheral neuropathy, and that dose modification and/or discontinuation of VIDEX EC may be required if toxicity develops.

Patients should be informed that when didanosine is used in combination with other agents with similar toxicities, the incidence of adverse events may be higher than when didanosine is used alone. These patients should be followed closely.

Patients should be cautioned about the use of medications or other substances, including alcohol, that may exacerbate VIDEX EC toxicities.

Patients should be informed that the preferred didanosine dosing regimen is twice daily with a VIDEX buffered formulation because there are limited data to support the long-term durability of response with a once-daily regimen.

VIDEX EC is not a cure for HIV infection, and patients may continue to develop HIV-associated illnesses, including opportunistic infection. Therefore, patients should remain under the care of a physician when using VIDEX EC. Patients should be advised that VIDEX EC therapy has not been shown to reduce the risk of transmission of HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination. Patients should be informed that the long-term effects of VIDEX EC are unknown at this time.

Drug Interactions (see also **CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY: Drug Interactions** in full prescribing information):

Drug interactions that have been established based on drug interaction studies are listed with the pharmacokinetic results in **CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY: Drug Interactions** (Tables 3-5) in full prescribing information. The clinical recommendations based on the results of these studies are listed in Table 1.

Table 1
Established Drug Interactions Based on Studies with Buffered Formulations of Didanosine and Expected to Occur with VIDEX EC

Coadministration Not Recommended Based on Drug Interaction Studies (see CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY: Drug Interactions in full prescribing information for Magnitude of Interaction)		
Drug	Effect	Clinical Comment
allopurinol	↑didanosine concentration	Coadministration not recommended.
Alteration in Dose or Regimen Recommended Based on Drug Interaction Studies (see CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY: Drug Interactions in full prescribing information for Magnitude of Interaction)		
Drug	Effect	Clinical Comment
ganciclovir	↑didanosine concentration	Appropriate doses for this combination, with respect to efficacy and safety, have not been established.
methadone	↓didanosine concentration	Appropriate doses for this combination, with respect to efficacy and safety, have not been established.

↑ indicates increase.
↓ indicates decrease.

Coadministration of VIDEX EC (didanosine) with drugs that are known to cause pancreatitis may increase the risk of this toxicity (see WARNINGS: Pancreatitis). Predicted drug interactions with VIDEX EC are listed in Table 2.

Table 2
Predicted Drug Interactions with VIDEX EC

Use with Caution, Risk of Adverse Reactions May Be Increased		
Drug Class	Effect	Clinical Comment
Drugs that may cause pancreatic toxicity	↑risk of pancreatitis	Use only with extreme caution.[a]
Neurotoxic drugs	↑risk of neuropathy	Use with caution.[b]

↑indicates increase.
[a] Only if other drugs are not available and if clearly indicated. If treatment with life-sustaining drugs that cause pancreatic toxicity is required, suspension of VIDEX EC is recommended (see **WARNINGS: Pancreatitis**).
[b] See **PRECAUTIONS: Peripheral Neuropathy**.

Carcinogenesis and Mutagenesis: Lifetime carcinogenicity studies were conducted in mice and rats for 22 and 24 months, respectively. In the mouse study, initial doses of 120, 800, and 1200 mg/kg/day for each sex were lowered after 8 months to 120, 210, and 210 mg/kg/day for females and 120, 300, and 600 mg/kg/day for males. The two higher doses exceeded the maximally tolerated dose in females and the high dose exceeded the maximally tolerated dose in males. The low dose in females represented 0.68-fold maximum human exposure and the intermediate dose in males represented 1.7-fold maximum human exposure based on relative AUC comparisons. In the rat study, initial doses were 100, 250, and 1000 mg/kg/day, and the high dose was lowered to 500 mg/kg/day after 18 months. The upper dose in male and female rats represented 3-fold maximum human exposure.

Didanosine induced no significant increase in neoplastic lesions in mice or rats at maximally tolerated doses.

Didanosine was positive in the following genetic toxicology assays: 1) the *Escherichia coli* tester strain WP2 uvrA bacterial mutagenicity assay; 2) the L5178Y/TK+/- mouse lymphoma mammalian cell gene mutation assay; 3) the *in vitro* chromosomal aberrations assay in cultured human peripheral lymphocytes; 4) the *in vitro* chromosomal aberrations assay in Chinese Hamster Lung cells; and 5) the BALB/c 3T3 *in vitro* transformation assay. No evidence of mutagenicity was observed in an Ames *Salmonella* bacterial mutagenicity assay or in rat and mouse *in vivo* micronucleus assays.

Pregnancy, Reproduction and Fertility: Pregnancy "Category B". Reproduction studies have been performed in rats and rabbits at doses up to 12 and 14.2 times the estimated human exposure (based upon plasma levels), respectively, and have revealed no evidence of impaired fertility or harm to the fetus due to didanosine. At approximately 12 times the estimated human exposure, didanosine was slightly toxic to female rats and their pups during mid and late lactation. These rats showed reduced food intake and body weight gains but the physical and functional development of the offspring was not impaired and there were no major changes in the F2 generation. A study in rats showed that didanosine and/or its metabolites are transferred to the fetus through the placenta. Animal reproduction studies are not always predictive of human response.

There are no adequate and well-controlled studies of didanosine in pregnant women. Didanosine should be used during pregnancy only if the potential benefit justifies the potential risk.

Fatal lactic acidosis has been reported in pregnant women who received the combination of didanosine and stavudine with other antiretroviral agents. It is unclear if pregnancy augments the risk of lactic acidosis/hepatic steatosis syndrome reported in non-pregnant individuals receiving nucleoside analogues (see **WARNINGS: Lactic Acidosis/Severe Hepatomegaly with Steatosis**). **The combination of didanosine and stavudine should be used with caution during pregnancy and is recommended only if the potential benefit clearly outweighs the potential risk.** Health care providers caring for HIV-infected pregnant women receiving didanosine should be alert for early diagnosis of lactic acidosis/hepatic steatosis syndrome.

Antiretroviral Pregnancy Registry: To monitor maternal-fetal outcomes of pregnant women exposed to didanosine and other antiretroviral agents, an Antiretroviral Pregnancy Registry has been established. Physicians are encouraged to register patients by calling 1-800-258-4263.

Nursing Mothers: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that HIV-infected mothers not breast-feed their infants to avoid risking postnatal transmission of HIV. A study in rats showed that following oral administration, didanosine and/or its metabolites were excreted into the milk of lactating rats. It is not known if didanosine is excreted in human milk. Because of both the potential for HIV transmission and the potential for serious adverse reactions in nursing infants, **mothers should be instructed not to breast-feed if they are receiving VIDEX EC (didanosine).**

Pediatric Use: The safety and efficacy of VIDEX EC in pediatric patients have not been established. Please consult the complete prescribing information for VIDEX (didanosine) buffered formulations and Pediatric Powder for Oral Solution for dosage and administration of didanosine to pediatric patients.

Geriatric Use: In an Expanded Access Program using a buffered formulation of didanosine for the treatment of advanced HIV infection, patients aged 65 years and older had a higher frequency of pancreatitis (10%) than younger patients (5%) (see **WARNINGS**). Clinical studies of didanosine, including those for VIDEX EC, did not include sufficient numbers of subjects aged 65 years and over to determine whether they respond differently than younger subjects. Didanosine is known to be substantially excreted by the kidney, and the risk of toxic reactions to this drug may be greater in patients with impaired renal function. Because elderly patients are more likely to have decreased renal function, care should be taken in dose selection. In addition, renal function should be monitored and dosage adjustments should be made accordingly (see **DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION: Dose Adjustment**).

ADVERSE REACTIONS

A SERIOUS TOXICITY OF DIDANOSINE IS PANCREATITIS, WHICH MAY BE FATAL (see **WARNINGS**). OTHER IMPORTANT TOXICITIES INCLUDE LACTIC ACIDOSIS/SEVERE HEPATOMEGALY WITH STEATOSIS; RETINAL CHANGES AND OPTIC NEURITIS; AND PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY (see **WARNINGS** and **PRECAUTIONS**).

When didanosine is used in combination with other agents with similar toxicities, the incidence of these toxicities may be higher than when didanosine is used alone. Thus, patients treated with VIDEX EC in combination with stavudine, with or without hydroxyurea, may be at increased risk for pancreatitis, which may be fatal, and hepatotoxicity (see **WARNINGS**). **Patients treated with VIDEX EC in combination with stavudine may also be at increased risk for peripheral neuropathy** (see **PRECAUTIONS**).

Studies of VIDEX EC and a buffered didanosine formulation yielded comparable safety profiles for both formulations. Selected clinical adverse events that occurred in clinical studies of didanosine dosed once daily in combination with other antiretroviral agents are provided in Table 3.

Table 3
Selected Clinical Adverse Events from Combination Studies of Didanosine Dosed Once Daily

	Percent of Patients[a]			
	AI454-152[b]		AI454-148[c]	
Adverse Events	VIDEX EC+ stavudine+ nelfinavir n=255	zidovudine/ lamivudine[d]+ nelfinavir n=250	VIDEX Buffered Tablet+ stavudine+ nelfinavir n=482	zidovudine+ lamivudine+ nelfinavir n=248
Diarrhea	54	56	70	60
Nausea	21	35	28	40
Headache	20	16	21	30
Peripheral Neurologic Symptoms/Neuropathy	20	8	26	6
Vomiting	13	18	12	14
Rash	10	10	13	16
Pancreatitis (see below)	<1	*	†	*

[a] Percentages based on treated patients.
[b] Median duration of treatment 43 weeks in the VIDEX EC+stavudine+ nelfinavir group and 39 weeks in the zidovudine/lamivudine+ nelfinavir group.
[c] Median duration of treatment 48 weeks.
[d] Zidovudine/lamivudine combination tablet.
* This event was not observed in this study arm.

In clinical trials using a buffered formulation of didanosine, pancreatitis resulting in death was observed in one patient who received didanosine plus stavudine plus nelfinavir, one patient who received didanosine plus stavudine plus indinavir, and 2 of 68 patients who received didanosine plus stavudine plus indinavir plus hydroxyurea. In an early access program, pancreatitis resulting in death was observed in one patient who received VIDEX EC plus stavudine plus hydroxyurea plus ritonavir plus indinavir plus efavirenz (see **WARNINGS**).

The frequency of pancreatitis is dose related. In phase 3 studies with buffered formulations of didanosine, incidence ranged from 1% to 10% with doses higher than are currently recommended and 1% to 7% with recommended dose.

Selected laboratory abnormalities that occurred in clinical studies of didanosine dosed once daily in combination with other antiretroviral agents are shown in Table 4.

Table 4
Selected Laboratory Abnormalities from Combination Studies of Didanosine Dosed Once Daily

	Percent of Patients[a]							
	AI454-152[b]				AI454-148[c]			
	VIDEX EC+ stavudine+ nelfinavir n=255		zidovudine/ lamivudine[d]+ nelfinavir n=250		VIDEX Buffered Tablet+ stavudine+ nelfinavir n=482		zidovudine+ lamivudine+ nelfinavir n=248	
Parameter	Grades 3-4[e]	All Grades	Grades 3-4[e]	All Grades	Grades 3-4[e]	All Grades	Grades 3-4[e]	All Grades
SGOT (AST)	4	40	4	17	3	42	2	23
SGPT (ALT)	4	39	4	20	3	37	3	24
Lipase	3	18	<1	8	7	17	2	11
Bilirubin	<1	7	<1	3	<1	7	<1	3

[a] Percentages based on treated patients.
[b] Median duration of treatment 43 weeks in the VIDEX EC+stavudine+ nelfinavir group and 39 weeks in the zidovudine/lamivudine+ nelfinavir group.
[c] Median duration of treatment 48 weeks.
[d] Zidovudine/lamivudine combination tablet.
[e] >5 x ULN for SGOT and SGPT, ≥2.1 x ULN for lipase, and ≥2.6 x ULN for bilirubin (ULN = upper limit of normal.)

Observed During Clinical Practice:

The following events have been identified during postapproval use of didanosine buffered formulations. Because they are reported voluntarily from a population of unknown size, estimates of frequency cannot be made. These events have been chosen for inclusion due to their seriousness, frequency of reporting, causal connection to didanosine, or a combination of these factors.

Body as a Whole- abdominal pain, alopecia, anaphylactoid reaction, asthenia, chills/fever, and pain.

Digestive Disorders- anorexia, dyspepsia, and flatulence.

Exocrine Gland Disorders- pancreatitis (including fatal cases) (see **WARNINGS**), sialoadenitis, parotid gland enlargement, dry mouth, and dry eyes.

Hematologic Disorders- anemia, leukopenia, and thrombocytopenia.

Liver- lactic acidosis and hepatic steatosis (see **WARNINGS**); hepatitis and liver failure.

Metabolic Disorders- diabetes mellitus, elevated serum alkaline phosphatase level, elevated serum amylase level, elevated serum gammaglutamyltransferase level, elevated serum uric acid level, hypoglycemia, and hyperglycemia.

Musculoskeletal Disorders- myalgia (with or without increases in creatine kinase), rhabdomyolysis including acute renal failure and hemodialysis, arthralgia, and myopathy.

Ophthalmologic Disorders- Retinal depigmentation and optic neuritis (see **WARNINGS**).

OVERDOSAGE

There is no known antidote for didanosine overdosage. In phase 1 studies, in which buffered formulations of didanosine were initially administered at doses ten times the currently recommended dose, toxicities included: pancreatitis, peripheral neuropathy, diarrhea, hyperuricemia, and hepatic dysfunction. Didanosine is not dialyzable by peritoneal dialysis, although there is some clearance by hemodialysis (see **CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY, Pharmacokinetics** in full prescribing information).

DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION

Dosage:

Adults- **VIDEX EC (didanosine) should be administered on an empty stomach.**

VIDEX EC Delayed-Release Capsules should be swallowed intact.

The recommended daily dose is dependent on body weight and is administered as one capsule given on a once-daily schedule as outlined in Table 5.

Table 5
Dosing of VIDEX EC Delayed-Release Capsules

Patient Weight	Dosage
≥60 kg	400 mg once daily
<60 kg	250 mg once daily

Pediatric Patients- VIDEX EC has not been studied in pediatric patients. Please consult the complete prescribing information for VIDEX (didanosine) buffered formulations and Pediatric Powder for Oral Solution for dosage and administration of didanosine to pediatric patients.

Dose Adjustment:

Clinical and laboratory signs suggestive of pancreatitis should prompt dose suspension and careful evaluation of the possibility of pancreatitis. VIDEX EC use should be discontinued in patients with confirmed pancreatitis (see **WARNINGS**).

Based on data with buffered didanosine formulations, patients with symptoms of peripheral neuropathy may tolerate a reduced dose of VIDEX EC after resolution of the symptoms of peripheral neuropathy upon drug interruption. If neuropathy recurs after resumption of VIDEX EC, permanent discontinuation of VIDEX EC should be considered.

Renal Impairment- Dosing recommendations for VIDEX EC and VIDEX buffered formulations are different for patients with renal impairment. Please consult the complete prescribing information on administration of VIDEX buffered formulations to patients with renal impairment.

In adult patients with impaired renal function, the dose of VIDEX EC should be adjusted to compensate for the slower rate of elimination. The recommended doses and dosing intervals of VIDEX EC in adult patients with renal insufficiency are presented in Table 6.

Table 6
Recommended Dosage of VIDEX EC in Renal Impairment by Body Weight[a]

Creatinine Clearance	Dosage	
(mL/min)	≥60 kg	<60 kg
≥60	400 once daily	250 once daily
30-59	200 once daily	125 once daily
10-29	125 once daily	125 once daily
<10	125 once daily	b

[a] Based on studies using a buffered formulation of didanosine.
[b] Not suitable for use in patients <60 kg with CL_{CR} <10 mL/min. An alternate formulation of didanosine should be used.

Patients Requiring Continuous Ambulatory Peritoneal Dialysis (CAPD) or Hemodialysis- For patients requiring CAPD or hemodialysis, follow dosing recommendations for patients with creatinine clearance less than 10 mL/min, shown in Table 6. It is not necessary to administer a supplemental dose of didanosine following hemodialysis.

Hepatic Impairment- (See **WARNINGS** and **PRECAUTIONS**.)

HOW SUPPLIED

VIDEX® EC (didanosine) Delayed-Release Capsules are white, opaque capsules that are packaged in bottles with child-resistant closures as described in Table 7.

Table 7
VIDEX EC Delayed-Release Capsules

125 mg capsule imprinted with BMS 125 mg 6671 in Tan	
NDC No. 0087-6671-17	30 capsules/bottle
NDC No. 0087-6671-12	60 capsules/bottle
200 mg capsule imprinted with BMS 200 mg 6672 in Green	
NDC No. 0087-6672-17	30 capsules/bottle
NDC No. 0087-6672-12	60 capsules/bottle
250 mg capsule imprinted with BMS 250 mg 6673 in Blue	
NDC No. 0087-6673-17	30 capsules/bottle
NDC No. 0087-6673-12	60 capsules/bottle
400 mg capsule imprinted with BMS 400 mg 6674 in Red	
NDC No. 0087-6674-17	30 capsules/bottle
NDC No. 0087-6674-12	60 capsules/bottle

The capsules should be stored in tightly closed containers at 25°C (77°F). Excursions between 15° and 30°C (59° and 86°F) are permitted [see USP Controlled Room Temperature].

HANDLING AND DISPOSAL

Disposal options include incineration, landfill, or sewer as dictated by specific circumstances and relevant national, state, and local regulations.

US Patent Nos: 4,861,759 and 5,616,566 (didanosine). Patent also Pending (didanosine capsules).

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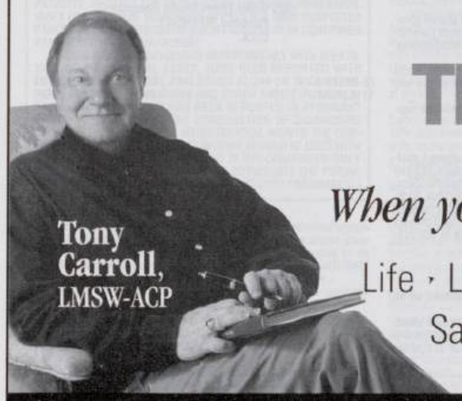
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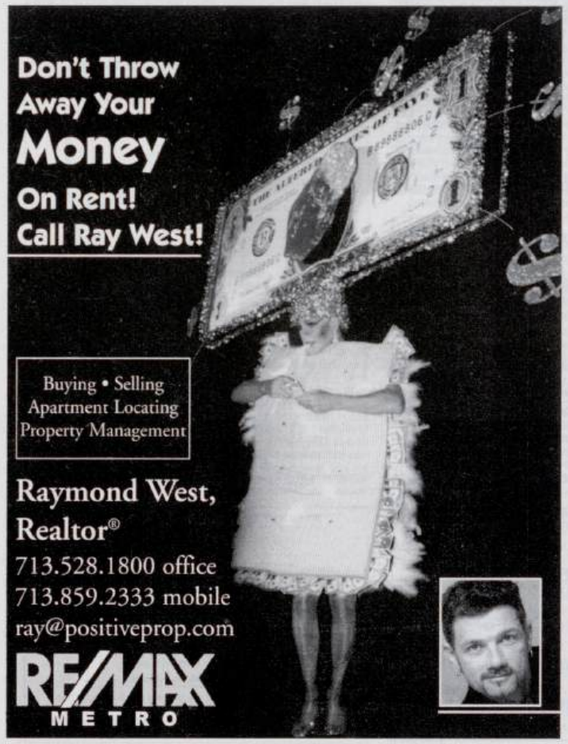


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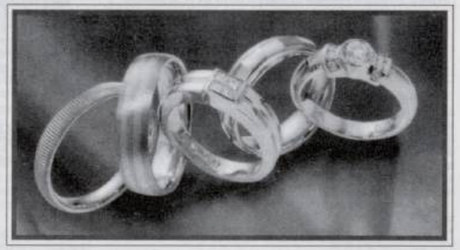
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MTV Takes a Stand

continued from page 12

titled "Fight for Your Right: Take a Stand Against Discrimination." Viewers are encouraged to join the campaign and make their voices heard. MTV offers links on its website to President-elect George. W. Bush and Congress for supporters to contact with their opinions on hate crimes issues.

Cathy Renna, GLAAD's news media director, was present for the post-show discussion group and recalls the mood in the network's control room when the reading of stories by various celebrities began. "There were zillions of people running around and we all just stopped when it started. We were shocked to silence when we heard these voices reading these stories. It was stunning." Renna says that MTV should be applauded for its bold efforts and commitment to the subject matter. "That's a huge commitment for 17 hours, and losing millions of dollars in ad revenues. I think it sends a very strong message from MTV. It was one of the most powerful things I've seen a media outlet do."

MTV will continue its hate crimes campaign throughout 2001. Five more special programs are planned. Renna adds that the network's priority is about more than sending a message. "It's not just about getting a message out there for them, it's about actually having people get engaged, which doesn't happen often enough." —*Chris Sill*

SOULFORCE: TITHE NOT TO OPPRESSION!

The standard-bearing religious activist group Soulforce has announced a new stage in their campaign of nonviolent protest against churches' exclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people through antigay policies and teachings. After high-visibility protests and arrests at the national and international gatherings of most of the major religious groups, Soulforce announced its intention to mobilize thousands of people of faith to withhold tithes and offerings from churches that oppress GLBT people.

Soulforce bases its "Stop Spiritual Violence" project on the words of Martin Luther King Jr.: "It is as much our obligation NOT to cooperate with evil as it is to cooperate with good."

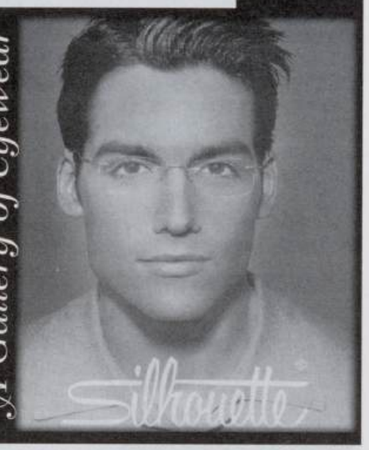
"These deeply moving vigils and symbolic arrests are just the beginning of our efforts to confront the teachings and actions of the Protestant and Catholic churches against gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals," explains Jimmy Creech, Soulforce board chair. "Stage II is the next step to empower people to stand up against oppression and spiritual abuse."

According to the Soulforce website (www.soulforce.org), gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people and those who support them, are being encouraged to withhold their tithes and offerings to antigay churches and to place cards in offering plates stating that they will no longer take part in their own oppression. The campaign further encourages people to donate their time and talent to organizations that seek justice and work against oppression.

"The antigay teachings and actions of the Protestant and Catholic churches lead directly and indirectly to discrimination, suffering, and even death," says Dr. Mel White, executive director of Soulforce. "And yet year after year we continue to support our own oppression with our tithes, offerings, and special gifts. We are hoping that thousands of people of faith will join us by withholding their financial support from the churches that oppress us until that oppression ends." ■

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LOGAN & BLOOM WED

Colleen Rua Logan and Deborah Renee Bloom were joined together in marriage during a public declaration of their Brit Ahavah or covenant of love. The wedding was a traditional Jewish ceremony, held at 5 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 10, 2000, at the Warwick Hotel in Houston, Texas. Before the ceremony, Colleen and Deborah signed a Ketubah or marriage contract in the presence of family and friends. Rabbi Myriam Klotz of Philadelphia performed the ceremony and Rabbi Shaul Osadchey of Houston, Texas, participated in the ceremony. Colleen and Deborah exchanged rings inscribed in Hebrew with a verse from the Song of Songs, " I have found the one whom my soul loves. . . " A reception, dinner and dancing followed at the Warwick Hotel.

Deborah's parents, Dr. Joseph and Zandra Bloom of Canton, Ohio, escorted her down the aisle. Unfortunately, Colleen's parents, Rev. Ernest and Muriel Logan, were unable to travel from Northern Ireland due to declining health and, therefore, her brother, Eamonn Logan of Pittsburgh, PA, escorted Colleen down the aisle.

The Sheva Brachot or Seven Wedding Blessings were chanted in Hebrew by Cantor Marilyn Ladin and recited in English by friends and family including: Marcy Rothman, Houston, TX; Seth Cramer, Columbus, Ohio; Don Wilder, Washington, D.C.; Mary Natividad, Victoria, TX; Sandra Wolk-Graubard, Cleveland, Ohio; Mark Aguirre, Washington, D.C.; and David Wolf-Bloom, San Jose, California.

Following the ceremony, Deborah and Colleen enjoyed a fabulous honeymoon trip to Puerta Vallarta, Mexico.

IN MEMORIAM

Charles "Chuck" Drake died January 2, 2001, just 47 days short of his 16th annual 30th birthday celebration. He died from AIDS complications.

Originally from New Holland, Ohio, Chuck was a longtime resident of Houston and Austin, a philanthropist, business entrepreneur, and owner of The Ripcord.

Chuck is survived by his companion, Solomon "Jae" Arkeen of Austin and Houston. He is also survived by his parents, Shirley and Dean Drake of New Holland, Ohio, and his sisters, Betsy Schach of Birmingham, Alabama; Denise Eldridge of Amelia, Ohio; and Lynn Anderson of Knolensville, Tennessee. Other survivors include Alan, Joyce, Caitlin, and Austin Batchellor of Austin; Ron Dionne of Houston; John DeShane of Beverly Hills, California; Joe Seay of Austin; and, of course, Flossie. The myriad of friends left behind are far too many for mention in print.


UNCREDITED

A memorial service was held Saturday, Jan. 13, at Sonoma, loated at 1415 California in Houston. In lieu of flowers, please send a donation to Houston Buyers Club, 3400 Montrose, Houston, TX 77006, in memory of Charles Drake.

We wish to send a special thanks to Dr. Salvato of Houston, Dr. Hart of Houston, Dr. Wright, Dr. Werntz, and Dr. Eichner of Austin, as well as Sona Nast of Austin and the staff of Nast, Arkeen & Associates in Austin. ■

BORDERS

We know how you like to be up on what's going down...

Monday, February 12
7:30 pm:
Jimmy Buffet Trivia Contest!
Join us at Borders Margaritta-ville for a night with Ken Hoffman of the *Houston Chronicle*. First prize walks out with a pair of tickets to the sold out concert!

Tuesday, February 13
7:30 pm:
William July, author, will be signing copies of and discussing his book, *Understanding the Tin Man*. Learn the whys and why nots of men.

Thursday, February 22
7 pm:
Author James Olsen sits in for autographs and a personal discussion of his book, *A Line in the Sand*. New information about the Alamo!

Monday, February 19
7:30 pm:
Authors Lee and Leslie Keno, antique dealers and appraisers, will discuss and sign their book, Hidden Treasure, recently featured on Martha Stewart.

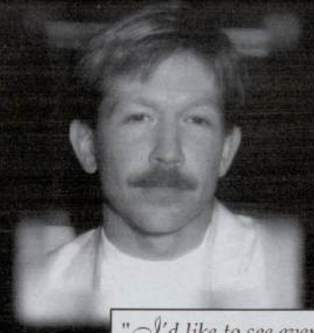
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Chuck Drake
1955-2001



"I'd like to see every single house in the world, no matter how poor the people are, have nice window treatments."

- Chuck Drake

OutSmart sends our thoughts out for the loss of Chuck Drake, owner of The Ripcord and not-so-silent icon of the community. You will be missed.

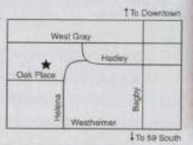
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Business News

Bill Baldwin has been named senior Realtor executive at **Karen Derr and Associates**. More than doubling his production over 1999, Baldwin was awarded the promotion for his consistently excellent client satisfaction rating, as well as his growth in residential sales. Besides continuing in sales, Baldwin will be a key person in the agency's executive team and assist in strategic planning for the Heights office for the year 2001. When asked to what he attributes his success, Baldwin cited repeat and referral business, as well as his affiliation with several custom builders in the Heights. Baldwin specializes in residential sales in the Heights, Montrose, West U and other close-in neighborhoods. He can be reached on his direct line at 281/850-6862. Karen Derr & Associates Realty has offices in the Heights and Kingwood areas and can be reached at 713/862-1600.

Did you know that over 45 percent of all Americans who die from cardiovascular disease have normal cholesterol levels? While managing your cholesterol is important, several other independent factors cause close to 50 percent of all cardiovascular deaths in the United States. These factors can be easily screened for and treated if you know what to look for. Want to know more? **Dr. Nellie Grose** will present a free public lecture on March 6 from 12:15–1:30 p.m. at the Houston Title Company, 777 Post Oak Place, Suite 100. Registration begins at noon. For more information or reservations, call Linda at 713/660-6620.

G&L Connection (www.glconnection.com), a communications provider for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community, announced that it has reached an agreement with **EarthLink**, the nation's second-largest Internet service provider (ISP). The partnership will allow G&L Connection to provide EarthLink's Internet service to their subscribers, while allocating 2.5 percent of their revenue to be donated to LGBT charities and causes.

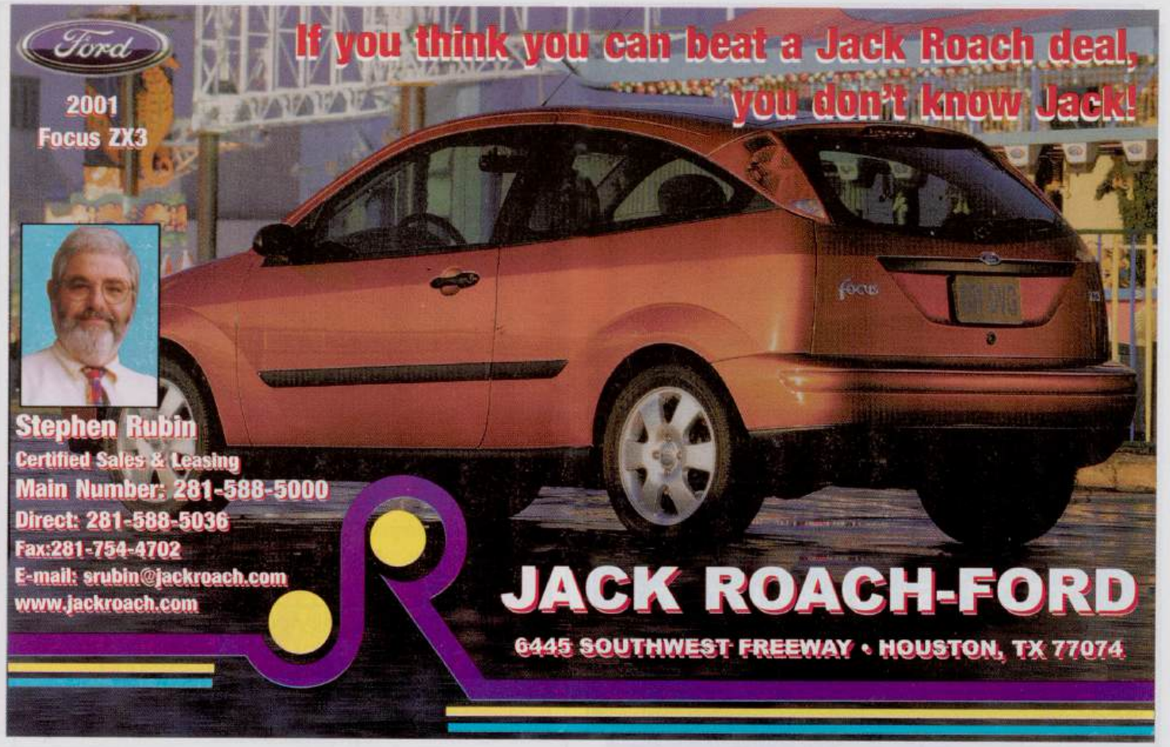
Subscribing to EarthLink through G&L Connection provides gay and lesbian subscribers with all the benefits of EarthLink's service, and the added value of knowing that their choice of Internet service providers will directly benefit causes deemed of importance to the LGBT community. As a bonus for signing up with EarthLink through G&L Connection, subscribers will not be required to pay the $25 setup fee and will receive their first month of EarthLink Internet access free of charge.

Charities slated for donations in 2001 include **GLAAD** (Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation), **PFLAG** (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), **HRC** (Human Rights Campaign), **GLSEN** (The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network), and the **GSBA Scholarship Fund** (managed by the Seattle Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce). Charities are chosen based on subscriber input.

Individuals interested in signing up for EarthLink through G&L Connection can do so by calling 1-888-EARTHLINK, ext. 60154, and mentioning registration number 400059983.

Ever thought of the perfect thing to say, hours after the discussion/argument passed? If you were smart enough to think of it later, what stopped you from saying it when you needed it? Probably lack of confidence, self-esteem, and good communications skills got in the way. Therapist **Denise O'Doherty**, LPC, LMFT, LCDC, RN, will present her workshop "Develop Confidence and Self-esteem Through Personal Boundaries and Effective Confrontation" on Saturday, March 3, 10 a.m.–noon. Learn step-by-step methods of how to confront someone effectively and identify ways to ovecome being manipulated, controlled, and intimidated due to differences in personality styles. Identify and discuss the importance of personal boundaries and how they are essential to healthy relationships, confidence, and personal integrity. To register for this class or for a schedule of other workshops, call Denise O'Doherty at 713/524-9525. Fee $25 per class.

Got news? Is your business expanding, growing, or promoting? E-mail your business news to feedback@outsmartmagazine.com or fax your press releases and news items to 713/522-3275.



by Mubarak Dahir

THE OTHER SIDE OF HOPE

Once the walls of gay bars shook with cheers for Clinton—eight years later, we argue his good versus his bad, but the walls are definitely still

As the Clinton years come to a close, the entire country will pause to ponder the legacy of the man with whom so many of us had a tumultuous relationship.

Of course, there are the hard-core Clinton bashers who despise the president and his wife on all counts and refuse to grant them the faintest praise, even where it is deserved.

Likewise, there are the Clinton apologists, still blinded by their belief in the man. These are the people who continue to find ways to blame any of his shortcomings on elaborate plots by right-wing conspirators to undermine their hero.

But for most of the rest of us, Clinton remains a man we have at times both loved and hated, admired and abhorred, respected and detested. We've voted for him, cheered for him, rallied around him, staked our hopes on him. In return we have been alternately buoyed and disappointed by him, rewarded and cheated by him, angered and consoled by him, inspired and disillusioned by him, proud of him and embarrassed by him. Through it all, we have remained awed by him in ways both good and bad.

It's fair to say a large number of Americans have mixed, almost schizophrenic, feelings about the president who seemed to have more political lives than a black cat. But as gay and lesbian people, our relationship to Mr. Clinton was different than probably any other constituency. For the first time, we had a president who addressed us directly, who included us in his speeches, who invited us to his parties, who even welcomed us into his White House. For so long, we had felt politically disenfranchised at the national level. Then Mr. Clinton came along, and the man from Hope seemed to be the walking embodiment of that emotion for gays and lesbians throughout the country.

A friend once recounted how, while working as a local volunteer for the Clinton campaign in 1992, he pushed his way to the front of a large crowd during a Clinton rally, determined to shake Mr. Clinton's hand. As Mr. Clinton made his way down the crowd, as he so famously does, my friend stuck out his hand. Mr. Clinton grabbed it and shook it firmly.

"Mr. Clinton, gay people love you!" my friend exclaimed as the candidate walked past, continuing to shake dozens of hands in the mobbed crowd.

But as the words eventually caught up to the candidate, Mr. Clinton a few seconds later paused. He took several steps back to where he had shaken my friend's

continued on p. 24



Living in Manhattan, Mubarak Dahir writes for a variety of queer publications, including The Advocate. *He receives e-mail at MubarakDah@aol.com.*

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by Dale Carpenter

GOODBYE TO CLINTON . . . AND GOOD RIDDANCE

More promise than progress, Clinton's gay legacy is mighty microscopic

He came in with great promise, promising greatly. He leaves with the worst legislative record on gay issues of any president in the history of the country. By his personal irresponsibility, and by his total lack of genuine commitment to the cause of gay equality, Clinton squandered the opportunity to speak with real moral authority about the place of gays in American life.

Clinton's legislative record on gay issues will unfortunately be with us for decades. No major pro-gay federal measure passed during Clinton's time, not even during the two years in which his party controlled both houses of Congress. On the antigay side of the ledger, the most shameful aspects of Clinton's legal legacy are by now familiar, but it is worth recalling how profoundly they damaged the lives of real gay Americans.

Clinton campaigned for gay votes and gay dollars in 1992 on a promise to lift the ban on gays in the military—and we believed him. Yet rather than immediately ending the ban by executive order, which he could have done and which enjoyed majority support in polls at the time, Clinton stalled. This delay allowed supporters of the ban, led by Democratic Senator Sam Nunn, to initiate highly publicized hearings on the effect of ending the policy. The resulting investigation, which focused luridly on group showers and close sleeping quarters, played devastatingly on the worst stereotypes about sexually predatory homosexuals.

Worse still, neither Clinton nor his administration responded to Nunn's nonsense. At the height of the furor, Clinton, in a live television appearance from the Rose Garden, even said the government should be careful not to "condone" the homosexual "lifestyle."

By the summer of 1993, Clinton had permitted Nunn's crowd to dominate the debate so thoroughly that it was necessary to "compromise" by enacting "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT). Within a year, observers warned that DADT was being used to continue and even to accelerate antigay witch-hunts and discharges. Clinton ignored the problem.

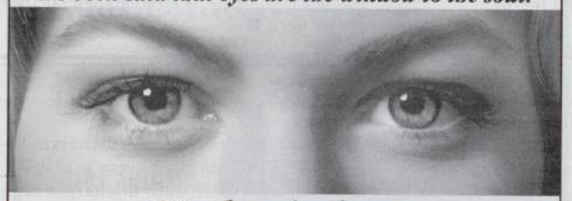
The result is the most easily quantifiable harm done to actual gay people during the Clinton years. According to figures from the Defense Department, discharges for homosexuality declined *every year* between the first full year of the Reagan administration (1982) and the first full year of the Clinton administration (1994), for a net decline during the period of more than 70 percent. But in



Writing from the conservative end of the spectrum, former Houston resident and law professor Dale Carpenter began his column for OutSmart *in 1994 and has won three Vice Versa awards for excellence in gay writing. Now living in Minneapolis, he can be reached at OutRight@aol.com.*

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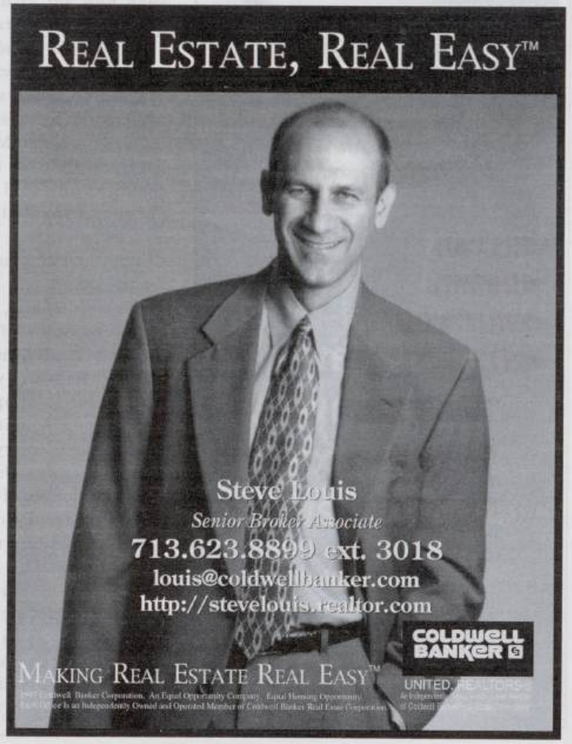
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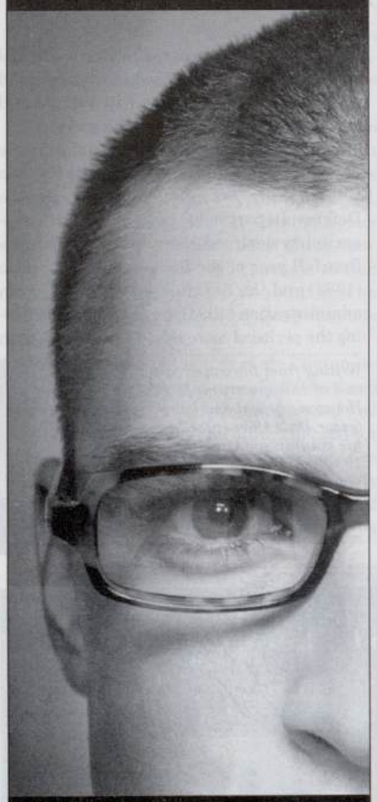
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continued from page 22

hand, and sought him out in the throng of supporters. When he found him, he looked him straight in the eyes.

"I want you to know I will be there for you," Mr. Clinton responded.

As you can imagine, Mr. Clinton's reply sent my friend soaring. And in many ways, though we didn't all get to personally shake his hand, Mr. Clinton seemed to look every gay and lesbian person in the country in the eye and make the same pledge. And so he sent us all soaring.

Maybe that is why when Mr. Clinton stood with us, he was able to send us to such heights. It is also why, when Mr. Clinton let us down, we seemed to plunge to such deep lows.

I still remember election night 1992. I was sitting in a small gay bar in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, the state capitol, where I was a reporter covering state government news. The normally vacant bar, a thin, narrow space no more than 15 feet wide and maybe 75 feet long, was jampacked. In the far corner, a television set tuned to a local news station blared out election results as they became known. Clinton, of course, state by state, swept the country. As the announcer called out each new set of numbers bringing our man ever closer to clinching the presidency, the men and women in the bar let loose a torrent of whoops and screams and bangs and hollers. Later in the night, when enough votes had been counted and it was announced Mr. Clinton had won the Electoral College, the bar went mad. You could literally feel the walls shaking under the excitement and fervor.

That evening, I, too, applauded Mr. Clinton's victory, having cast my own vote for the man.

But even then, as the walls trembled under the fervor of Mr. Clinton's gay supporters in that small bar that night, I couldn't help but wonder about the man we had all so happily staked our future on. The excitement in the bar, like in the rest of the country, was magnetic, to be sure. But it was also frightening, for both us as a community and for our newly hailed leader. I wondered how any mere mortal could live up to the expectations Mr. Clinton and his pep squad had created.

As it turns out, we now know, that fervored pitch of glee in that gay bar in Harrisburg—and in so many other towns and cities across the country that night—was a fleeting one. Almost before the swearing-in Bible had cooled off from Mr. Clinton's touch, the new president was put to the test on gay issues, with the disastrous result of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

For gays and lesbians, the end of Mr. Clinton's first term was punctuated with as much confused disappointment as the beginning, when Clinton signed the Defense of Marriage Act in 1996. It was enough for me to personally refrain from giving Mr. Clinton my vote the second time around. Still, most gays and lesbians cast their ballots that year for Mr. Clinton just the same. I can't recall where I was the second time I heard Mr. Clinton won the presidency. But I know there were no walls shaking with excitement at the news.

Meanwhile, the disappointment of Mr. Clinton's second term wasn't so much in concrete antigay measures, such as had been allowed to happen in his first term. Instead, the disappointment was that such a brilliant politician had squandered so much potential, so much of our hopes, because he couldn't keep his pants zipped.

And yet, I can still see the TV cameras panning on the crowd gathered at the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles last year as Mr. Clinton stepped on stage. People there—including a record number of more than 200 gay and lesbian delegates—simply went wild for the man.

Gay and lesbian people will continue to debate whether Mr. Clinton was too ambitious or too weak-kneed during his presidency, and whether our own expectations were too high while we as a group were too naïve.

As I look back on Clinton's legacy, there is only one thing that I am certain of: It will be a long time before the walls of that little bar in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, reverberate as passionately on election night as they did in 1992. ■

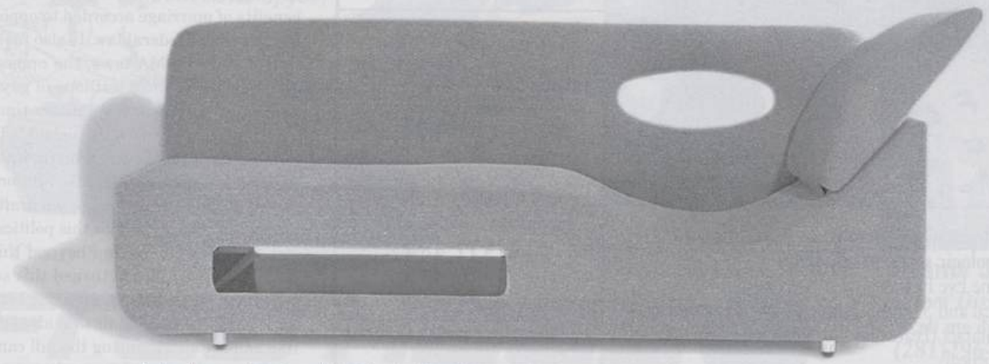
OutRight

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1994 the number of antigay discharges began to rise and has risen every year since. On an annual basis, such discharges have more than doubled since 1994. In 1998, they climbed above 1,000 for the first time in 10 years.

Such dismissals represent hopes smashed, families shattered, a life's work cut short. While Clinton's administration was hiring scores of openly gay campaign contributors (as we were tirelessly reminded), the same administration was firing thousands more through military discharges. From its inception through its implementation, DADT has been a betrayal of trust that should never be forgotten. *continued on p. 26*

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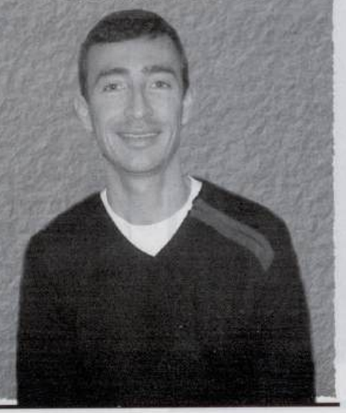
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continued from page 24

Also not to be forgotten is Clinton's support for the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in 1996. Recall that DOMA created the first-ever congressional definition of marriage, denying to future gay newlyweds all of the benefits of marriage accorded to opposite-sex couples under federal law. It also fueled a series of state DOMA laws, the opposition to which has consumed millions of gay dollars and countless hours of volunteer time.

Clinton's defenders say he had to back the bill in the politically charged atmosphere of a presidential election year. Yet Clinton agreed to sign DOMA before it was even drafted, suggesting an enthusiasm for this political necessity that goes above and beyond the call of duty. And then Clinton turned this supposed necessity into a virtue, publicizing his support for DOMA in commercials that aired on Christian radio stations during the fall campaign.

Some will respond that, whatever the legislative disappointments, the social standing of gays has risen greatly in the eight years Bill Clinton has inhabited the White House. So it has. But how much of that rise is attributable to Clinton? Very little more than none.

Recall that Clinton signed his marriage-defense law while he himself conducted an extramarital affair. It was the perfect Clintonian moment: Defend the principle in the abstract (the sanctity of heterosexual marriage, gay equality) while you corrode it in the application (Monica Lewinsky; DADT, and DOMA).

The Lewinsky affair confirmed Clinton's lack of personal integrity, his refusal to control his appetites, and his penchant for betraying those closest to him. It exposed a grownup reluctant to grow up, disinclined to take responsibility for himself and his actions, and unwilling to see in life a duty higher than the preservation of self-interest.

Who could take seriously any instruction from this man? Who could credit his lectures about what ails American culture, including its antigay aspects? Clinton lost any authority to speak authoritatively on important cultural matters, like basic fairness for gay Americans.

But even if he'd had the authority, he lacked the will. For Clinton, gays were an expendable constituency. He threw us just enough sops (an administration appointment here, using the word "gay" in a speech there) to keep us quiet when he betrayed us. We accepted this deal because, like a battered spouse, we thought we'd never had it so good.

Having tied ourselves so closely to this man, we sit beside the stench of his moral putrefaction, in need of a bath. ■

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Calendar of Events

Deadline for *OutSmart*'s March issue is 5 p.m., Monday, February 12.

FEBRUARY

7, 14, 21, 28 (Wed.)
HIV Testing. The Montrose Clinic offers free confidential HIV testing and counseling every Wednesday, 6-9 pm @ the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 803 Hawthorne. Center: 713/524-3818. Clinic: 713/830-3000. *PLEASE NOTE: Free & confidential HIV/AIDS testing is also available from 1–3 pm on the 14th & 28th in Conroe at Northwoods AIDS Coalition, 1414 South Frazier, Ste. 106. More info: 936/441-1614.*

9 & 10 (Fri. & Sat.)
All Clytemnestra on the Western Front. Michelle Spencer's reorganized version of Homer's epic poem is a tour de force one-woman show. In *A Techno-Feminist Reconstruction of the Illiad*, the narrative unfolds as the homebound Clytemnestra has video phone conversations with Agamemnon, Helen, Penelope, & Aegisthus—all of whom are played by Spencer. DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway. Info: 713/335-3445.

9–11 (Fri.–Sun.)
Texas Home & Garden Show features: designer home built in four days; room vignettes & elegant landscaping displays; pool & spa showcase; "how-to" seminars & demonstrations; gourmet cooking shows with tempting demos & delicious samples; and vacation, leisure, & outdoor show. Tickets available at the door. General admission $8 (children under 14 are free). Friday 2–9 pm; Saturday 10 am–9 pm; Sunday 11 am–6 pm. George R. Brown Convention Center, 1001 Avenida de las Americas, lower halls A, B, C. More info: 713/529-1616 or visit www.TexasHomeandGarden.com.


RANDY HOLMES/FOX

February 10 (Sat.)
Susan Goes Mad. Susan Sarandon a fairy? Well, not the queer kind. In an uncoming episode of *MADtv*, the gay-friendly actress plays the tooth fairy. This is her second appearance on the quirky show, probably because it's her children's favorite show. 10 pm on FOX.

Susan Sarandon

10 (Sat.)
Rodeo Parade Brunch. In the tradition of spurs, chaps, & trail-blazing fun, the Alley Theatre Guild is hosting this 4th annual brunch, where guests will enjoy a catered buffet & unobstructed view of the Houston Rodeo Parade from the Alley Theatre's 4th-floor balcony. All proceeds will benefit the Alley Theatre. 8:30 am–noon @ the Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. Tickets are $35 ($20 for children under 12). For reservations/more info: Carole Wells at 713/222-1281.

10–12 (Sat.–Mon.)
From Russia With Love. Conductor Yakov Kreizberg returns to Houston with a program of Russian & Latvian masters. Rachmaninoff's beloved *Rhapsody* and Shostakovich's breathtaking Symphony No. 11, *The Year 1905*, are both performed. Tickets $17–$71. Sat. & Mon. at 8 pm, Sun. at 2:30 pm @ Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. For more info: 713/224-7575 or visit www.houstonsymphony.org.

INFO NEEDED FOR YOUR EVENT LISTING: a few lines of info about your event; date/time; cost; location/address; organization name; AND two phone numbers—one for *OutSmart* to reach you for questions and one for *OutSmart* readers to get more info on your event. *Mail info to:* OutSmart Magazine, 3406 Audubon Place, Houston 77006. *Fax info to:* 713/522-3275. *E-mail info to:* calendar@outsmartmagazine.com. NO LISTINGS CAN BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE DEADLINE DATE—MON., FEB. 12.

14 (Wed.)
Hooray for Love! Celebrate Valentine's Day with a classic romantic comedy. Then watch the surprise flick (to be announced on the evening) while you enjoy chocolate candy treats. Even better, everyone who watches the movie will receive a special Valentine. Love donations welcomed. 7 pm @ the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 803 Hawthorne, 713/524-3818.

16 (Fri.)
This Night of Desire is an evening of lust & longing; an evening of arousal, Eros, & fancy; of phallus-nostalgic, womb-envying hunger; of Cupid-craving, Bacchus-urgent, Aphrodite-attendant appetite; of Himeros-ian, Dionysian itch & desire. Acclaimed visiting & local writers will read about desire and speak to the eternal subject through their poetry, prose, & high theory. 8 pm @ DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway. This six-act literary concert is a standing-room-only, one-night event, so reserve your seat early. Tickets $12 general; $5 students/seniors; $8 members. 24-hour reservation line: 713/335-3445.

16 (Fri.)
Literary Valentines. To celebrate the Valentine's Day weekend, five Houston poets will read verses on love and sex during "Passion, Poetry, and Politics 3: A Valentine's Event." This provocative evening will feature Michael Bolin, Aaron Coleman, Simone Cunningham, Donna Garrett, & Michael Locke. The event will also serve as a preview of Locke's new literary magazine, *Consortium*, which will debut in March and will include work by all of the evening's poets. $5 donation includes sweet refreshments. 7 pm @ the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 803 Hawthorne. More info: 713/524-3818.

16 (Fri.)
Battle of the Sexes. ComedySportz-Houston, an improvisational comedy troupe, holds their 11th annual Battle of the Sexes matches. The merits of gender dominance have been argued for years now, and in honor of St. Valentine, these two matches will give audiences the chance to see beauty meet brawn, as the sweet demure women square up against the big, burly men of ComedySportz. We assume this is a pretty heterosexual show, but it's no reason not to cheer your favorite chromosome combination anyway. Kickoffs are 7:30 & 10:30 pm @ Lambert Hall, 1703 Heights Blvd. (at 17th St.). Admission is $10, and reservations are recommended. Reservations/more info: 713/868-1444.

16 (Fri.)
America Now: The Legacy of American Pop is an exploration of the influence of rock, jazz, world music, & electronic music on late 20th-century concert music. 8 pm @ Wortham Center's Cullen Theater, 500 Texas Ave. Tickets ($22–$33) are available by visiting www.culturefinder.com or by calling Da Camera Music Center at 713/524-5050.

16–18 (Fri.–Sun.)
Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Share in the magic, power, & passion of one of America's best-loved & most-revered dance companies. With a well-earned reputation as one of the most acclaimed international ambassadors of American culture, this new tour showcases premieres, new productions of vintage works, and their signature work, *Revelations*. Presented by Society for the Performing Arts at 8 pm @ Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. Tickets ($15-$40) available by calling 713/227-4SPA (4772) or at Ticketmaster outlets..


FOX

Actress Anne Heche

5, 12, 19, 26
(Mondays)
Heche Goes Hetero. In the Jan. 8 episode of *Ally McBeal*, Anne Heche (you haven't already forgotten Ellen's ex, have you?) was introduced as Melanie West, a high-maintenance new client of John Cage (Peter MacNicol). She was accused of intentionally running over her ex-boyfriend with her van and killing him. In the process, it seems that Melanie and John definitely have personal feelings for each other (love is in the air, but it's not necessarily gay). Tune in to the February episodes to see the results. • Just because Heche is no longer with Ellen, is that any reason to dismiss her acting talent? Besides, it'll give you a chance to see the hilarious and homophobic Richard Fish (Greg Germann) make a complete ass of himself . . . as usual. 8 pm on FOX.

17 (Sat.)
Asians and Friends Houston. It's a potluck party and game night at 7:30 pm at a member's suburban getaway. Asians & Friends Houston, Inc. (A&FH) is a nonprofit social group for gay and lesbian Asians and anyone interested in furthering their understanding of the gay and lesbian cultures of Asia. For more information, visit www.AsiansAndFriendsHouston.com or call 713/626-6300.

17 (Sat.)
Mardi Gras Galveston. Four parades today: 1) The Mystic of Krewe of Aquarius 15th annual parade celebrating space exploration starts at noon @ 14th & Seawall. Info: 409/621-1885; 2) The Z Krewe's Z Procession starts at 1 pm @ 26th & Mechanic. Info: 281/331-2739 or pac@zkrewe.com; 3) Pinstripe Pasquinade starts at 2 pm @ 26th & Mechanic. Info: 713/377-6248. 4) Krewe of Gambrinus Parade starts at 6:30 pm @ 12th & Seawall. Info: 409/744-5900 or 409/737-1986. *For more parades, see Feb. 24 & 25.*

18 (Sun.)
Bisexuality Panel Discussion. Everyone invited to join in this discussion. Refreshments served. 1:30–3:30 pm @ First Unitarian Universalist Church, 5200 Fannin. More info: 713/526-5200.

18 & 25 (Sun.)
Introducing On Q: a torch song sung by the Statue of Liberty. "My Heart Belongs to Krishna," and other twisted

DIRTY LITTLE SHOWTUNES!

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Dirty Little Showtunes! follows the format of "Forbidden Broadway," a satirical revue in its 18th year in New York. "Forbidden Broadway" uses new lyrics to Broadway show tunes to spoof the industry. *Dirty Little Showtunes!* does the same, only with a gay subtext. • Tom Orr, lyricist, has taken two dozen Broadway show tunes and rewritten them from the gay male perspective. The result is highly irreverent, outrageous, occasionally gross, but very delightful. • According to Orr: "In 1993, when I first started as theater critic for *The Seattle Times* at the age of 23, I thought I'd found the perfect job for a young actor and writer whose love for the theater had sidetracked him from the early leanings toward a journalism career. But my boss informed me of the conflict of interest that barred me from performing, writing, or producing my own work, and I became the saddest and ugliest of nature's aberrations: a frustrated critic." • But Orr finally got off his ass and followed his dream. *Dirty Little Showtunes!* has had very successful productions in Seattle, Chicago, and San Francisco, and now it's here in Houston directed by Joe Watts. Fridays & Saturdays at 8 p.m., **through Feb. 24** @ Theatre New West, 1415 California Street (one block north of Westheimer between Commonwealth & Waugh, on the ground floor of the Sonoma Restaurant building). Tickets are $20. Reservations: 713/394-0464.


JOE WATTS

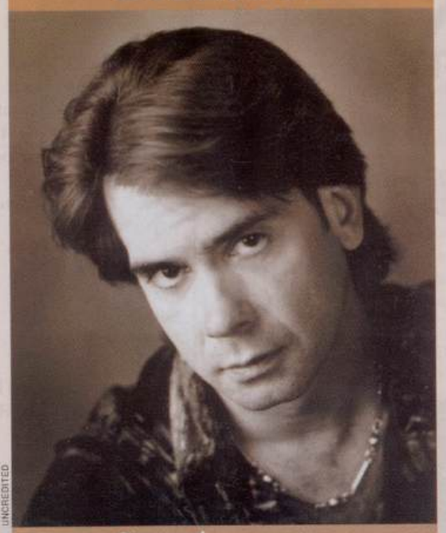

JOE WATTS

BOA BOYS (clockwise from top): Craig Stephens, Randy Boatright, Jim Carter, David Barron, Andy Clements, and Taavi Mark.
DRAG & LEATHER (left to right): Craig Stephens, Taavi Mark, Randy Boatright, Andy Clements, Jim Carter, and David Barron.


JEFFREY HORNSTEIN

Dirty Little Lyricist Tom Orr

OUT OF THE SILENCE


UNCREDITED

Singer/songwriter Daniel Link speaks out

After years of songwriting 'in the closet' and playing piano for a handful of friends and family," Daniel Link says, "I was reminded by my partner Ralph that 'music is a gift, and that gift is meant to be shared.' With each step I took toward my dream, the universe took multiple steps toward me. Suddenly a career was forged with the help of an unseen hand. Now the phrase becomes literal, finally bringing my art *Out of the Silence*," which coincidentally is the title of his EP. • *Out of the Silence* ties into the subject matter of the opening and closing songs, as well as who Link is as an artist and a man. "Altar Boy," the opening song, exposes the realities of what organized religion can do to a young gay child. The song is direct, blunt, yet renders healing through the proclamation, "God's love is free!" The closing song, "Constant Faithfulness," completes the song journey, written when his best friend told him he was HIV positive. "I remember where I was when I got the call, what time of day it was, what he said to me," Link recalls. "What I couldn't do is find the words to express what I felt." Instead of talking, Link wrote a song for his friend to demonstrate the power of their friendship. "One thing I've learned in the gay community," he says, "is that our friendships are lasting and unbreakable. If anything, AIDS has taught me how beautiful we really are. Never before has the gay and lesbian community been given the opportunity to show the world, and ourselves, the kind of people we really are . . . people with an extraordinary capacity for human compassion, selflessness, and growth." It is Link's hope that *Out of the Silence* will serve as wakeup call, "not only to society," he says, "but to ourselves . . . within our community and within our hearts, ever reminding us that we are essentially a people of love." The three other song titles on the EP are "I Still Need You Tonight," "Believe," and "Nature of Love." • So you've read what he says, now hear him sing on **Saturday, February 17**, at The Sidecar Pub on 290 and Highway 6. He will share the bill with lesbian singer Christy Claxton (see *OutSmart* Calendar, November 2000). His EP is available at Borders, 9633-A Westheimer, and online on his site at www.mp3.com/daniellink.

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stuff, silly songs & a few nice ones, performed by Charles Baker, David Carter, David Gebo, Rex Gillit, Daniel Lim, Neal Massey, and Mike McNamara. 7 pm @ The Little Room Downstairs Theater, 2326 Bissonnet. $15. Reservations/more info: 713/522-5737.

20 (Tue.)

Transgender Lobby Day. The Texas Gender Advocacy Information Network (TGAIN) will hold their fourth Transgender Lobby Day at the state capitol in Austin. For more information, contact TGAIN at sarahdepalma@ev1.net.

21 (Wed.)

The Grammys. The gay-friendly and/or not-so-gay-friendly 43rd Grammy Awards ceremony for the music industry should prove to be quite controversial this year. Since Eminem is nominated for a slew of awards, and since GLAAD is scheduled to protest his inclusion, you might want to tune in for the festivities (or the not-so-festive festivities, depending on your take) @ 7 pm on CBS, Channel 11. *(See Groove-Out on page 42 of this issue of OutSmart for more Grammys info.)*

24 (Sat.)

Awaji Puppet Theater. Get a glimpse of the ancient tradition of Awaji puppetry—an art first developed to pay homage to the gods, ensuring the safety of houses, farmland, & fishing boats. Enjoy the Bunraku style as these fascinating puppets come to life with a range of delicate emotions & rapid magical transformations. Listen as the narrator spins the tale, accompanied by live music with traditional Japanes music. 8 pm @ Wortham Center's Cullen Theater, 500 Texas Ave. Tickets range from $22–$32. More info: 713/227-1111 or visit www.spahouston.org.

24 (Sat.)

Chamber Orchestra Special. The Houston Symphony presents a special chamber orchestra concert with British conductor Nicholas McGegan at the helm. The evening spans the baroque style of Pergolesi. Tickets $20 & $30. 8 pm @ Stude Concert Hall, Shepherd School of Music, Rice University. More information: 713/224-7575 or visit www.houstonsymphony.org.

24 & 25 (Sat. & Sun.)

British Advertising Broadcast Awards celebrates the best in commercials from the UK. 7:30 pm on Sat. and 7 pm on Sun. in the Museum of Fine Arts' Brown Auditorium, 1001 Bissonnet. $5 admission ($4 students/seniors). More info: 713/639-7531.

24 & 25 (Sat. & Sun.)

Mardi Gras Galveston. Three parades over this weekend: 1) Krewe of Espirit Rosaire Parade starts at 11 am on Saturday @ 27th & Seawall. Info: 409/762-2478; 2) Momus Grand Night Parade starts at 5:45 pm on Saturday @ 21st & Seawall. Info: 888-GAL-ISLE (425-4753); 3) Krewe of Munchkins Parade starts at 2 pm on Sunday @ 1500 of 25th. Info: 409/762-4401 or 409/765-7005. *See Feb. 27 for the last procession.*

25 (Sun.)

The Montrose Softball League (MSL) invites you to their annual Recruitment Day. Play softball, receive information, meet members, and join the league. The MSL has teams for all levels of play: beginner, recreational, & competitive. 10 am–2 pm @ Tim Heam Softball Field located at Jackson Hill & Memorial Dr. (north side), just west of Waugh Dr. More info: call 713/867-3913; write MSL, P.O. Box 541954, Houston 77254-1954; or visit www.montrosesoftballleague.com.

27 (Tue.)

Mardi Gras Galveston. The Mystic Krewe of Aquarius annual Fat Tuesday procession, "We End What We Begin," starts at 6:30 pm @ 26th & Mechanic. Info: 409/744-5782 or 409/621-1885.

27 (Tue.)

Twentieth-Century Landscapes features music inspired by memory & nature. Called "a genius in a wasteland" by Aaron Copland, Charles Ives decided to work in the business world while composing the music that he truly wanted to write. His *Violin Sonata No. 4, "Children's Day at the Camp Meeting"* features fragments of church hymns. Joan Tower's *Amazon* and Toru Take-mitsu's *Rain Tree Sketch* recall nature sounds. 7:30 pm @ the Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross. Tickets ($25) are available by visiting www.culturefinder.com or by calling Da Camera Music Center at 713/524-5050.



Mar. 10 (Sat.)

Pilobolus. Acclaimed for a startling mix of humor & invention, Pilobolus adds Klezmer music to the mix in a new co-commission by Society for the Performing Arts. The wondrous, sculptural forces of Pilobolus meet the ecstatic sounds of the Klezmatics, performing live, in this premiere, plus three more works from the repertory. 8 pm @ Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. Tickets ($15-$38) available by calling 713/227-4SPA (4772) or at Ticketmaster outlets.

PLANNING AHEAD

MARCH

March

HOG Garage Sale. The Houston Outdoor Group is looking forward to another successful garage sale to raise funds for activities such as the Pride Parade in June 2001. At press time, a specific date in March had not been set for the sale. To donate items or for more info: 713/KAMP-OUT.

Mar. 1–4 (Thu.–Sun.)

Antiques. The Houston Antique Dealers Association's (HADA) annual spring show & sale hosts over 150 antique dealers & specialists from across the country & around the world. Dealers will showcase antique furniture, silver, glass, porcelain, primitives, Orientalia, jewelry, linens, lace, quilts, artifacts, rugs, prints, paintings, lighting, china, dolls, and much more. Tickets (good for all four days): $9 at the door. Thur. 11 am–8 pm, Fri. & Sat. 11 am–7 pm, and Sun. noon–5 pm @ the George R. Brown Convention Center. Info: 713/764-4232.

Mar. 1–4 (Thu.–Sun.)

Let Us Entertain You (LUEY) Weekend is for those eager to continue celebrating after Mardi Gras. Ten clubs participate, attended by as many as 798 registered guests from 23 states and four foreign countries. The original tradition of LUEY Weekend was to entertain out-of-town guests, and it continues with no fee for guests registering from out of town. Local guests pay only $15. Advance registration is required. Pre-registration takes place on Thursday, March 1, from 8–10 pm @ the Outpost. Info: www.lueyweekend.com.

Mar. 2 (Fri.)

The Ritz. In honor of Rita Moreno's Houston concerts this weekend, our community center has scheduled to show *The Ritz*, the hilarious 1976 film about a dolt who hides from his murderous brother-in-law in a gay bathhouse. Critic Leonard Maltin says, "Moreno is memorable re-creating her Tony-winning role as no-talent entertainer Googie Gomez." 7 pm @ the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 803 Hawthorne. More info: 713/524-3818. *(See interview with Rita Moreno on page 46 of this issue of* OutSmart.*)*

Mar. 3 (Sat.)

The Human Rights Campaign annual black tie gala will take place at the Westin Galleria on Alabama. The incredibly funny Georgia Ragsdale is returning from last year as the emcee. Billy Bean, a former major league baseball player, who was recently featured on ABC's *20/20* and in *The Advocate* will be the keynote speaker. Individual tickets can be purchased by calling 800-494-TIXS. More info, contact this year's co-chairs: Bret Baccus at 713/807-7408 or Dalia Stokes at 713/522-2224.

Mar. 3 (Sat.)

Red, the theme for this year's DiverseWorks gala, promises to be a truly spectacular evening. The festivities begin at 7 pm with a cocktail reception and preview of artist-designed table centerpieces. A silent auction continues throughout the evening, including fun & unique items such as a weeklong trip to Biarritz, France; a trip to Mexico City with a private guided tour of the pyramids; a progressive dinner in artist studios; Louis Vuitton luggage; and much more. Regional artists are creating fantastic one-of-a-kind red centerpieces for each of the dining tables, which will also be up for auction. The mouth-watering menu will include contributions from Houston's top restaurants. Dancing to the sounds of a live band follows the buffet dinner. Individual tickets are available at the following levels: friend, $150; sponsor, $250; benefactor, $500; and underwriter, $1,000. Tables of 10 are also available. All proceeds benefit DiverseWorks. For reservation information: Lisa Haynes at 713/223-8346.

Mar. 4 (Sun.)

AIDS Walk Houston is an AIDS awareness fundraising walk event to benefit individuals/families infected or affected with HIV/AIDS. In 2000, thousands of people took a big step for AIDS awareness by raising over $325,000 to support the critical work of numerous local AIDS service organizations. Combined, these agencies provide education, healthcare, food, shelter, employment training, & a variety of vital services to over 100,00 Houstonians. The event is set to begin and end at Sam Houston Park. To register, call 713/623-6796 or visit www.aidshelp.com.

Mar. 9 (Fri.)

The Spirit of Africa: Randy Weston and African Rhythms. Pianist Randy Weston is a veteran explorer who has discovered the roots of jazz in the soil of Africa. The Master Gnawa Musicians of Morocco, Weston's creative muses of the last 30 years, join Weston in this performance with his band & saxophonist & Houston native Billy Harper. 8 pm @

HOUSTON BALLET

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The Firebird

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Five Poems

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February 22 - March 4, 2001

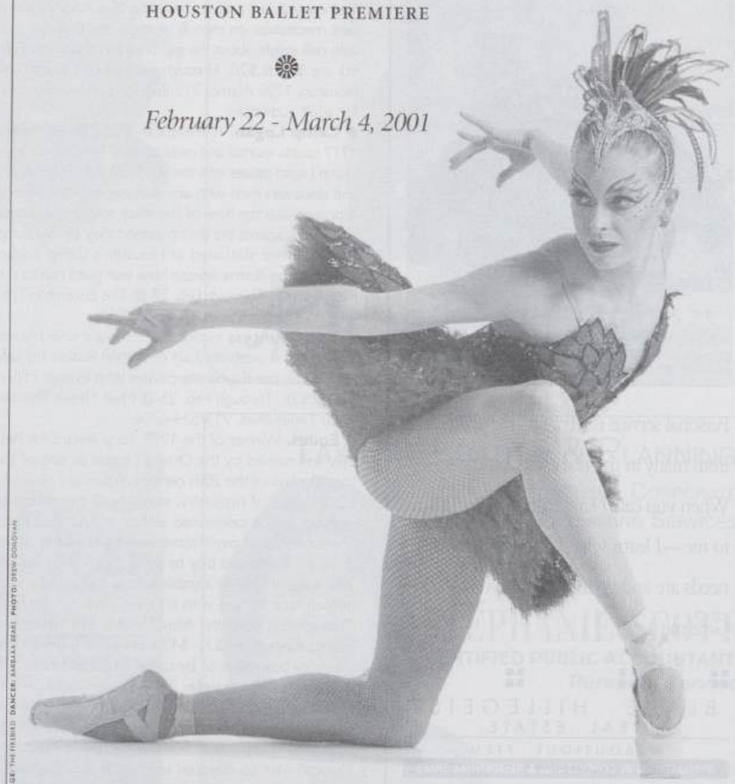


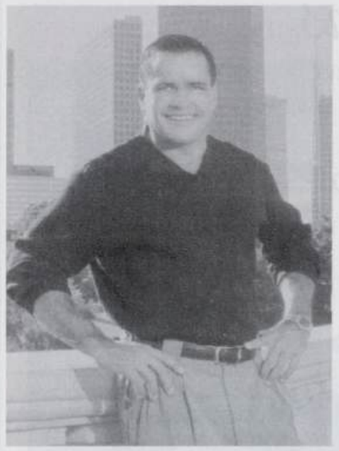
IMAGE: THE FIREBIRD DANCER: BARBARA BEARE PHOTO: DREW DONOVAN

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Wortham Center's Cullen Theater, 500 Texas Ave. Tickets ($27–$37) are available by calling Da Camera Music Center at 713/524-5050 or by visiting www.culturefinder.com.

Mar. 23–25 (Fri.–Sun.)

Texas Lesbian Conference. The 14th conference takes place at San Antonio's AmeriSuites Riverwalk and features Luz Guerra, social activist & trainer; Kelli Herd, director of *It's in the Water*; and Laura Jimenez, a comedian from the California bay area. Workshop topics include coming out, dating, maintaining relationships, women's health issues, political activism for busy people, computer communications, & other ways to meet people. For more information: e-mail to TLCSanAntonio@aol.com or visit the website at www.hometown.aol.com/tlcsanantonio/myhomepage/index.html.

PERFORMING ARTS

♦ **The Blue Room.** Arthur Schnitzler described *Reigen*, his loose series of sexual sketches as "completely unprintable," and indeed its premiere in 1921 spurred an obscenity suit. It was only when Max Ophuls made his famous film in 1950 that the work became known as *La Ronde*. Now David Hare has reset these circular scenes of love & betrayal in the present day with a cast of two actors playing a succession of characters whose sexual lives enmesh like a daisy chain. The Blue Room is a brilliant meditation on men & women, sex & social class with deft insight about the gap between the sexes. Tickets are $18 & $20. Through Feb. 24 @ Theater LaB Houston, 1706 Alamo, 713/868-7516. Recommended for adult audiences.

♦ **Camp Logan.** A theatrical drama based on the 1917 courts-martial and execution of 19 black soldiers, *Camp Logan* delves into the world of the early military and discovers men who are sleeping with the enemy. It probes into the lives of the black soldiers who rose up in arms against the discrimination they encountered in 1917 while stationed at Houston's Camp Logan. This gripping drama reveals how war gives rise to unlikely heroes. Through Feb. 27 @ The Ensemble Theatre, 3535 Main Street, 713/520-0055.

♦ **The Countess** explores the straight love triangle involving the celebrated art critic John Ruskin, his wife Effie, & the pre-Raphaelite painter John Everett Millais. $20 & $25. Through Feb. 25 @ Main Street Theater, 2540 Times Blvd., 713/524-6706.

♦ **Equus.** Winner of the 1975 Tony Award for Best Play and named by the Drama League as one of the top 10 plays of the 20th century, *Equus* is a powerful examination of hypocrisy, sexuality, & the nature of worship by the celebrated author of *Amadeus*, Peter Shaffer. When a psychiatrist investigates what would drive a 17-year-old boy to savagely blind six horses with a metal spike in a stable in rural England, he finds himself face to face with his own personal demons. Through Feb. 10 @ the Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. Tickets range from $32–$49 and can be purchased at the Alley box office or by calling 713/228-8421.

♦ **Eyes for Consuela.** The Houston premiere of Sam Shepard's *Eyes for Consuela* examines the lives of two men: Henry, a member of the American middle class who is separated from his wife, and Amado, a Mexican man so devoted to his lady that he literally collects bouquets of blue eyes for her. The two discuss the sacrifices they have made and will make for the women they love. Henry, it seems, might sacrifice his life for Amado's love if his eyes are blue. Tickets $14 (students/seniors $10). Fridays & Saturdays at 8 pm, Sundays at 2 pm, through Feb. 24 @ Actors Theatre of Houston, 2506 South Boulevard, 713/529-6606.

♦ **A Flea in Her Ear.** One of the Alley's most popular plays in the last decade, *A Flea in Her Ear* is a chaotic comedy in which Raymonde Chandebise assumes her husband Victor-Emmanuel must be having an affair, as he has recently been unable to fulfill his conjugal duties. When she asks a friend to request a rendezvous with her husband, and he in turn asks a friend to replace him at the rendezvous, a chain reaction of frenzied mistaken identities & misplaced jealousies begin. Feb. 23–Mar. 24 @ the Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. Tickets to preview performances are $19–$35; tickets to performances on or after the Feb. 28 opening are $32–$49 and can be purchased at the box office or by calling 713/228-8421.

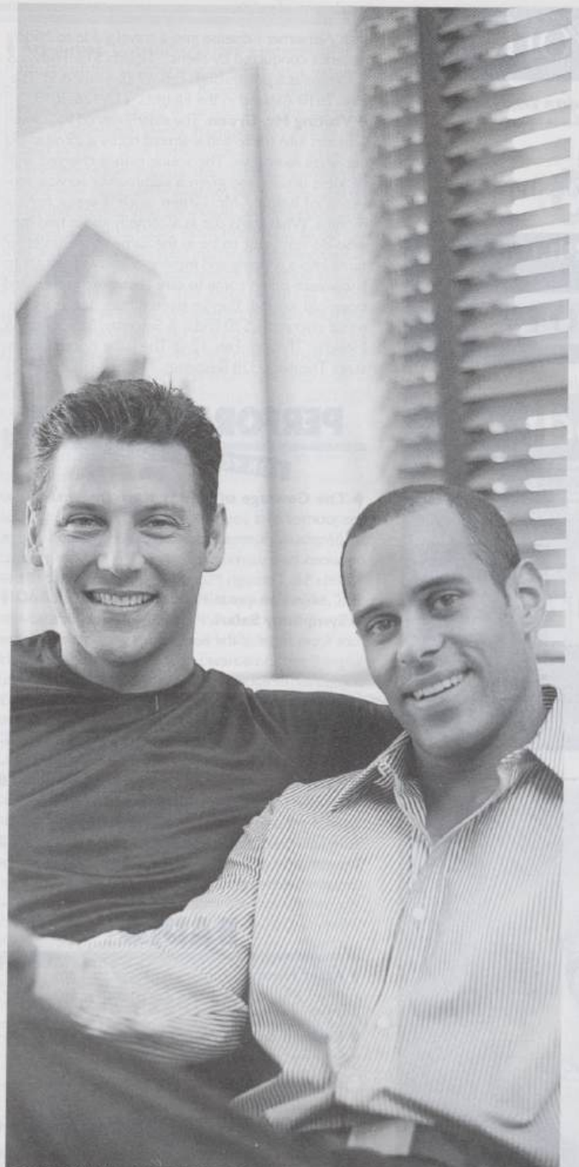
♦ **Houston Grand Opera** (HGO) revives its delightful production of Mozart's *Cosi fan tutte*. Two couples are manipulated and tricked by the crafty old Don Alfonso and a maid into believing that their lovers cannot be faithful. • HGO also presents its first performance of Borodin's Russian epic, *Prince Igor*. Set in 12th-century Russia, Igor Sviatoslavich leaves his wife in the care of her brother and sets out with his army against a Tartar tribe from Central Asia. Prince Igor & his son are captured in battle, but the prince is assured that he is a guest and not a captive. • *Cosi fan tutte* runs through Feb. 10; *Prince Igor* runs through Feb. 11. • Each opera: $22–$200; tickets available by phone at 713/227-ARTS, in person at the Wortham Ticket Center (in the Wortham lobby), or online at www.houstongrandopera.org. Both operas: Wortham Center's Brown Theater, Texas at Smith.

♦ **Lou Tells a Big One.** is another original comedy featuring the "Single Fertle Family" from Dumpster, Texas. Uncle Al is opening a new Honky Tonk, Bridgette Fertle is about to reaveal the actual father of her baby, someone in town has won $85 million in the lottery, & Lou has lied his way into a mess that just might cost him everything. Through May 5 @ Radio Music Theatre, 2623 Colquitt. Admission is $15, and reservations are required. 713/522-7722.

♦ **Old Wicked Songs.** Stephen Hoffman, a young pianist troubled by artistic block, travels to Vienna and enlists he help of an elderly singing instructor to help him return to the stage. The student-teacher relationship evolves, though not without conflict, as Stephen and his instructor, Josef Mashkan, clash not only over musical style & technique but religion & history. Ultimately, Stephen's journey of self-discovery & rejuvenated passion for music help the instructor come to terms with his own past. Tickets $19–$42. Through Feb. 11 @ Stages Repertory Theatre, 3201 Allen Parkway. More info: 713/52-STAGE.

♦ **Synergy.** When Deb's routine dentist appointment turns out to be a meeting with the Devil, she bargains her way back to the living with a promise to secure a certain number of souls. Naturally, she begins her scavenger hunt in the corporate sector—the Disney Corporation, to be exact. Synergy is a look at human nature & the ultimate gifts we, the living, take for granted. Through Mar. 4 @ the Alley Theatre, 615 Texas Ave. Tickets ($37–$42) can be purchased at the Alley box office or by calling 713/228-8421.

♦ **Tales of the Lost Formicans** is a bizarre comedy/drama that deals with everything from dysfunctional families to alien abduction. From *Time* magazine: "If not the best new play of recent years, surely this is the most imaginative. Constance Congdon's brilliant off-Broadway script wryly deflects the story of a man



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with Alzheimer's disease into a travel guide to Middle America conducted by aliens." Tickets $15. Fridays & Saturdays at 8 pm, through Feb. 17 @ Ashland St. Theatre, 2610 Ashland in the Heights, 713/426-3019.

♦ **Visiting Mr. Green.** The elderly retired Mr. Green wanders into traffic and is almost hit by a 29-year-old coporate executive. The young man is charged with reckless driving and given a community-service sentence of helping Mr. Green once a week for six months. What starts out as a comedy about two men who do not want to be in the same room together turns into a gripping and moving drama as they get to know each other, come to care about each other, and open old wounds they've been nursing for years. Parental discretion. $20 Friday & Saturday, $15 Sunday & Monday. Through Feb. 12 @ The Little Room Downstairs Theater, 2328 Bissonnet, 713/522-LRDS (5737).

PERFORMING ARTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

♦ **The Courage of Mandy Kate Brown.** Follow the journey of a young slave girl traveling the famous Underground Railroad as her courage creates a bridge between two warring countries. For 1st–8th grades. Tickets $8. Through Mar. 3 @ Stages Repertory Theatre, Allen Parkway at Waugh Drive, 713/52-STAGE.

♦ **Symphony Safari.** Musical animals provide adventure from *Flight of the Bumble Bee* to music from *The Jungle Book* and a new work by acclaimed children's composer Gregory Smith entitled *The Zoo Song*. For children ages 4 to 13 and their families. Sat., March 3 (*10 am* with pre-concert activities beginning at 9 am; and *11:30 am* with post-concert activities beginning following the concert) @ Jones Hall, 615 Louisiana. Tickets: $13 adults, $8 children in reserved seating (main floor, box seats, & grand tier), and $8 adults, $4 children in general admission seating (mezzanine & balcony). Tickets are available at Jones Hall or at all Ticketmaster outlets; by calling 713/224-7575; or online at www.houstonsymphony.org.

RADIO

♦ **After Hours** Saturdays, midnight to 3 am. Featuring the QMZ (Queer Music Zone) with Jimmy Carper. KPFT 90.1 FM.

♦ **Lesbian & Gay Voices** Mondays, 8-10 pm. Features, news, music, interviews, reviews, and commentary. KPFT 90.1 FM, 713/526-4000.

ART/PHOTOGRAPHY

♦ **Art Classes for People With HIV: *The Art League of Houston*** is offering free art classes for people with HIV. The ongoing course meets every Thursday & Friday from 1-4 pm at the Art League, 1953 Montrose. Mixed media projects for the artist and non-artist. Constructive art-making in a relaxed atmosphere. Focus is on the healing power of art. More info: 713/523-9530. ***The Museum of Fine Arts Houston*** is offering free art classes for those with HIV/AIDS. Patrick Palmer begins his 9th year offering art instruction. Abstract painting, linoleum-cut greeting cards, & ceramics are some of the media offerings for the fall semester. Class is limited to 16. Everything is free, even lunch! The classes meet at the Glassell School of Art every Friday, 1–4 pm, 5101 Montrose Blvd., room 202. For more info: 713/639-7500 or 713/526-1118.

♦ **Art-o-mat.** DiverseWorks joins a network of sites throughout the U.S. serving as hosts for a national project known as *Art-o-mat*. Artists T. Clark Whittington and George Doles III, residents of the tobacco town of Winston-Salem, founded the Art-o-mat project in 1997. Their mission was to create an outlet where artists can expose their names & works to people who would otherwise not see it. They worked under the premise that art should be progressive, yet personal & approachable. What better way to do this than with a heavy cold steel machine? Whittington has refurbished an old cigarette vending machine specifically for DiverseWorks. The group Artists In Cellophane, as well as Houston-based artists, have filled the machine with original works of art that can be yours to keep for a mere $3–$5. The machine will be refilled with new art monthly. DiverseWorks will keep it filled to meet your demand. Through June 2001 @ DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway, 713/223-8346.

♦ **Breathe.** Sarah Nix Ginn's rhythmic pin-pushing hastens its beat in this installation. Known for her intense and fragile pursuits structured in commercial dress patterns and straight pins, this ephemeral departure represents a "coming-up for air" for this Houston artist. Through Feb. 9–Mar. 3 @ Diverse-Works, 1117 East Freeway, 713/223-8346. *Opening reception is Friday, Feb. 9, 6–8 pm.*

♦ **Donald Lipski: A Brief History of Twine.** This mid-career survey of Lipski includes more than 30 works of art, ranging from the early *Building Steam #351* (1985) to the most recent *Exquisite Copse No. 17* (2000), and features several large-scale installations, such as *The Starry Night* (1994)—a room-sized project comprised of thousands of razor blades sliced into the wall. Through Mar. 18 @ Blaffer Gallery, the Art Musem of UofH, entrance #16 off Cullen Blvd., 713/743-9530.

♦ **Humanoid** is a whimsical, colorful, strange presentation of works by 12 artists whose art is inspired by, although not necessarily representative of, the human form. Flesh, orifices, body parts, & other-worldly characters inhabit the works. Somehow, skewed realism, bulbous abstraction, melodrama, vibrating colors & patterns, and melancholy find common ground through shared carnality & wry wit. Through Feb. 24 @ Diverse-Works, 1117 East Freeway, 713/223-8346.

♦ **Pleasurscape** is a new installation by award-winning designer Karim Rashid, who is internationally recognized as one of the most innovative designers working today. His vision for the future is one where furniture & space merge. Through Feb. 25 @ Rice University Art Gallery, campus entrance 1 at the intersection of Main Street & Sunset Blvd. For more info: 713/348-6069.

♦ **Postive Art.** The photographs in this exhibition were taken by participants in the Positive Art Workshops of the Glassell School of Art. The workshops target adults who are HIV positive. Participants were encouraged to make images and keep journal entries that revolved around issues of self or that described a sense of place. The resulting work is a fascinating insight into the lives, feelings, thoughts, & poetry of people who have been afflicted by HIV. The exhibition traveled from its December home at the Glassell School of Art to its new home at the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center and is scheduled to hang around till the spring at the center, 803 Hawthorne, 713/524-3818.

CALENDAR DEADLINE
for *OutSmart*'s March issue:
Monday, February 12, 5 p.m.

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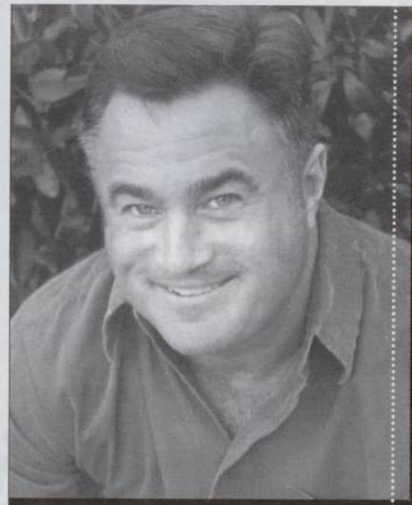
AIM ARTS TALK
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For program notes visit our website at www.spahouston.org

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Davenen was commissioned by the National Foundation for Jewish Culture, co-commissioned by Society for the Performing Arts.

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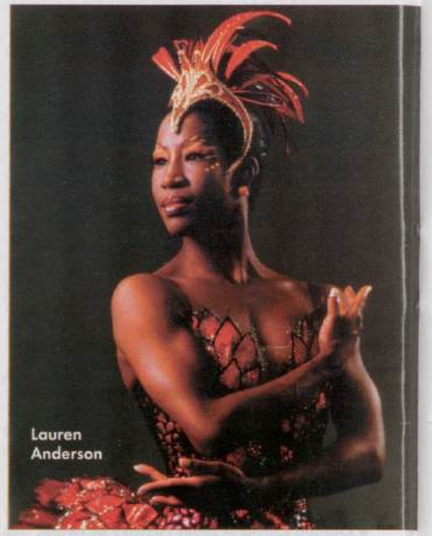
DANCING WITH FIRE

Gay choreographer James Kudelka creates a new Firebird *for Houston Ballet*

The Houston Ballet is presenting a dazzling new version of *The Firebird*, created by openly gay choreographer and ballet impressario James Kudelka. Described as a "kinetic poet of loneliness, isolation, misunderstanding, and repression," Kudelka has brought his moody rich sensibility to this fairy-tale ballet of opulent exoticism.

Known for his themes of love, death, and sex, Kudelka's past works include *Death of an Old Queen* (which is just what it sounds like), and the 1992 *Fifteen Heterosexual Duets*. ("Calling that piece 'Fifteen Heterosexual Duets' meant I could say that this was removed from me," Kudelka said. "I was naming it for what it was.") Kudelka was born in a small Canadian farming community, and escaped by entering the National Ballet School of Canada at age 10, "an ultra-serious child who wore fishbowl glasses and carried a briefcase." After a life of dance highs and lows, the shy and prolific 45-year-old choreographer has been hailed by the *New York Times* as "the most imaginative voice to come out of ballet in the last decade," and "not only Canada's premiere ballet choreographer, but also one of the best in the world today."

Kudelka has created the *Firebird* as a three-way coproduction, with expenses shared between the Houston Ballet, Kudelka's National Ballet of Canada (where it premiered in November), and the America Ballet Theatre.



Lauren Anderson

The Firebird was created by Serge Diaghilev for his Ballets Russes, and premiered in Paris in 1910, with music by the then-unknown Igor Stravinsky. Built on a pastiche of Russian fairy tales, *Firebird* tells the story of a prince who captures a magic bird, who is really a girl who has been enchanted by an evil sorcerer. The ballet opens with a renowned 10-minute solo by the sensual and frenetic firebird. (Lauren Anderson and Barbara Bears alternate dancing this daunting role.) The prince uses the firebird's powers so that he can battle the wizard and gain the love of one of the maidens under his spell.



James Kudelka



Barbara Bears

To give his *Firebird* its own distinctive opulence, Kudelka has brought in Santo Loquasto as designer. Among a multitude of credits, the Tony Award-winning designer has given several of Woody Allen's movies their look. Kudelka and Loquasto decided to transplant *The Firebird* from Russia to "an imaginary primitive society in South America—so that means we get to have wonderful headpieces and exotic reptilian monsters," Kudelka said. "We were looking for a different motif that would still pay homage to the fabulous exoticism of the Ballets Russes."

A huge production, the resplendent costumes (and "yards of yards of bright spangly materials") enliven ghoulish monsters and jungle beasts like jaguars, warthogs, lizards, and snakes, in "an extravagant parade of spectacular headdresses, masks, and costumes." (Move over, Miss Camp America.) "*The Lion King* meets Serge Diaghilev," the NYT rather tartly comments. It sounds like glittering high fun to us.

Another *Firebird* change is that Kudelka bolsters the part of the prince. As one ballotemane remarked about Kudelka: "The traditional requirements of the male lead in ballet—act straight, help the ballerina show off—have never seemed natural to this gay former dancer. Accordingly, the main focus in Kudelka's *Firebird* is on the prince. The story is his journey, his path to self-discovery and manhood." Kudelka says of the prince, "He is a wonderful fawn-like figure. The ballet is his story—a calm and righteous young warrior who triumphs over a horrible court." ■

Houston Ballet presents The Firebird, *along with* Five Poems *choreographed by Ben Stevenson, Thu.–Sat., Feb. 22–24 & Mar. 1–3, 7:30 p.m. (no show Sat., Feb. 23), and Sun., Feb. 24 & Mar. 4, 2 p.m., Wortham Theater, 713/227-ARTS, $11.50–$101.50.*

ANDERSON & BEARS - DREW DONOVAN; KUDELKA - UNCREDITED

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FIGHTING FOR HER DAUGHTER

What Makes a Family *is a smart insightful TV movie that starts an inquiry into the complex world facing gay adoptions*



L-r: Cherry Jones, Jordy Benattar, and Brooke Shields make a loving family.

Just when you thought you'd heard the last of Florida for a while, along comes *What Makes a Family*, the true story of a lesbian who must fight the laws of Florida and her deceased partner's parents for custody of their child. Brooke Shields and Cherry Jones star as lesbian couple Janine Nielssen and Sandy Cataldi. Sandy was their daughter's birth mother; when she succumbs to systemic lupus, her parents (played by Anne Meara and Al Waxman) file for custody. Florida law views bloodlines as preeminent in custody cases and specifically precludes gays and lesbians from adopting. Janine goes to court to adopt the child. It looks like a lost cause until lawyer Terry Harrison (Whoopi Goldberg) weighs in because she "likes a good fight." Seen as a battle over the archaic laws of two of our odder states, this is a sucker punch of a movie. When 48 of 50 states (Utah recently passed an antigay and lesbian adoption bill) are silent on the issue of gay and lesbian adoption, it's easy to make the case that something is wrong in the state of Florida. After the presidential election debacle, who could argue? The real truth about gay and lesbian adoptions is far more complicated and far less easily resolved than what we see in *What Makes a Family*.

The truth about adoption of any sort is not pretty. Adoption statistics quickly move from sad to tragic. Every six months, 150,000 children enter the foster care program, while 130,000 leave it—meaning that every six months, an additional 20,000 children are added to the numbers in foster care. There are currently more than half a million children in foster care in the U.S. Of that half million, a little more than 100,000 are eligible for adoption. The balance are still moving through the states' legal systems in various stages of resolution. Terminating parental rights can be difficult even when the most heinous abuse is evidenced. Less than half of the 100,000 eligible will be adopted in 2001. The reason: There are not enough "qualified" adoptive parents. As a result, most of the children will leave the foster care system when they reach adulthood, many never having known a loving home of any sort. Not surprisingly, most people considering adoption never actually adopt. They run out of money or patience. This is the world of public adoption.

Private adoptions are a whole other picture. Private adoptions are for those with money. The children moved through private adoptions are predominately white and are adopted by upper-middle-class white couples. The children most in need are the ones least likely to be served by private programs. Carrying an unwanted child to term and giving him or her up for adoption to a loving couple is a realistic alternative for young white girls.

Less than half of the 100,000 children eligible will be adopted in 2001. The reason: There are not enough "qualified" adoptive parents.

For any other potential mother, the realistic alternatives for her child come down to an uncertain future in a foster care system or abortion.

The bottom line on any adoption, public or private, is generally drawn by the few individuals directly involved. Whether public or private, people make the decisions, not laws or policies—case workers and judges in public agency adoptions, birth mothers and private agencies in private adoptions. The principle that the "best interests of the child" should guide the decision-making process is paramount, regardless of the arena.

Unfortunately, and here's the rub, the "best interests of the child" are defined by the individuals involved. If the individuals charged with seeing the child's interests served believe that gays and lesbians should not be allowed to adopt, it becomes almost impossible for them to do so. If a judge is homophobic, no gay or lesbian adoptions will take place in his or her court. If a private agency (the Roman Catholic Church, for example) believes same-sex unions are wrong, no adoption. Should a public agency have an official position of nondiscrimination and yet the individuals responsible for executing the program don't agree, the results are the same. The ignorance and prejudice of individuals become institutionalized in practice. Gay and lesbian couples, courageous enough to approach the system openly, often find themselves "offered" the children most difficult to place. Older children, emotionally disturbed children, and physically challenged children are matched to gay and lesbian couples with an attitude of "might as well, no one else will take them." The criminally cruel results are to leave tens of thousands of children languishing in foster care while depriving loving couples, and individuals, of the privilege →

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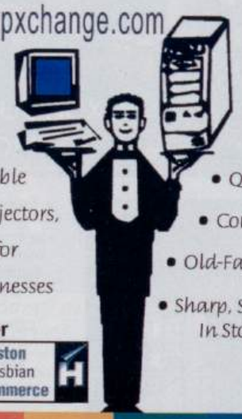
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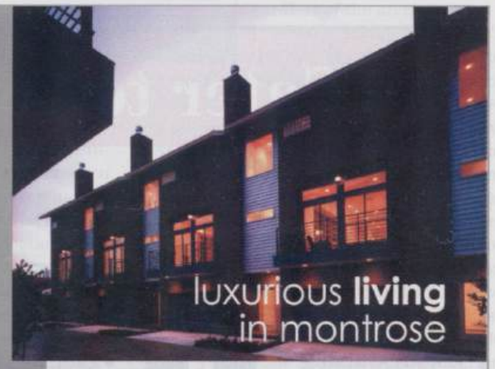
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of raising a child. In a perverse bit of irony, the assumption that gays and lesbians will not make fit parents often yields the result that the children demanding the greatest skills are placed with the very people these ignorant souls claim have the least skills.

What Makes a Family looks at one aspect of this complex problem, and it does so with clarity and grace. The issue before the court in *What Makes a Family* is whether this particular child will be better off with her biological mother's surviving lesbian lover or with her grandparents. The decision is supposed to turn on the "best interests of the child." Ironically, what finally sways the judge is the expressed interest of the biological mother, not "the best interests of the child." The viewer can easily see what should happen as the child is forced to sit quietly by while granny and her buddies play endless rounds of cards and granddad sleeps away the day on the couch. To see what happens in this true story which premiered in January, tune into Lifetime on Saturday, Feb. 3, at 3 p.m. or Sunday, Feb. 18, at 11 a.m.

This is a smart film by smart people. Anne Meara (yes, she is Jerry Stiller's real-life mom) does a remarkable job as the grieving mother desperately clutching Heather (Jordy Benattar) to her as all she has left of her daughter Sandy. Sandy's (Cherry Jones) transformation from healthy lover to lupus-ravaged victim is nothing short of breathtaking. Whoopi plays the attorney about as understatedly as is possible, in what is clearly an effort to keep the message of this important film up front. Brooke Shields puts her Princeton degree to good use in another intelligent choice of roles in this intelligent look at *What Makes a Family.* ■

When John W. Stiles isn't writing for his website www.johnstiles.com or for us, he serves the capitalist machine as a useful and productive cog facilitating the subjugation of the middle and lower classes.

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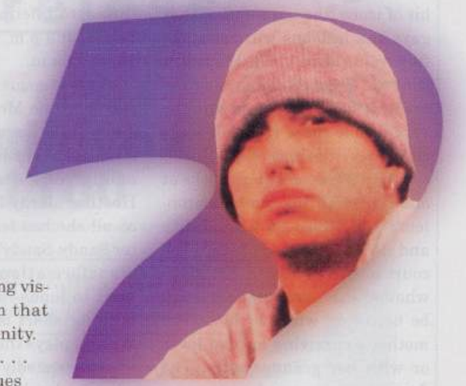
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by Chris Sill

EMINEM ANYONE

Free speech for hate-mongers, yes. Giving Grammy awards to hate-mongers . . . I don't think so





"I just make it up to make you mad."
—Eminem

On February 21, the music industry will gather at the Shrine Theater in Los Angeles to honor its own at the 43rd annual Grammy Awards. Zzzzz . . . wake me up when it's over. There's little to get excited about this year; in fact, most of the excitement may come outside the theater before the live broadcast when GLAAD, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, plans on crashing the party. "GLAAD will absolutely be at the Grammys," says Cathy Renna, GLAAD's news media director, speaking to *OutSmart* from their New York office. "We're planning on having a multi-faceted presence."

The reason for the demonstration is the ongoing controversy surrounding rapper Eminem and his multi-nominated album *The Marshall Mathers LP*. Since last summer GLAAD has been applying a lot of heat to the Detroit rapper and his label, Interscope Records, over lyrics promoting violence against gays and others. In September, GLAAD protested the MTV Video Music Awards outside Radio City Music Hall in New York, where Eminem took home two trophies.

"It's not OK for people to throw around words like *fag* and *dyke*."
—GLAAD

GLAAD is a media watchdog for the gay, lesbian, and transgendered community. Renna states that the group's goals concerning Eminem are the same as with any other issue. "Raising awareness and increasing visibility for what we see as defamation that continues to target the GLBT community. It's also about fostering a dialogue . . . getting people to talk about these issues because it's the only way we are going to make any movement forward in terms of understanding. . . ." GLAAD hopes to involve the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences—the governing body of the Grammys—in the discussion as well. GLAAD disagrees with the nominations Eminem received, especially Album of the Year. "We feel that they made a mistake in giving him this much prominence and nominating for that high an honor a CD that we really have some major concerns about."

Nominated for four Grammys, Eminem is most likely to win in the Best Rap Album and Best Rap Solo Performance categories. Although praised by many critics and colleagues for his rapping style and brutal content, he may prove too controversial to win the coveted Album of the Year prize. On *Mathers*, Eminem raps about raping and killing his mother and his wife, and stabbing gays and lesbians in the head with a knife.

My words are like a dagger
with a jagged edge
That'll stab you in the head
whether you're a fag or lez
Or the homosex, hermaph or
a trans-a-vest
Pants or dress—hate fags?
The answer's "yes"
—(from the song "Criminal")

Is this material worthy of that prize? GLAAD's concern is clearly justified. What kind of message is sent if music that promotes such violence and hatred toward a segment of the population wins awards? Especially when a large percentage of those listening are teenage males. Will this music influence their attitudes about the gay community? Does violence on television and in films make us more prone to commit violent acts? It's another chapter in America's ongoing debate over censorship.

Artists should have the right to freely express themselves through their music. It's one of this country's principal rights—when art becomes censored, a much larger problem unfolds. But there is difficulty in finding art in Eminem's music. He has stated that his music is "comical," and in a *Rolling Stone* interview he claims that half his lyrics are made up to antagonize. "I just make it up to make you mad. And you know what? I shouldn't even have to f---ing explain myself." Is he an artist or just an entertainer hiding behind the First Amendment, trying to get a rise out of everyone? The latter seems more applicable.

Either way, he has managed to amass a large audience made up of predominantly young males. To say that they won't be influenced in some way by Eminem's vicious tongue is foolish. Counterbalancing his hateful tone is GLAAD's mission and one that we all should be involved in. "It's not OK for people to throw around words like *fag* and *dyke*," Renna says. "The kind of climate we live in, in terms of prejudice and discrimination and even violence . . . people need to understand that it starts with that kind of language." She continues, "We've never said that Eminem should not be allowed to make his music or even say what he wants, but the bottom line is if that kind of speech is out there, then we have an obligation for the entire community to stand up and speak out about it. So it's really not about his free speech, it's about our own free speech and our ability to get our voice out there. It's not a *less*-speech but a *more*-speech argument, which I think is the only one with any integrity." ■



Chris Sill spins tunes at Rich's and can be reached at csill@infohwy.com.

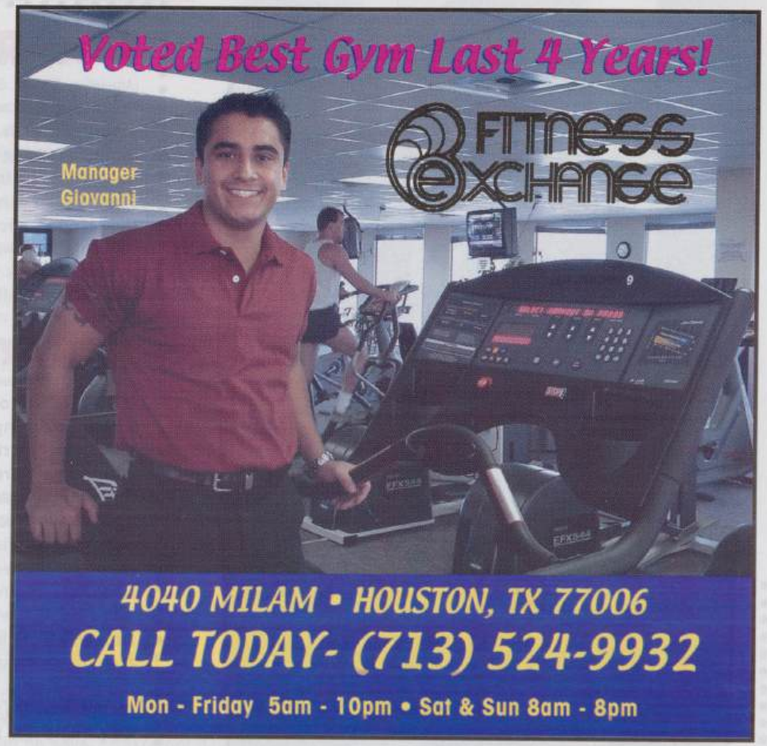
And the nominees are . . .

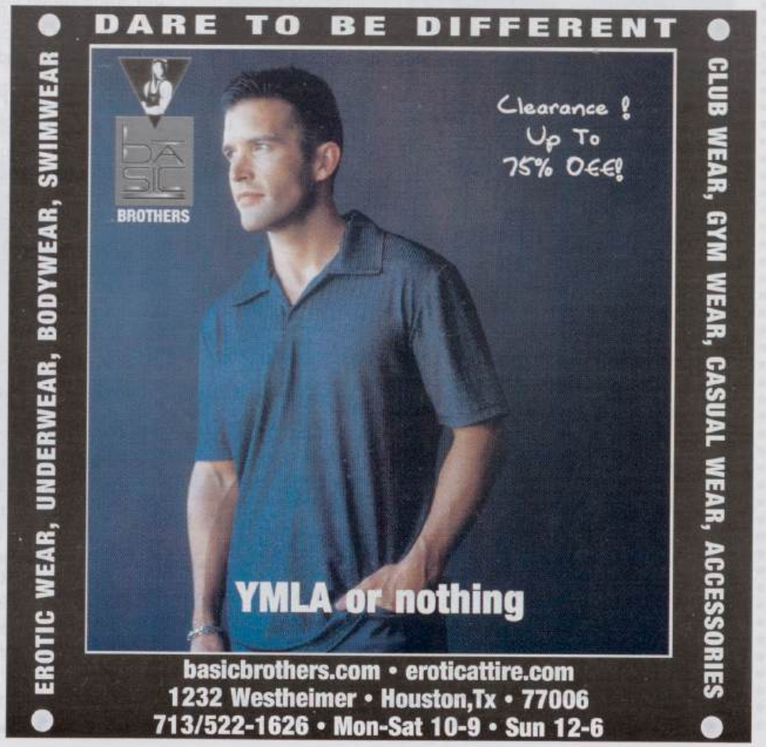
The nominees for Grammys are some of our favorite gay and lesbian artists and icons. Melissa Etheridge is up for the award in the Best Female Rock Vocal category. She faces some stiff competition from Fiona Apple, Sheryl Crow, Alanis Morrisette, and Patti Smith. This one's a toss-up. Elton John and Tim Rice receive a nomination for Best Musical Show Album with *Aida*. Latin lovestuds Ricky Martin and Marc Anthony battle it out with Sting, Don Henley, and Brian McKnight for Best Male Pop. This may be Anthony's year. Madonna's *Music* makes the Record of the Year nominees list and this is her best shot at an award this year. *Music* is also up for Best Pop Vocal Album, but look for Steely Dan's critically acclaimed comeback album, *Two Against Nature*, to take honors. Madonna's also nominated for Best Female Pop, but don't bet on her here—long-shot Aimee Mann deserves this one. *Let's Get Loud* from Jennifer Lopez has the momentum, but watch for Moby's *Natural Blues* to take Best Dance Recording. Remixer of the year honors should go to the much deserving Hex Hector.

Finally, the most exciting category this year is Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album, the nominees making a who's who of three decades of pop music: Bryan Ferry, Rickie Lee Jones, George Michael, Joni Mitchell, and Barbra Streisand. Look for Babs' *Timeless—Live in Concert* to get the sentimental vote and win.

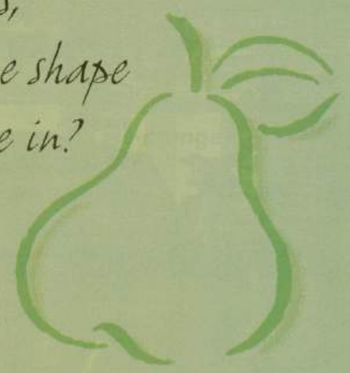
The Grammys air live Wednesday, February 21, on CBS.

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Don Roos (director of *The Opposite of Sex*)

(*Movieline*, 2/2001, Stephen Farber)

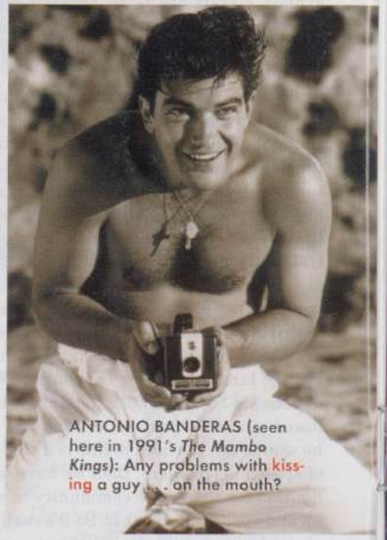
"Most sex scenes in movies seem funny to me, like the scene with the clay in *Ghost*. Or there are scenes where glasses and lamps go flying and curtains come off the rod. I have never knocked anything over during sex. To me, a good sex scene is Rhett Butler carrying Scarlett up a staircase [*laughs*]. I did like the scene in *The Way We Were* with a drunken Robert Redford and an all-too-willing Barbra Streisand. He was the sex object, so maybe that's why I remember it. As a gay man, you always imagine yourself as Barbra Streisand."

Antonio Banderas (actor)

(*Out*, 2/2001, Michael Muston)

Michael Musto: What about working with [Michael] Cristofer, who's a gay director?

Antonio Banderas: I don't give a damn about what people's sex orientation may be. He was very open for certain things, and I don't have problems with those things either. I have to kiss a guy's mouth—almost a bite—in the movie [*Original Sin*]. There was no problem. [Pedro] Almodovar, who is one of my best friends, is a recognized homosexual, and I never had a problem. To discuss this kind of thing at the end of the millennium is kind of absurd. I've been saying this for five years: I consider it stupid when people question somebody about their sexual option. It's old and Victorian.



ANTONIO BANDERAS (seen here in 1991's *The Mambo Kings*): Any problems with kissing a guy . . . on the mouth?

. . . By the way, after you see *Original Sin*, can you give me a call? I don't care if you give a quote that's shitty or that's great, just call me.

Honey, I'll call you every day.

I'll be here waiting.

You big tease.

Miguel Arteta

(director, *Chuck & Buck*)

(*Movieline*, 2/2001, Stephen Farber)

[Miguel] Arteta's most recent film, *Chuck & Buck*, includes a sex scene in which the character played by Mike White and the character he's been stalking for the entire film (Chris Weitz) have an unexpected sexual encounter. "Right before we shot the scene," Arteta recalls, "Chris Weitz said, 'I'm not going to French kiss him.' I'm a foreigner and I didn't know the expression 'French kiss' so I thought he was backing down from the whole scene, and I got angry. So finally he said, 'OK, I'll do it,' and he really went all the way with it."



Lily Tomlin (actress/comedienne)

(*Us Weekly*, 1/22/2001, James Kaplan)

[Lily Tomlin] had always paid writers to create her material, but when it came time to record her first Edith Ann album, the material she had, while funny, "wasn't deep enough," she says. Then a friend told her to watch a TV movie called *J.T.* . . . "It was about a kid, and I was looking to make Edith Ann better," Tomlin says. ". . . It was tender, it was funny, it was satiric, it was edgy."

It was written by Jane Wagner.

Tomlin sent Wagner a letter. They met; they clicked. They've worked and lived together ever since.

"I don't like to talk about my private life in any detail, but I don't disavow my private life," Tomlin says. "I also don't want to become someone's poster girl, either. And, you know, that's been somewhat difficult in terms of the [gay] movement. I've tried to be as simple and direct as I can without being exploited or tabloidized."

Lily Tomlin 2

(*Genre*, Dec/Jan2001, Gil Kaan)

Gil Kaan: What do you think is your appeal to your gay audience?

Lily Tomlin: The gay community, we just have a much higher sensibility. And I fulfill some of those standards.



LILY TOMLIN (seen here in 1996 in *Murphy Brown*): Has she been exploited or tabloidized?



NATHAN LANE (seen here in 1996's *The Birdcage*): Just letting his hair down?

Nathan Lane One year ago this month

(*Us*, 2/98, Brantley Bardin)

Nathan Lane: . . . I was sitting in a hotel lobby and a guy there with his wife says, "I loved you in *The Birdcage*." I say, "Thank you very much," and go back to my conversation. Then he says, "You're not gay, are ya?" I said, "You know, I hardly know you—maybe on the *second* date we'll discuss that." The trouble with that to me is that it [implies] that if you're gay, you were just letting your down and it wasn't really a performance.

Brantley Bardin: Tell me, is getting laughs like having an orgasm?

Yeah, but not as messy. You don't have to clean up after.



SEAN YOUNG (pictured here with Iman in '87's *No Way Out*): Gives big kisses . . . to women?

Sean Young

(*Movieline*, 2/2001, Stephen Rebello)

"I get some strange mail from women. I always oblige by signing with a big kiss, mmmmmmm, and a big heart. It's part of me, too. I'm not gay, but I definitely like looking at good-looking women."

Queer Quotes

Compiled by Blase DiStefano



BROOKE SHIELDS (left) & CHERRY JONES (seen here in Lifetime's recent *What Makes a Family*): Is there a trust to their kisses?

Cherry Jones (actress)

(*The Advocate*, 1/30/2001, Anne Stockwell)

As always, [Cherry Jones] politely downplays the high priestess status she's owned ever since the night when she simultaneously collected her 1995 Best Actress Tony (for her pitch-perfect performance in *The Heiress*) and became a gay folk hero when she jumped onstage and thanked her longtime love, Mary O'Connor.

Cherry Jones on Brooke Shields

(*The Advocate*, 1/30/2001, Anne Stockwell)

Asked what it's like to do love scenes with Brooke Shields, Jones paraphrases Susan Sarandon's comment about kissing Catherine Deneuve: "Have you *seen* her lately?" Actually, says Jones, "from the get-go there was this complete ease. I think it's partly that Brooke is so happy with Chris [Henchy] and I'm happy with Mary. There's a trust there."

TOM LIN - TONY ESPARZA/CBS; BANDERAS - WARNER BROS.; LANE - LOREY SEBASTIAN/UNITED ARTISTS; SHIELDS & JONES - LIFETIME TELEVISION; YOUNG & IMAN - GEMMA LAMANNA/WILLOW/CHOICE PICTURES

Rita Reigns

Ritzy Rita Moreno has ripened with age, and the multiple-award-winning actress/singer/dancer is still our darling

by Blase DiStefano

In 1962, Rita Moreno was holding Oscar. Thirteen years later, she was holding Antoinette. She had finally gone bi. Bicoastal, that is. She had won her Academy Award in California and her Antoinette Perry Award (aka Tony) in New York.

Only three years earlier, Moreno had picked up a Grammy. In 1977 *and* 1978, she picked up a couple of Emmys, at which point she was entered into the *Guinness Book of World Records* as the only female performer to win all four top entertainment awards!

Rita Moreno was born Rosa Dolores Alverio on December 11, 1932, in Humacao, Puerto Rico, but at the age of 5, she and her mother moved to New York. Though the immigrants were poor, Rosita (as Rita was known) started dancing lessons the following year. When she was 13, she debuted on Broadway in *Skydrift* with Eli Wallach, and at 17, she met with Louis B. Mayer and was offered a standard seven-year contract with MGM.

She shortened Rosita to Rita (at the behest of Mayer) and used her stepfather's surname and was nevertheless continually typecast as the Mexican spitfire or Indian maiden . . . and always barefoot.

In the early '50s, she had an affair with Marlon Brando, which had its ups and downs over many years; her career, however, was mostly downs. So when Brando married someone else in 1961, Moreno swallowed a handful of sleeping pills; luckily for us, her suicide attempt failed.

Only one year later she won an Oscar for Best Supporting Actress for her role as Anita in *West Side Story*. At the age of 33, she married Dr. Lenny Gordon, and in 1967, she gave birth to her only child, Fernanda (Nandy) Luisa, who has two children. Grandmother Moreno is still married to Gordon, who retired and became her manager.

You might think that was enough to accomplish in one lifetime. But Moreno also starred in the TV version of the film *9 to 5*, played opposite Burt Reynolds in *B.L. Stryker* from 1989–90, was featured in Fox's *The Top of the Heap*, and has been costarring in HBO's *Oz*, which began its fifth year in January.

During all of this, Rita Moreno has been a true advocate for human rights in general and has not shied away from gay rights specifically. She was one of the first to do a benefit for AIDS, possibly before Elizabeth Taylor, and she was on the RSVP cruise in 1979, the first to have entertainers.

The night Rita Moreno performs with the Houston Symphony won't be just any night

Rita Moreno will be in Houston with her cabaret act with the Houston Symphony on March 2, 3, and 4. Tickets range from $22 to $76. For more information, call 713/224-7575 or visit www.houstonsymphony.org.

Rita Moreno stars as Googie Gomez in *The Ritz*, which will show in Houston

To honor Rita Moreno's appearances in Houston, *The Ritz* is scheduled to be shown on Friday, March 2, at 7 p.m. at the Houston Lesbian & Gay Community Center, 803 Hawthorne, 713/524-3818.

OutSmart: In 1975, in *People* magazine, you were asked about the possibility of playing Googie Gomez in the screen version of *The Ritz*, and you said, "You know how Hollywood works, they'll probably let Freddie Prinze play it in drag."

Rita Moreno: Is that what I said?

Yep. So, do you think Freddie Prinze would have accepted the part?

Uh, let me think. [*Pause*] He would have been crazy not to. I'm glad it wasn't offered to him.

Well, I'm really glad, too. What do you remember most about making the film?

Well, really what I remember most about doing the play—because in the film we were just simply doing what we did on Broadway for years—was the fun we had. I'd never laughed so hard in all my life. And the cast was like that, too. The hardest thing we had to do on that show was to keep a straight face. I broke myself up all the time. I just thought Googie was so hilarious. It was like I was schizophrenic, like I was two people. I was always Rita listening to this other character and the character would make Rita laugh. I can still break myself up by thinking of things to do with her attitude and her accent and, well, I would fall on the floor myself.

I would love to have seen the play.

Believe it or not, the play was easily a hundred times funnier because it didn't have the same director. Richard [Lester] just really couldn't see what was funny about it. It was the strangest experience. He kept saying, "God, all these words." And the first time I heard him say that I almost fainted, because I thought, *He really doesn't know. He's so used to cartoon stuff that he doesn't realize that it's not always just visual, but it's about attitude.* That whole play of Terrence McNally's is always about attitude. And that's what was so hilarious about it.

I've done a couple of scenes from that show since then for a few benefits, and I must tell you it's gotten even funnier. Phyllis



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Newman does a wonderful charity benefit show every year for AIDS and breast cancer. It's Broadway Cares. So I did the scene where Googie tells the man who she thinks is a producer that she was in the *Sound of Music*, and he says, "You were in the *Sound of Music*?" And she says, "Oh, chure." And he says, "What part did you play?" and she says, "One of those f---ing brat kids." That scene. So we did that scene with another actor, and then I said, "Oh, they're announcing me," and I ran offstage and came onstage and did the number with two wonderful guys who were just horrible. We were leaping around in the air like crazed gazelles. I mean, these bad, bad ballet leaps. In other words, we refined the choreography, and it was just absolutely hilarious. Anyway, it is just so much fun to do it years and years later because, hard as it is to believe, you find new stuff to add to it.

Let's go from Googie to gay pride. In 1985 while you were doing *The Odd Couple*, there was a full-page gay pride ad that was supposed to run in *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *U.S. News and World Report*. In the ad was a picture of you with a personal statement supporting human rights. They rejected the ad. Even then, you said you were surprised, especially by *Newsweek*, because of their liberal stand. But that was back in '85. I wondered now, from your vantage point, what do you think the climate is like now for gays compared to then?

Certainly the door is ajar, I just don't think it's wide open.

At least there are a few who are openly gay now.

Right, who are still working. That's the crux of the matter.

When you accepted your Oscar for *West Side Story*, did you feel at the time that it would be better for minorities after you won?

I didn't even think of that. I thought it was such an anomaly. And indeed it was in a way. It didn't change things much at all. What it did change, which I didn't know for years and years and years, was the climate within the Hispanic community. I cannot tell you how many Hispanic stars have since then either said in print or told me personally that my appearance in that movie and then getting the Oscar meant all the difference to them to the extent that they then felt that they could be in show business and that somehow they could make it happen for them. Edward James Olmos, Jimmy Smits, and John Leguizamo told me that. Rosie Perez told me that. And Jennifer Lopez has said it in print tons of times. Isn't that fascinating?

Paul Rodriguez (at a bash for Rita after being given a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame):
"I just want you to know that when I was a kid living in East L.A., none of us in that neighborhood had a clue who our congressman was, who our councilman was, who our senator was, but we knew who Rita Moreno was."

It's wonderful.

When I got my star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, they had a big bash for me that night, and every Latino in the world showed up for it. It was really quite extraordinary because usually when actors get stars, the press shows up and that's it, that afternoon. [I was also given] a bash that night at the Beverly Hilton. And Morgan Freeman flew in at his own expense to emcee the show. Ruben Blades, whose back was so out of joint he could barely walk to the middle of the stage, came and sang a couple of songs. Celia Cruz, the Queen of Salsa, flew in and did part of the show. Paul Rodriguez showed up, [as did] Liz Torres and Eddie Olmos. [*Edward James Olmos had presented Moreno with the star that afternoon on Hollywood Blvd.*]

What was really so moving to me was what Paul Rodriguez and Liz Torres said. I never expected Paul to get serious because he's just not that way, and at one point through his wonderful funny stand-up, he said, "I just want you to know that when I was a kid living in East L.A., none of us in that neighborhood had a clue who our congressman was, who our councilman was, who our senator was, but we knew who Rita Moreno was." All this was a huge surprise to me, and I just started to cry. Then Liz Torres gets up. Oh, she killed me. She sang the Puerto Rican national anthem a cappella in Spanish. Which was really kind of brave because nobody knew what the hell she was singing about. But it was our anthem. And then she said to the audience, "You know, when Rita won her Oscar for *West Side Story*, I lived in the Hispanic ghetto in New York, and that's a pretty noisy place, but I have to tell you that when they started to name the names of the nominees, that neighborhood got absolutely silent. And when Rita's name was called, it went up in flames." Isn't that amazing?

I've got goose bumps. →

(L-r): Moreno gets steamy in *Summer and Smoke* (1961); Moreno gets down with George Chakiris in *West Side Story* (1961); Moreno gets an Oscar in 1962.



L-R: HAL WALLIS AND JOSEPH H. HAZEN; UNITED ARTISTS; UNCREDITED



Introducing new HIV therapy

New kaletra™ (lopinavir/ritonavir)

Formerly known as ABT-378/r

DESIGNED FOR HIV

KALETRA™ is for the treatment of HIV infection in combination with other antiretroviral (ARV) agents. This is based on analyses of plasma HIV RNA levels and CD_4 T-cell counts in a controlled study of KALETRA of 24 weeks' duration and in smaller, uncontrolled, dose-ranging studies of KALETRA of 72 weeks' duration.

At present, there are no results from controlled trials evaluating the effect of KALETRA on the clinical progression of HIV.

KALETRA helps fight HIV

New KALETRA, when taken with other HIV medicines, has been shown to reduce the amount of HIV in the blood and increase the number of CD_4 T-cells. However, KALETRA is not a cure for HIV infection or AIDS. The long-term effects of KALETRA are not known at this time either. Individuals taking KALETRA may still develop opportunistic infections or other conditions associated with HIV infection.

Over 24 weeks, most patients found that they could stay with a KALETRA-based regimen. Only 2% of 326 patients stopped taking KALETRA because of drug-related side effects (12% stopped for other reasons).

KALETRA is taken twice daily—in the morning and evening. Your healthcare professional will tell you how much KALETRA to take. KALETRA is to be taken with your choice of food, but there are no rules on what you eat or how much liquid you drink. KALETRA is also available as a liquid.

Safety considerations

KALETRA should not be used with ergotamine, ergonovine, dihydroergotamine, and methylergonovine such as Cafergot®, Migranal®, D.H.E. 45®, Ergotrate Maleate, Methergine® and others, Halcion® (triazolam), Hismanal® (astemizole), Orap® (pimozide), Propulsid® (cisapride), Rythmol® (propafenone), Seldane® (terfenadine), Tambocor™ (flecainide), Versed® (midazolam).

Taking certain drugs with KALETRA could create the potential for life-threatening side effects. Always talk to your doctor or pharmacist before starting new medications.

KALETRA should not be taken if you have had an allergic reaction to KALETRA (lopinavir/ritonavir) or any of its ingredients.

Pancreatitis and liver problems have been reported in patients receiving KALETRA. In some patients taking protease inhibitors, increased bleeding (in patients with hemophilia) and diabetes/high blood sugar have occurred. Changes in body fat have been seen in some patients receiving ARV therapy. Some patients receiving KALETRA have had large increases in triglycerides and cholesterol, which should be monitored before and during therapy.

The most commonly reported KALETRA-related side effects of moderate severity are: abnormal stools, diarrhea, feeling weak/tired, headache, and nausea.

For more information about KALETRA: **Call 1-800-441-4987 toll free.**

Ask your doctor or other healthcare professional.

Please see adjacent page for Patient Information.

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North Chicago, IL 60064

KALETRA™
(lopinavir/ritonavir) capsules
(lopinavir/ritonavir) oral solution

ALERT: Find out about drugs that should NOT be taken with KALETRA. Please also read the section "MEDICINES YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE WITH KALETRA."

Patient Information
KALETRA™
(kuh-LEE-tra)
Generic Name: lopinavir/ritonavir
(lop-IN-uh-veer/rit-ON-uh-veer)

Read this leaflet carefully before you start taking KALETRA. Also, read it each time you get your KALETRA prescription refilled, in case something has changed. This information does not take the place of talking with your doctor when you start this medicine and at check ups. Ask your doctor if you have any questions about KALETRA.

What is KALETRA and how does it work?
KALETRA is a combination of two medicines. They are lopinavir and ritonavir. KALETRA is a type of medicine called an HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) protease (PRO-tee-ase) inhibitor. KALETRA is always used in combination with other anti-HIV medicines to treat people with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. KALETRA is for adults and for children age 6 months and older.

HIV infection destroys CD4 (T) cells, which are important to the immune system. After a large number of T cells are destroyed, acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) develops.
KALETRA blocks HIV protease, a chemical which is needed for HIV to multiply. KALETRA reduces the amount of HIV in your blood and increases the number of T cells. Reducing the amount of HIV in the blood reduces the chance of death or infections that happen when your immune system is weak (opportunistic infections).

Does KALETRA cure HIV or AIDS?
KALETRA does not cure HIV infection or AIDS. The long-term effects of KALETRA are not known at this time. People taking KALETRA may still get opportunistic infections or other conditions that happen with HIV infection. Some of these conditions are pneumonia, herpes virus infections, and *Mycobacterium avium* complex (MAC) infections.

Does KALETRA reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?
KALETRA does not reduce the risk of passing HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination. Continue to practice safe sex and do not use or share dirty needles.

How should I take KALETRA?
- You should stay under a doctor's care when taking KALETRA. Do not change your treatment or stop treatment without first talking with your doctor.
- You must take KALETRA every day exactly as your doctor prescribed it. The dose of KALETRA may be different for you than for other patients. Follow the directions from your doctor, exactly as written on the label.
- Dosing in adults (including children 12 years of age and older): The usual dose for adults is 3 capsules (400/100 mg) or 5.0 mL of the oral solution twice a day (morning and night), in combination with other anti-HIV medicines.
- Dosing in children from 6 months to 12 years of age: Children from 6 months to 12 years of age can also take KALETRA. The child's doctor will decide the right dose based on the child's weight.
- Take KALETRA with food to help it work better.
- Do not change your dose or stop taking KALETRA without first talking with your doctor.
- When your KALETRA supply starts to run low, get more from your doctor or pharmacy. This is very important because the amount of virus in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time. The virus may develop resistance to KALETRA and become harder to treat.
- Be sure to set up a schedule and follow it carefully.
- Only take medicine that has been prescribed specifically for you. Do not give KALETRA to others or take medicine prescribed for someone else.

What should I do if I miss a dose of KALETRA?
It is important that you do not miss any doses. If you miss a dose of KALETRA, take it as soon as possible and then take your next scheduled dose at its regular time. If it is almost time for your next dose, do not take the missed dose. Wait and take the next dose at the regular time. Do not double the next dose.

What happens if I take too much KALETRA?
If you suspect that you took more than the prescribed dose of this medicine, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

As with all prescription medicines, KALETRA should be kept out of the reach of young children. KALETRA liquid contains a large amount of alcohol. If a toddler or young child accidentally drinks more than the recommended dose of KALETRA, it could make him/her sick from too much alcohol. Contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately if this happens.

Who should not take KALETRA?
Together with your doctor, you need to decide whether KALETRA is right for you.
- Do not take KALETRA if you are taking certain medicines. These could cause serious side effects that could cause death. Before you take KALETRA, you must tell your doctor about all the medicines you are taking or are planning to take. These include other prescription and non-prescription medicines and herbal supplements.

For more information about medicines you should not take with KALETRA, please read the section titled "MEDICINES YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE WITH KALETRA."
- Do not take KALETRA if you have an allergy to KALETRA or any of its ingredients, including ritonavir or lopinavir.

Can I take KALETRA with other medications?*
KALETRA may interact with other medicines, including those you take without a prescription. You must tell your doctor about all the medicines you are taking or planning to take before you take KALETRA.

MEDICINES YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE WITH KALETRA.
- Do not take the following medicines with KALETRA because they can cause serious problems or death if taken with KALETRA:
  Dihydroergotamine, ergonovine, ergotamine and methylergonovine such as Cafergot®, Migranal®, D.H.E. 45®, Ergotrate Maleate, Methergine, and others
  Halcion® (triazolam)
  Hismanal® (astemizole)
  Orap® (pimozide)
  Propulsid® (cisapride)
  Rhythmol® (propafenone)
  Seldane® (terfenadine)
  Tambocor® (flecainide)
  Versed® (midazolam)
- Do not take KALETRA with rifampin, also known as Rimactane®, Rifadin®, Rifater®, or Rifamate®. Rifampin may lower the amount of KALETRA in your blood and make it less effective.
- Do not take KALETRA with St. John's wort (hypericum perforatum), an herbal product sold as a dietary supplement, or products containing St. John's wort. Talk with your doctor if you are taking or planning to take St. John's wort. Taking St. John's wort may decrease KALETRA levels and lead to increased viral load and possible resistance to KALETRA or cross-resistance to other anti-HIV medicines.
- Do not take KALETRA with the cholesterol-lowering medicines Mevacor® (lovastatin) or Zocor® (simvastatin) because of possible serious reactions. There is also an increased risk of drug interactions between KALETRA and Lipitor® (atorvastatin) and Baycol® (cerivastatin); talk to your doctor before you take any of these cholesterol-reducing medicines with KALETRA.

Medicines that require dosage adjustments:
It is possible that your doctor may need to increase or decrease the dose of other medicines when you are also taking KALETRA. Remember to tell your doctor all medicines you are taking or plan to take.

Before you take Viagra® (sildenafil) with KALETRA, talk to your doctor about problems these two medicines can cause when taken together. You may get increased side effects of VIAGRA, such as low blood pressure, vision changes, and penis erection lasting more than 4 hours. If an erection lasts longer than 4 hours, get medical help right away to avoid permanent damage to your penis. Your doctor can explain these symptoms to you.
- If you are taking oral contraceptives ("the pill") to prevent pregnancy, you should use an additional or different type of contraception since KALETRA may reduce the effectiveness of oral contraceptives.
- Efavirenz (Sustiva™) or nevirapine (Viramune®) may lower the amount of KALETRA in your blood. Your doctor may increase your dose of KALETRA if you are also taking efavirenz or nevirapine.
- If you are taking Mycobutin® (rifabutin), your doctor will lower the dose of Mycobutin.
- **A change in therapy should be considered if you are taking KALETRA with:**
  Phenobarbital
  Phenytoin (Dilantin® and others)
  Carbamazepine (Tegretol® and others)
  These medicines may lower the amount of KALETRA in your blood and make it less effective.
- **Other Special Considerations:**
  KALETRA oral solution contains alcohol. Talk with your doctor if you are taking or planning to take metronidazole or disulfiram. Severe nausea and vomiting can occur.
- **If you are taking both didanosine (Videx®) and KALETRA:**
  Didanosine (Videx®) should be taken one hour before or two hours after KALETRA.

What are the possible side effects of KALETRA?
- This list of side effects is **not** complete. If you have questions about side effects, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. You should report any new or continuing symptoms to your doctor right away. Your doctor may be able to help you manage these side effects.
- The most commonly reported side effects of moderate severity that are thought to be drug related are: abnormal stools (bowel movements), diarrhea, feeling weak/tired, headache, and nausea. Children taking KALETRA may sometimes get a skin rash.
- Blood tests in patients taking KALETRA may show possible liver problems. People with liver disease such as Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C who take KALETRA may have worsening liver disease. Liver problems including death have occurred in patients taking KALETRA. In studies, it is unclear if KALETRA caused these liver problems because some patients had other illnesses or were taking other medicines.
- Some patients taking KALETRA can develop serious problems with their pancreas (pancreatitis), which may cause death. You have a higher chance of having pancreatitis if you have had it before. Tell your doctor if you have nausea, vomiting, or abdominal pain. These may be signs of pancreatitis.
- Some patients have large increases in triglycerides and cholesterol. The long-term chance of getting complications such as heart attacks or stroke due to increases in triglycerides and cholesterol caused by protease inhibitors is not known at this time.
- Diabetes and high blood sugar (hyperglycemia) occur in patients taking protease inhibitors such as KALETRA. Some patients had diabetes before starting protease inhibitors, others did not. Some patients need changes in their diabetes medicine. Others needed new diabetes medicine.
- Changes in body fat happen in some patients getting anti-HIV medicines. These changes may include increased fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), breast and abdomen (stomach area). Loss of fat from the face, legs, and arms may also happen. The cause and long-term health effects of these conditions are not known at this time.
- Some patients with hemophilia have increased bleeding with protease inhibitors.
- There have been other side effects in patients taking KALETRA. However, these side effects may have been due to other medicines that patients were taking or to the illness itself. Some of these side effects can be serious.

What should I tell my doctor before taking KALETRA?
- *If you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant:* The effects of KALETRA on pregnant women or their unborn babies are not known.
- *If you are breast-feeding:* You should not breast-feed if you have HIV. If you are a woman who has or will have a baby, talk with your doctor about the best way to feed your baby. You should be aware that if your baby does not already have HIV, there is a chance that HIV can be transmitted through breast-feeding.
- *If you have liver problems:* If you have liver problems or are infected with Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C, you should tell your doctor before taking KALETRA.
- *If you have diabetes:* Some people taking protease inhibitors develop new or more serious diabetes or high blood sugar. Tell your doctor if you have diabetes or an increase in thirst or frequent urination.
- *If you have hemophilia:* Patients taking KALETRA may have increased bleeding.

How do I store KALETRA?
- Keep KALETRA and all other medicines out of the reach of children.
- Refrigerated KALETRA capsules and oral solution remain stable until the expiration date printed on the label. If stored at room temperature up to 77°F (25°C), KALETRA capsules and oral solution should be used within 2 months.

Do not keep medicine that is out of date or that you no longer need. Be sure that if you throw any medicine away, it is out of the reach of children.

General advice about prescription medicines:
Talk to your doctor or other health care provider if you have any questions about this medicine or your condition. Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Patient Information Leaflet. If you have any concerns about this medicine, ask your doctor. Your doctor or pharmacist can give you information about this medicine that was written for health care professionals. Do not use this medicine for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not share this medicine with other people.

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Well, I get goose bumps, because I never ever perceived myself that way. And I didn't know this for years and years. The Hispanic community doesn't have a tradition of writing fan mail; that's a very American thing. So I never got any feedback from my community. I never had a clue. And now kids who shouldn't know me, know me because of the parents who talk about me. There are kids who have been named after me. It is just astonishing. And I honestly don't think of myself in any iconic ways. When I first met Rosie Perez, she started to tremble and cry. And I kept thinking, *I wonder what's wrong, somebody must have said something terrible to her.* And it wasn't that at all, it was me. My presence, my holding her hand. Because I said, "Gee, I have been wanting to meet you, and I hear you are a fan of mine," and she just stared at me and these great tears came into her eyes and she started to tremble. Can you imagine? Having somebody do that?

Well, that does tell you a lot about how we think of you.
And you know that is the other thing, the gay community has always been just absolutely warm and lovely and devoted.

I'm sure part of that is your response. You're such an open, honest, giving person.
I have to tell you that I was the very first celebrity person to do a benefit for AIDS at the Hollywood Bowl. It was the very first time they had done one.

You're kidding.
I'm not kidding, no. And in fact it was such a new and bold thing . . . well, it was bold on their terms, not for me it wasn't . . . that all the local TV people showed up sticking the mikes in my face saying, "Why are you doing this?" And my only response was, "Why wouldn't I? What a silly question." And then about a year or two later, Elizabeth Taylor became involved.

Do you have any stories about the show?
First of all, I had included my daughter in the act.

Oh really? About how old was she?
Fernando was about 16. And we did two numbers together. We did "America" from *West Side Story*, and then we did an aerobics-type number by Michael Jackson, "You Got Me Working Day and Night." The applause was thunderous. As I went backstage after the show, I said to her, "Don't ever, ever expect that to happen again. This is a very special audience." Another story about that night is that they had a lot of gay and lesbian marching bands. And it so happens that in my act I used to open with "Strike Up the Band." So we decided to close with it and have all the bands come on and sing. But to rehearse this many bands is a nightmare, because number one, it's almost impossible for that many drum people to keep time. So the rehearsal of that number was really just very long and very arduous. And finally they seemed to be getting it right so that we were together. And when we finally got to that point, my conductor said to everybody, "Okay, it seems to be clarified now. Is everybody straight?" And a chorus of hundreds of voices said, "NO!" I thought my drummer would pee in his pants, I laughed so loud.

"The gay community has always been just absolutely warm and lovely and devoted."

[*Laughs*] You seem to have always been there for gay people. I remember an ad in *The Advocate* that pictured you as part of the entertainment for an RSVP cruise.
Oh yeah, in fact I was on the first that had a show, with Waylan Flowers and Quentin Crisp. He was really a terrible little man.

Who?
Quentin Crisp.

Really?
The whole gay population on the ship really got to dislike him because he actually called AIDS—at a time when everybody was really realizing what a scourge this illness is—a fad, a trend.

What?
Yeah. And they just sat there goggle-eyed with their jaws on their laps, because we're talking about almost all gay people on this ship. And they were just appalled. Absolutely appalled. And we started to scold him. It was just awful. Till then he was funny and he was very sharp-tongued and all that, not my kind of humor, but you know, he was what he was, and then he comes up with this thing. I guess he was feeling his oats because everyone was there so ready to love him.

Yeah, but did he not know . . .
He was just extremely ignorant, but not to know at that point. . . . But two charming things happened on that ship. By the way, it was the most fun trip I've ever had on a ship. And everyone kept saying, "This is so much fun, why is this so much fun?" I said, "I know why, it's because there are no secrets on this

(L-r): Moreno gets it on with Marlon Brando in *The Night of the Following Day* ('69); Moreno gets ritzy in *Happy Birthday, Gemini* ('80); Moreno gets religious in Oz (2000).



L-R: UNIVERSAL CITY STUDIOS INC.; UNITED ARTISTS CORPORATION; HBO

ship. No one has to pretend." Everyone was so open, it was such a gas. My husband had a great time, and the other few people who were straight as arrows just loved it and had such a good time.

Any anecdotes?

We were on deck and the ship was departing from New Orleans and they had music going and big purple balloons and they were serving champagne and wonderful music was blasting through the loudspeakers—like Gershwin, something marvelous—and I'm moving around meeting everybody, just introducing myself to people, and I remember saying to one guy, "So, do you cruise often?" And he said, "Dahling, all the time."

[*Both laugh.*]

And then when I did the show, on the way up I ran into some guys who just went nuts for what I was wearing. And after my opening number, I said, "Let me establish immediately, you cannot have my earrings." It was the loosest, funniest show I have ever done. I mean I just let it go. I let her rip. Some of the guys showed up with towels around their waists and wing collars and tuxes and black ties because it was formal night. It was just so much fun and so charming.

It makes me want to have been there.

Oh, it was delicious. They had a bingo night and Madame called out all the numbers. And of course when she called out "69," everybody went crazy. And then they had a costume contest that Madame and I judged. Well, my dear, there were *trunks* on board for people. Everybody was dressed to the nines every night. It was really just wonderful. We made some great friends. It was the best. Talk about "We Are the World."



The original 1987 ad that pictured Moreno as a performer on the first RSVP cruise that provided entertainment.

How was your husband through all this?

They loved my husband. My husband was the kind of doctor—when he was practicing—who had a big gay practice. Because he was so sweet and kind, it almost sounds patronizing to say that, but in those days doctors apparently were not very nice to gays. They would get big lectures and really terrible attitudes, and Lenny would never, never do anything like that. Anyway, he had a big gay practice, and word got around real fast, *There is this wonderful doctor who knows what he's doing and he's also a nice person.* And as a result he also got gangsters. He had the g--damnedest practice you ever saw. He had a lot of Puerto Ricans. And he was nice to them. He was in a kind of fancy building with a doorman, and they always knew who his patients were. "You're here for Dr. Gordon, right?" It was either a mafioso-looking guy or a Puerto Rican or a chorus girl.

Or a drag queen.

Or a drag queen. How could I not marry a guy like this?

OK, now you were on the cover of *Ms.* magazine in 1979.

God, you did your homework.

There was a caption, "Rita Moreno is a stair bounder."

Oh, God, I remember I was jumping off the steps on the cover. It was a way of keeping in shape.

Apparently it helped for your role in *Sunset Boulevard* where you had to climb 400 steps.

Well, that came much later, before I really finished off my knees.

What happened?

Well, they weren't good to begin with at that point. And in order to come down steps and make a grand entrance, you have to go up steps backstage. And I was weighing in at 107 pounds. And I was wearing 20- and 30-pound costumes, so I was bearing weight that was way past what anybody my size should be doing. So I ended up with serious big-time medical braces on my knees under the costumes, because it was the only way I could do it. Most of the times when I had scene changes, I had to run up the stairs backstage and then very calmly come down the steps in front of the audience. But a few times I had enough time to go up slowly. So I learned to shimmy backwards. I would go on my behind. The staircases on both sides of the stage had rails, so I would pull myself up literally with my arms. Well, my arms and my back got so gorgeous. At first they started to laugh and say that was the funniest sight they had ever seen—me shimmying up on my ass. But at the same time they were full of admiration because nobody had ever thought of that before. Honey, I got truck-driver arms and upper back while I was doing it.

"The staircases on both sides of the stage had rails, so I would pull myself up literally with my arms. Well, my arms and my back got so gorgeous."

Now you're a nun!

Isn't she wonderful?

I don't have HBO right now, but I did get to see the first season [of *Oz*].

Well, you missed some of the good stuff because the second and third year, she began to get a serious attraction to one of the prisoners. We're afraid of nothing on that show.

Who came up with that premise?

It was my idea actually. I went to Tom Fontana, the producer/writer, and I asked if anyone had ever explored the physical yearnings of religious people. And right away his eyebrows shot up. I said it would be so interesting for Sister Pete to find somebody actually attractive . . . the dilemma, what do you do? Oh, he handled it fabulously. [Fontana] was going to be a Jesuit many, many years ago. But you take one look at *Oz* and you say that definitely wouldn't have worked. It has a huge gay following.

Two of the leading characters who play lovers on *Oz* were at the GLAAD awards, and one of them kissed the other guy.

It was wonderful because they are as straight as they can be. They have love scenes in the show and it's just amazing. They just go right for the mouth and they part their lips. It's so astonishing that they are so easy with it.

Would you kiss a woman for a role?

Of course I would! ■

Read more about the ritzy Rita Moreno at www.outsmartmagazine.com.



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A Taste of Houston
Tapas-style reviews
OutSmart Restaurant Guide

A note about our "tapas" dining reviews: You may have noticed that our advertisers are listed in our tapas section. Biased? You bet! By advertising in *OutSmart*, our advertisers are indicating that the business of the gay & lesbian community is important to them—and that's important to us at *OutSmart*. Of course, there are many other excellent and supportive restaurants out there, and we rotate mention of them into our tapas section.

A tapas-style taste of Houston

Baba Yega
2607 Grant St. (Missouri St.)
713/522-0042
A Montrose institution. Sometimes we're tempted to eat here every day, it's so homey and healthy. We especially love Tuesday pasta night ($9.95 for the pasta du jour and a glass of wine), their "Old Smokey" noshing platter of salmon with accoutrements, their in-house sesame dressing, Sunday brunch, and almost any of their specials. If you're feeling outdoorsy, you have the choice of their open patio under the trees, the covered patio, or the porch facing their secret garden. $

Baich's Bar and Grille
2016 Main
713/650-8830
Baich's (pronounced *bay*-chess) Bar and Grill is housed on the ground floor of the 2016 Main Condo. Serving uptown Southwest quisine in a downtown atmosphere, this classy spot is the perfect location for a quiet romantic dinner. For starters try the corn crab chowder, a Baich's specialty made with sweet yellow corn and fresh lump crabmeat. There are pizzas, pasta, and a variety of sumptuous entrees: my favorite being the Southwestern Pasta consisting of chicken breast grilled to perfection, black beans, and pico de gallo with a tomato-cilantro cream sauce over fettucini. The art covering the walls is by superstar artist and 2016 Main resident Kermit Eisenhut. Live jazz on Friday nights. Entrance on Main with valet parking. $$

Beck's Prime
Multiple locations.
These upscale burger joints have been touted as the best in Houston, although many complain of inconsistent hamburgers, which sometimes taste like ground sirloin and other times like a prefab from Sam's. But there's no denying their unforgettable fries, the thick, skin-on kind that can be cooked extra crispy on request, nor their dessert-sized mocha shakes. And the Alpine Chicken sandwich—basted in hickory barbecue with sautéed onions, mushrooms and Swiss cheese—makes you wish you were bulimic so you could just keep on eating. $

Boulevard Bistrot
4319 Montrose (just past Richmond)
713/524-6922
Houston's culinary queen Monica Pope delves into culinary wanderlust every time she mixes a drink with her signature fruit-infused alcohol. Her eclectic New American menu includes a Mediterranean sampler plate and salad Nicoise that you'll dream about until your next visit. Come for Sunday brunch, where funk meets haute couture, and taste scones the size of Mars, fluffy frittatas, and a dreamy cherry chocolate bread pudding. $$

Colina's Italian Cafe
3835 Richmond Ave. (@ Weslayan)
713/621-8844
2400 Times Blvd. (Rice Village)
713/365-9497
12311 Kingsride
With its reliable Italian food, unpretentious feel, and BYO wine option (with no corking fee), Houston yuppies flock to these neighborhood locations. And as long as you don't expect haute cuisine, you'll be perfectly content. Order the pizza Marguerite and one of the antipasto salads and you may even border on exhilaration. $

continued on page 59

Making Love in the Kitchen

In putting together their unusual mixture of world cuisines, Farrago's owner-chefs have created a Valentine to the sensual art of cooking

Please watch the movie *Like Water for Chocolate* sometime. I was reminded of one of its theme of food-as-sensual-expression after I met the chefs at Farrago, Midtown's latest eatery. Todd Stevens and his wife Kelly Stevens are definitely making love in the kitchen. I don't mean on the countertops. I mean the love they generously put into the food and the passion that created the recipes. It's so obvious and so wonderful to meet lovers.

Todd Stevens is the executive chef. Kelly Stevens is the pastry chef. Together—along with Chuck Russell, former owner of Solero Restaurant—they give you Farrago World Cuisine, which opened June 1 last year, nestled in the corner of a townhouse complex in the Midtown area. The name, translated from several Latin-based languages, means an "unusual mixture." They're not kidding.

You won't find pig's knuckles and licorice, but there are some interesting combinations that should pique the curiosity of my fellow adventurous diners—such as the curried mussels, which are cooked in a tangy Thai coconut-lime curry with hints of lemon grass. The fresh herbs, basil and cilantro, are tossed in as the dish exits the kitchen, and the result is ripe garden flavor on luscious mussels.

'Tis the month for oysters, *n'est pas*? Take your lover to enjoy the zany but brilliant combination of ingredients that top these fried aphrodisiacs. The oysters are breaded with a variety of seasonings including wasabi powder and cayenne and then they are dunked into the deep fryer for a crispness that doesn't come out of a pan. They are then placed on a pool of spicy orange vinaigrette and drizzled with more wasabi sauce. They're not as hot as all these fiery words make them sound, but they do have a nice kick and I love crunching through the coating to get to the plump and juicy meat.

Other appetizers to try are the spring rolls and calamari, both of which seem to be Asian-Italian fusion. As is the way in this state, the portions are enormous and too large for one person to eat before an entree, so share.

Of the entrees that were tasted by a highly skilled test market (the staff of this magazine), the grilled salmon won the yummy award, hands down. The perfectly cooked fish comes with a fairly spicy mango and sundried tomato salsa, which is fun to stick on the same forkful as the salmon. To cool your mouth down, jump into the sweet potato purée or the fresh greens topped with light jerk sauce.

Barley risotto is something I've never seen before. But, hey Todd, good idea! It's a nuttier, chewier version of the more common smaller grain risotto. It's a vegetarian's delight, topped with grilled yellow zucchini, red peppers, large beautiful slices of portobello mushrooms, roasted corn, manchego cheese, and a tomato cream sauce.

We also really enjoyed the crawfish pasta, but suggest that you stay clear of the cilantro -encrusted seabass —*boring*!

Remember the movie that I mentioned? Well, have you seen it yet? Now is the time. Order your dessert to go so that you can enjoy it noisily in the privacy of your own



A hunk a hunk of picante love?: Farrago's grilled seabass tacos with shredded Napa cabbage, fresh fruit salsa, frijoles blanco, and Basmati rice.



Chef Todd Stevens.

> Todd Stevens and his wife Kelly Stevens are definitely making love in the kitchen. I don't mean on the countertops. I mean the love they generously put into the food and the passion that created the recipes.

PHYLLIS HAND

home. There's lots to moan about. Espresso Neapolitan has a light and flaky pastry, layered with cool espresso mousse. The flourless chocolate cake is fluffier than most versions, and high on chocolate content. Caramel pumpkin cheese cake is superb—it's all in the crust, which is made with gingersnap cookies, a fantastic base for the rich filling and sugared pecans. Cinnamon apple cobbler is probably not a good take-out option as it's served warmed with ice cream, and, because it tastes like something from Mom, one tends not to moan.

Maybe you would rather try Farrago for a romantic Sunday brunch—it's a civilized option to La Strada, with better food but still bottomless mimosas. They serve the standard fare with exciting little twists. Like their Cajun Benedict, which substitutes a homemade fluffy biscuit for the English muffin, blackened Canadian bacon for the ham, and a wonderful crawfish cream sauce for the hollandaise. It's served with crispy brown potatoes.

In addition to the egg dishes, there are a couple of lunch items on the brunch menu, including a variety of pizzas. I tried the Jerked Pizza, which is a huge improvement upon the standard Hawaiian pizza, familiar to most Americans. Farrago's is topped with jerk spice Canadian bacon (am I a jerk or is "jerk spice" supposed to be spicy?—well, this isn't), pineapple, mango mozzarella, and manchego cheese. It's a sweet smoky pizza that I really liked.

Lela Geiser's Buttermilk Pancakes

1 quart buttermilk
4 eggs -- whip until frothy while thinking happy loving thoughts
1 teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon baking soda
3 tablespoons melted butter
2 cups of flour

Just barely mix the flour into the other ingredients leaving small lumps that will cook out.

My pal wasn't too excited about his huevos rancheros, and he is quite an authority on the subject. He didn't fancy the polenta. In fact, the whole dish was somewhat soupy, although flavorful. The pancakes and muffins are great. This is because Kelly whips love into the eggs. The blueberry muffins are cake-like in flavor with their sugar sprinkles, but light in texture—when smothered in butter, they make a sinful start or finish. The pancakes are served either as a side dish, or as their own meal with bacon or sausage, blueberries, and pure maple syrup. They are so good that we had to know their secret. Happy Valentine's Day—here is the recipe that has been passed through Kelly's family and was given to her by her grandmother. ■

Farrago World Cuisine, 318 Gray (at Bagby), 713/523-6404. Hours are Tue. & Wed. 11 a.m.–10 p.m.; Thu. & Fri. 11 a.m.–11 p.m.; Saturdays 6–11 p.m.; Sundays 11 a.m.–3 p.m.; closed on Mondays. Tuesday through Saturday the bar stays open "until everyone gets tired," usually around midnight. Pizzas are served while the bar is open. There is free parking in the building, accessible from Bagby.

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A Taste of Houston

Tapas-style reviews

(continued from page 56)

NEW **divino**
1830 West Alabama
713/807-1123
There is a lot of passion in this father-son team, both self-taught experts in the two themes at divino: "Italian restaurant" and "wine bar." The wine list is great for sampling with the two-ounce tastes, and the menu is simple and good. The pasta dishes come in two sizes and the larger portion is definitely a meal's worth. For entrees there is chicken, pork, beef, and fish, which come with a variety of vegetable and grain accompaniments. $$

NEW **Daily Review**
3412 West Lamar (@ Dunlavy)
713/520-9217
This intimate cafe hides in a residential neighbourhood, but is well worth finding. They serve contemporary American food in a casual atmosphere. Two must-trys are Tony's Southern Fried Chicken (served only on Wednesday)s and the delicious organic 100 percent Hereford beef. When the weather permits try sitting in their shaded patio overlooking the garden. Great beer list. $$

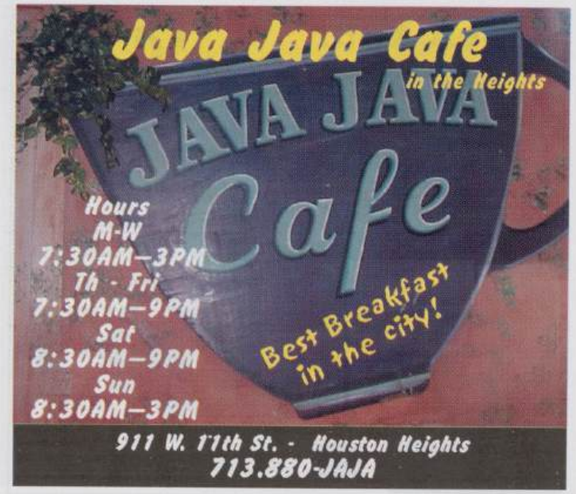
Estancia Grill
414 West Gray
713/807-1111
An open grill is the focal point of the kitchen at this casual upscale eatery. Already known for its Argentinian dishes, the new menu features cuisine from all of the Americas including Mexico and other Latin American countries. The bar menu serves up mouth-watering tapas. Also served are pastas, steaks and seafood entrees along with a variety of soups, salads and sandwiches all of which reflect the bold flavors of South America. Best of all, chef Greg Webb promises to dish up some of his favorite items, most notably the Opal Duckling. The atmosphere sparkles with simple elegance and the service is attentive. $$

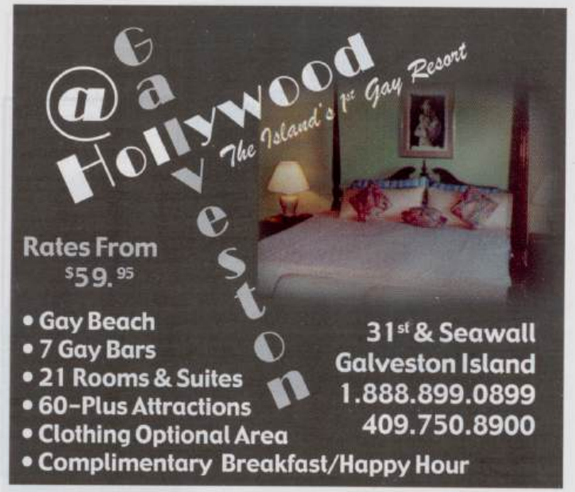
Golden Room
1209 Montrose (@ Dallas)
713/524-9614
True to its name, this gold-gilded Thai-Chinese will have you rubbing elbows with the entire room—literally. Some find it a bit too intimate for private conversation, but the chicken wraps, spicy curries, and flavorful soups are meant for sharing, so dig in. Just don't burn your tongue. $$

Jalapenos
2702 Kirby Dr. (@ Westheimer)
713/524-1668
This River Oaks standby boasts spinach enchiladas so undeniably delicious that all others pale in comparison. They're an orchestration of taste and texture, with spinach just the right consistency—not grainy, mushy or stringy, but fusing with the cheese and cream sauce to create a texture all its own. Their ultimate secret, however, lies in the iced tea. It's always perfect, which tells you how much thought they put into things that others often find trivial. You'll always find a table, and their type-A waiters guarantee speedy, attentive service. $

Java Java
911 11th Street
713/880-5282
A comfortable neighborhood restaurant that exemplifies the homey Heights, serving breakfast, lunch, and weekend dinner specials: Thursday is chicken fried steak night, Friday is seafood, and Saturday is prime rib. With a mural outside and the purple medley of painted plaster walls and rustic cement floors, owner Matt Parson has created a cozy "just settle yourself in" atmosphere. The menu offers healthy sandwichs, burgers, and pastas, and a salad bar worth visiting. A new covered patio is filled with tropical plants "from the yards of everybody who works here," says longtime waiter Richard. "We're all plant freaks and I said it doesn't make sense to go spend a lot of money on plants when we all have more than we know what to do with." $

continued on page 60





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A Taste of Houston

Tapas-style reviews

(continued from page 60)

neighborhood joint for after-work unwinding. While the food is a bland take on '90s Southwestern, the ubiquitous mesquite grilling-from moist fish entrees and portobello pesto mushrooms to angel food cake-will inspire you to experiment in your own backyard (with your grill: now get your mind out of the gutter). $$

Riva's
1117 Missouri St. (Montrose)
713-529-3450
In one of the most verdant and restful eatery atmospheres we know of, the brothers Silboyeh bring you Italian cuisine so unusually well seasoned you'll notice the pasta as well as the sauce. The simple dinner salad is alive with fresh vegetables and a tangy vinaigrette and a pleasant forecast of things to come. These men know herbs, and their fish dishes will make seafood converts out of diehard carnivores. And pastry chef Pierre kneads up some tasty little numbers. $$

NEW **Solero**
910 Prairie
713/227-2665
If you're in the mood for a variety of tastes, then grab some friends and head to Solero in the downtown Market Square Historic District. My compliments to Arturo Boada, chef and part owner of Solero, for the best ceviche that I have ever tasted outside of South America. The menu is an international collection of flavors served in tapas-sized or dinner portions. $$

Sonoma
1415 California St.
713/522-7066
Wildly eclectic menu features steak pasta, Osso Bucco, and crispy crab cakes (heavy crab with minimal cake), bursting with fun and flavor. Very reasonable, and a great party atmosphere. For their Sunday brunch and afternoon T-Dance (on their patio, with its exhilerating wide-open view of downtown), owner Jay Allen makes the ultimate host. $$

La Strada
322 Westheimer (@ Taft)
713/523-1014
5161 San Felipe (@ Sage)
713-850-9999
Yes, they do more than Sunday brunch. It's called award-winning cuisine and matching wine list available to the entire population seven days a week. Two hip locations differ in style and mood, but not in the yummy, unconventional pastas or reliable bellinis. $$

This Is It
207 W. Gray (@ Bagby)
713/659.1608
No other place dishes up soul food like this hearty Fourth Ward spot. Just one foot in the door, and you'll smell pork chops and collard greens like mama still makes. The cornbread is the sweetest, moistest that Houston has to offer. For the uninitiated, display just a hint of down home naiveté to the gals behind the steam table and they'll give you the skinny on each dish. $

Tony Ruppe's
3939 Montrose
713/852.0852
Standing in the former Quilted Toque location, Ruppe's California vineyard décor sets a tone of anticipation that escalates with one glance at his fusion menu. Nothing standard here; even the descriptions smack of flavorful humor. Everything from Wok-seared Hoisin Beef Summer Roll and Extreme Cuisines' Wild Half-Moon Bay Salmon to his Blazin' Summer Salad (with a delightful cilantro cream dressing), and Capellini Pasta Baked in Parchment is intricate but not overwhelming. Even the sides of Parmesan Polenta and balsamic vinaigrette-marinated vegetables are off the beaten path. From entrée to dessert, Ruppe is masterful at concealing unspeakable delicacies in parchment paper. $$$

Two Rows Restaurant & Brewery
2400 University (in the Village Arcade, second floor)
713/529-2739
Any brewery is bound to get a bad rap, but this one deserves kudos for its interesting and varied menu (it even offers health-conscious selections, so phooey on the brew pub non-believer). Refreshingly, there's barely a fried potato in the house. Instead, you'll find balsamic-marinated veggies, tasty pizzas, bountiful salads and beer-infused muffins accompanied by yummy honey spiked butter. Non-beer drinkers should at least try the homemade root beer or, better yet, in a float. $

Ziggy's Healthy Grill
2320 W. Alabama
713/527-8588
Ziggy's was always healthy and wholesome, but now that the three new owners are doctors, you know you're in for a guiltless gourmet experience. Although the decor is still a bit on the utilitarian side, we seek out Ziggy's when we don't feel like being embarrassed about our urge to eat healthy—you can even ask to see their binders with the nutritional contents of all their dishes. Both healthy and yummy, they offer comfort food like lean meatloaf, sweet yam fries, and pecan acorn squash; we especially love Ziggy's baked veggie sandwich and buffalo burger. They've all sorts of wild game burgers (known for being way lower in fat than regular cow beef)—even such exotica as ostrich, antelope, caribou, or kangaroo! Their latest offering is the Tuesday happy hour, with fresh blueberry margaritas and discounted appetizers. $

The cost guide reflects the average cost of dinner with one drink and tip. Deduct about 25 percent for average lunch prices.

$	$15 and below (inexpensive)
$$	$16 to $30 (moderate)
$$$	$31 to $50 (expensive)
$$$$	$51 or more (very expensive)



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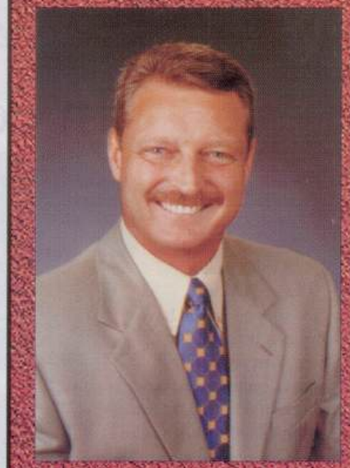
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The Fundamental Things Apply

In celebration of kissing

by David Parnell









A kiss is just a kiss." More untrue words have never been uttered. Kissing is expression. Kissing is communication. Kissing is a nonverbal form of saying exactly what you're feeling. One should never underestimate the power of a kiss. It sets you free, it makes you a prisoner, it fills you up, and it can leave you broken and longing for more. So you see, a kiss is never just a kiss.

For centuries, humankind has resorted to lip-locking to say the things that could not be expressed in words. As the first caveman dragged the first cavewoman (or the second caveman) by the hair, she (or he) went willingly. Why? He was an excellent kisser. From friendship to all-consuming passion, the deepest or most playful emotions can be expressed by the simplest and most difficult act two people can do.

So what makes a good kiss? That is a question that is difficult to answer. There is no such thing as a bad kiss, but unfortunately, there are bad kissers. Every kiss is different, every message personal. There are as many different kisses as there are messages one wants to convey.

The Friendship Kiss

Only the luckiest of people know about the friendship kiss. Europeans have experienced it for years. That gentle peck on the cheek, that soft brushing of two people together, it says, "Hey, I really like you." There is no question of motivation, no negotiation for sexual relations. It is pure, it is enlightenment. It can be done in many ways.

While overseas, I witnessed the most miraculous thing. Two men who had been walking arm in arm, parting with a gentle kiss on the lips. I was stunned. I had no idea two men could kiss in the streets without all the shopkeepers attacking them with their brooms. It was so simple and natural, as if this sort of behavior had been going on for quite some time. I realized then and there what I had been missing. As I walked the streets of Brussels with a friend of mine, I decided to be brave and give it a try. My friend was typically British so I was a bit apprehensive about plotting a public display of affection. We were laughing and sharing stories of our childhood as we walked, and I was really starting to feel close to him. As we were about to part company, I leaned in, and with my lips shut tight, I placed them on his. To my surprise, he leaned in also to receive them. There was no awkwardness. Just two friends expressing appreciation for the company they were keeping. From then on I was addicted. Every person I'd meet, I'd kiss. From the quick peck on the cheek to the holding of an arm and the joining of the mouths, I could not get enough. Perhaps the most beautiful of the kisses to watch, this friendship kiss, it is also the most undervalued.

The Stolen Kiss

Much like a smile, it can occur anytime and anywhere. It starts in your belly, moves to your heart, and ends up in your mouth. Sitting in a dark theater, waiting for a crowded bus, reading the Sunday paper—it just happens. You know what I'm talking about, that inexplicable urge to stop whatever you're doing and go on an affection attack. It's happened to you, admit it. You're in your kitchen washing dishes when suddenly your partner comes in for a cold beverage. You turn around, walk toward them and give them a big ol' kiss. Why? Because you can. For the most part, they are welcomed and appreciated.

> Romantics dream of it, cowards fear it.

It's happened to me. While riding a roller coaster in Sandusky, Ohio, a partner of mine got the itch. As we ascended up a hill, I heard him say my name. I turned to look at him and out of the blue he planted a quick yet slobbery kiss on me in front of God and the country. It definitely made the ride more thrilling. There is no reasoning

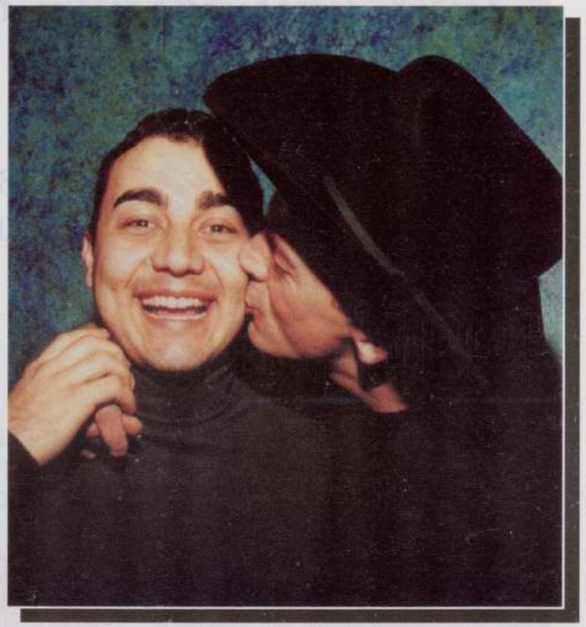
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Read My Lips!

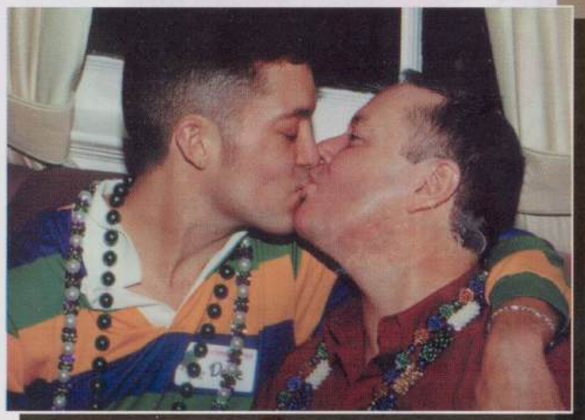
OutSmart presents Houston's most luscious lips in action!

Photography by Dalton Dehart, Yvonne Feece, Marc Hernandez, Greg Jeu, Debbie Maurelli, David Medina, B.J. Smith, Evin Thayer and John T.

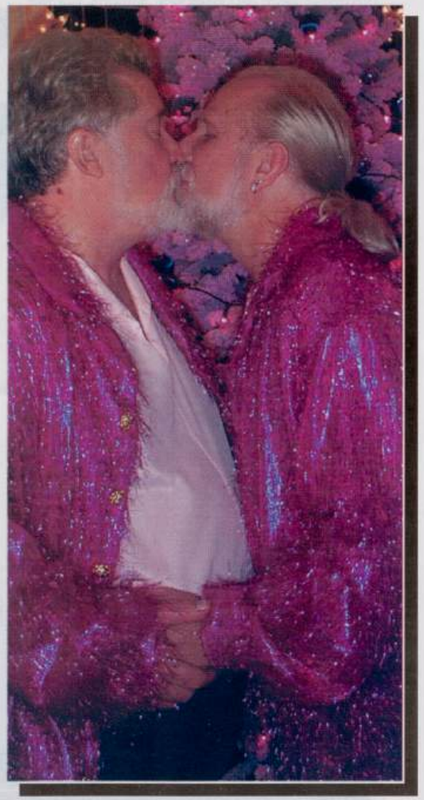




Read more lips →







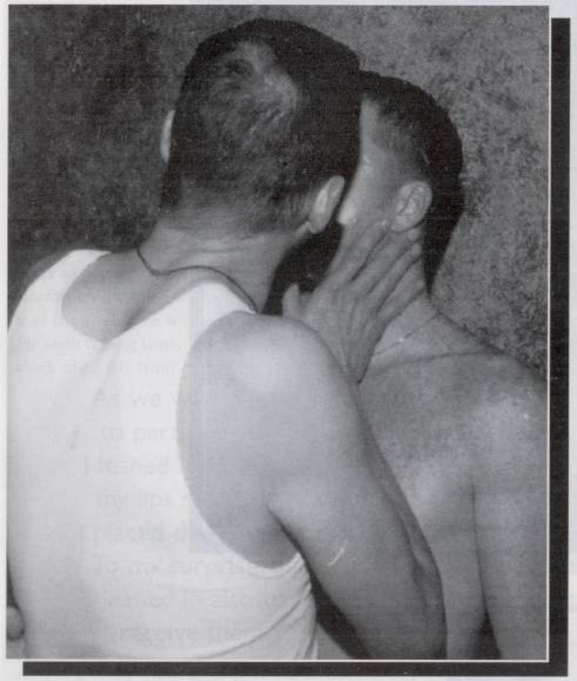
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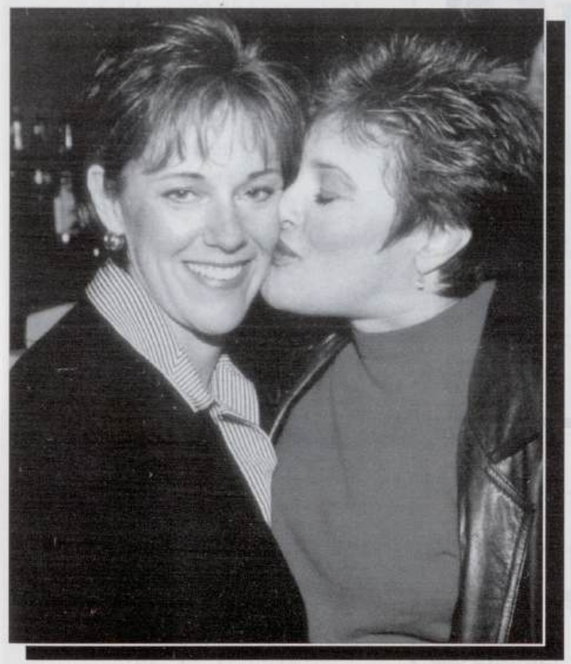
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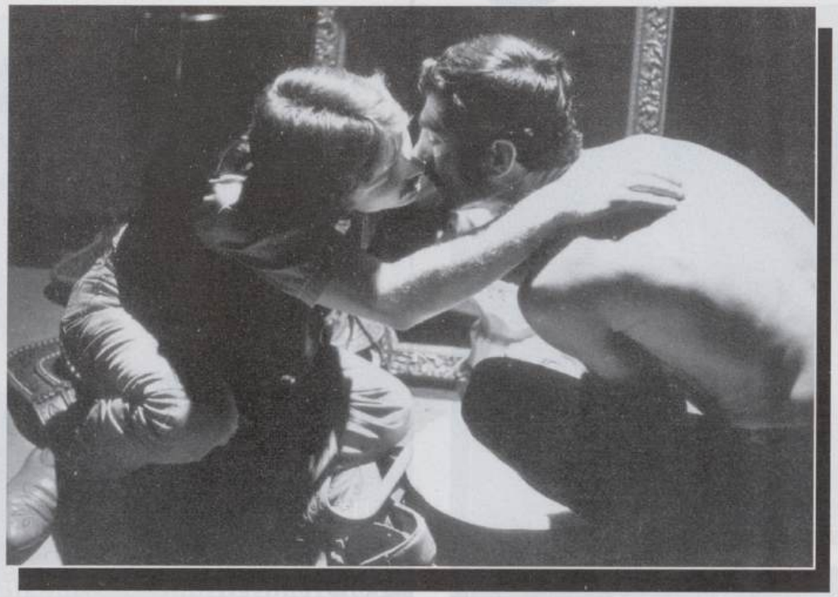
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standing there waiting for him. His arms were weighed down with his baggage but I didn't care. I wrapped my arms around his neck, my hands held the back of his head, pulling him closer. Our chests were pressed together and I could feel the pounding of his heart; I couldn't let go. I pulled him down to the floor and ran my tongue across his neck and chin. I teased him, pretending I was going to kiss him, then pulling away. I traced the outline of his face with my nose, his breath rushing past my head. I put my open mouth on his open mouth and just left it there. I felt him, I tasted him, I breathed in his scent.

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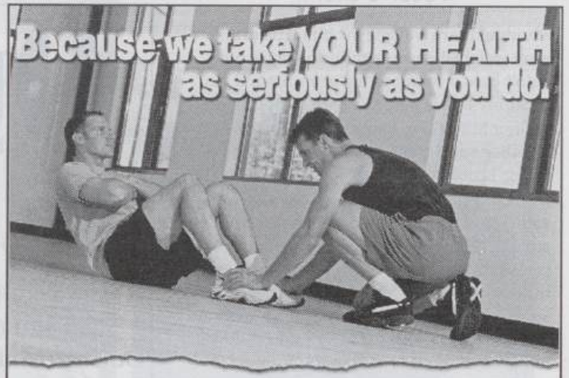


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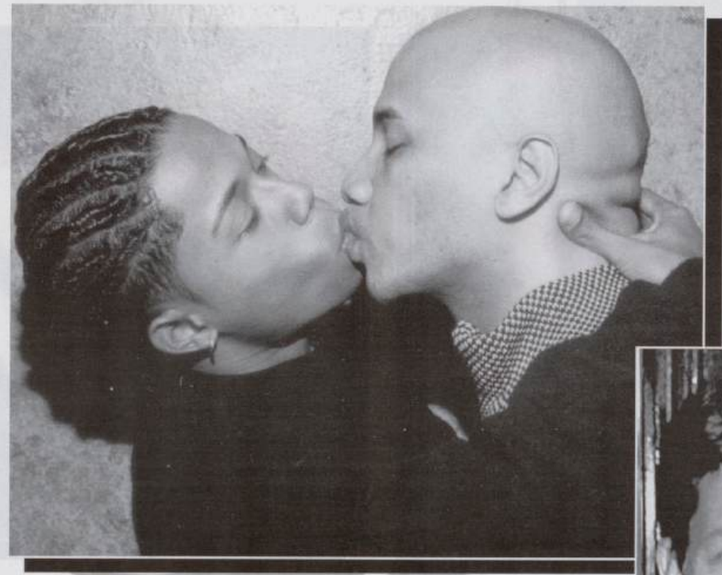


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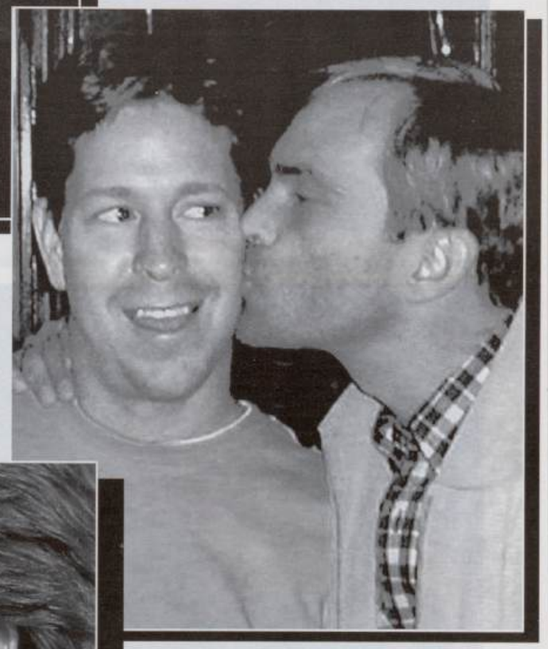
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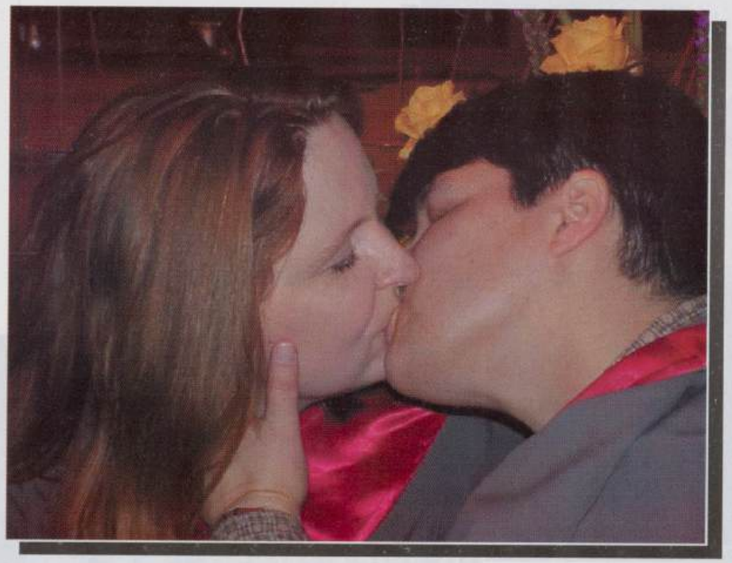




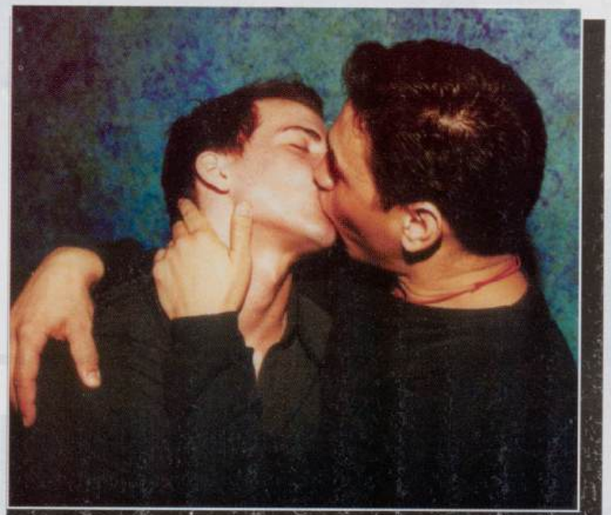


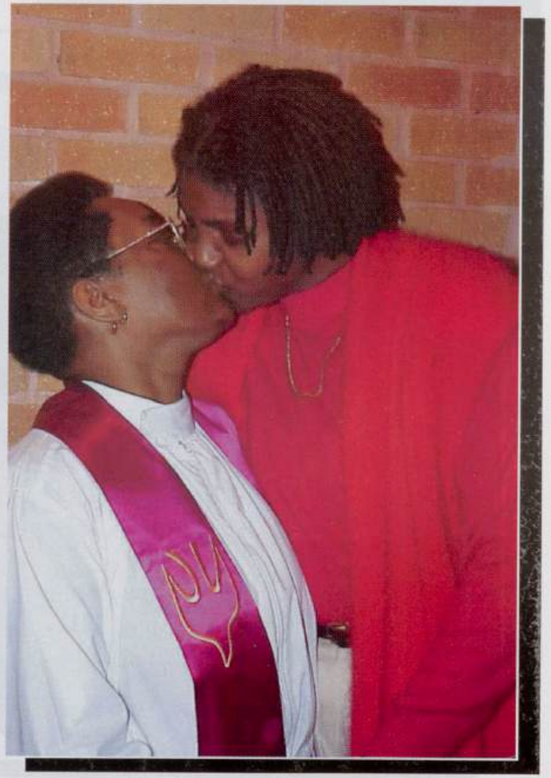












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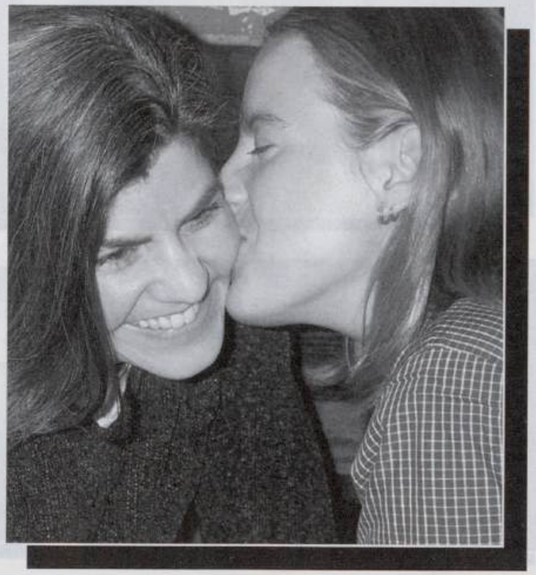
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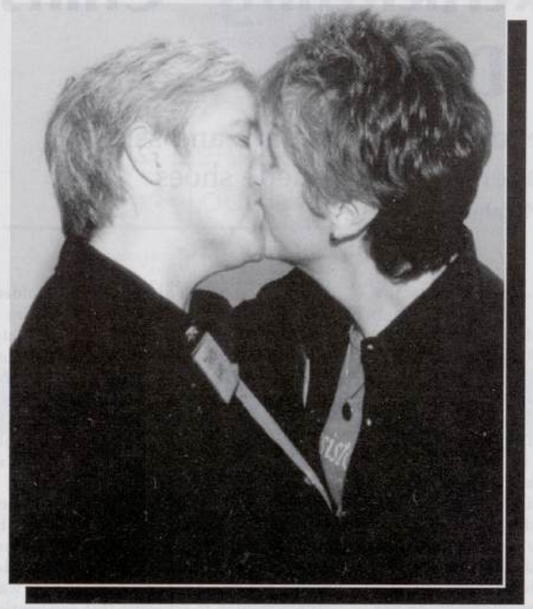


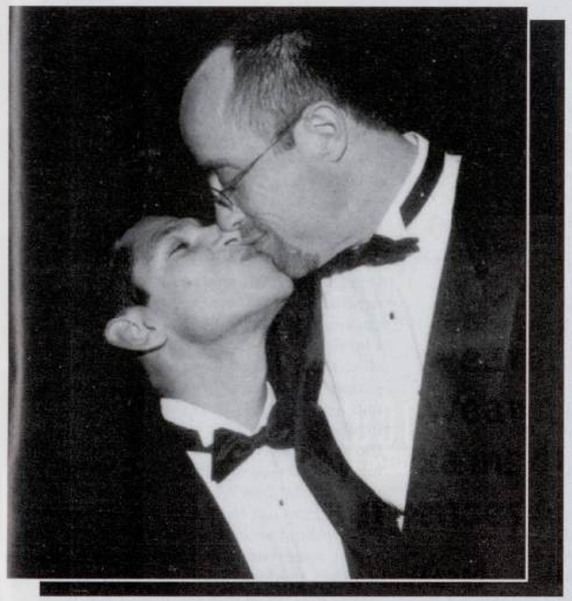
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Just when you thought you were looking oh-so-suave and sexy, God places a banana peel under your blue suede shoes

by D. L. Murphy

It's Valentine's time again. Lucky me, I live with the current love of my life, and am spared the traditional Valentine's angst of the single. But let me tell you, I have spent massive amounts of time (and massive amounts of money) looking for a date, going out on dates, and recovering from dates (and near dates) prior to arriving at this state of marital bliss. Let me share some of my true-to-life dating adventure stories.



A woman I "met" via personal ads and I meet for coffee. I am really impressed, and ask her if she would like to have dinner. She says yes. I ask what cuisine appealed to her that evening. She says Italian. I take her to Vincent's. No, no appetizer, it might have garlic in it. No, no salad, it might have garlic in it. She orders a steak, very rare, no seasonings. I am very confused by someone who apparently hates garlic but who asks to go to an Italian restaurant. I am very frightened when she tells me that she is a vampire (and seems to believe it). I immediately order and consume a head of roasted garlic. I belch uncontrollably for an hour afterward. But hey, it saved me from a vampire.

I am standing in the old Ranch, recovering from the above encounter. I am not in the mood for company. This woman keeps following me around the bar, trying to get me to buy her a drink. I tell her that I always thought women soliciting drinks in bars were working. She hits me over the head with her shoe (after one of her friends explains to her exactly what I meant). . . .

Next disaster. I show up at my then-current inamorata's with a Black Forest cake in one hand and a shower curtain in the other. Little did I know she had invited her parents to dinner. They are happy I brought dessert. They give the shower curtain (which my girlfriend left on the kitchen counter) funny looks all evening. . . .

OK, I tell myself, keep trying. Girlfriend and I plan on spending a decadent weekend at the Ritz Carlton. Girlfriend thinks it would be a good idea to invite Dear Neighbor to the Ritz's famous Friday afternoon tea, a civilized social interlude to contrast with our scheduled weekend of decidedly uncivilized festivities. We all have a lovely time. At the end of the afternoon, on her way out the door, Dear Neighbor, smiling sweetly, gives me a book and asks me to read the first page of said book. It is such a compelling first page that I spend the rest of the weekend longing to read the damn book. Only time in my life I've ever fantasized about reading a book when having sex. Usually, it's the other way around. . . .

Try, try again. We're going to Austin for the weekend! Girlfriend sticks a .32-caliber handgun down the back of her pants. She then puts a .45 under the seat. And a .38 in my luggage. And a shotgun in the gun rack. I spend the entire weekend thinking she was going to confuse the lube and the gun oil. . . .

I'm just too stupid to give up. Drive-in movies being a thing of the past, I plan to recreate the thrill. I search all over town for old-fashioned popcorn boxes, waxed paper soda cups, and a copy of *Creature from the Black Lagoon*. I shave ice for the soda. I pop the popcorn a day in advance so that it will be perfectly stale. I borrow a friend's TV/VCR combination. I pull the truck into the garage, set the TV/VCR on the hood, and lead girlfriend, blindfolded, into the garage. I get her settled in the truck, remove the blindfold, and she actually squeals with delight. We are having a marvelous time right up to the point where we bounce my friend's TV onto the concrete garage floor. . . .

This time, I am sure I will get it right. I plan a coffee date with someone I "met" as a result of the personal ads. While we are chatting, Dear Neighbor comes into the coffee shop dressed like Divine. She starts hitting me over the head with her purse and screaming at me to "think about the children." Too late, I realize that not only was I stupid enough to schedule this assignation on April 1, but I was also stupid enough to tell Dear Neighbor about it. The woman I was having coffee with flees. Dear Neighbor and I have a good laugh (I realize that friends are more important than coffee dates) and go to her house for dinner. Too late, she realizes that I do know it is April 1st, right about the time she discovers that what she thought was her favorite dessert has been secretly replaced by a piece of frosted foam rubber. . . .

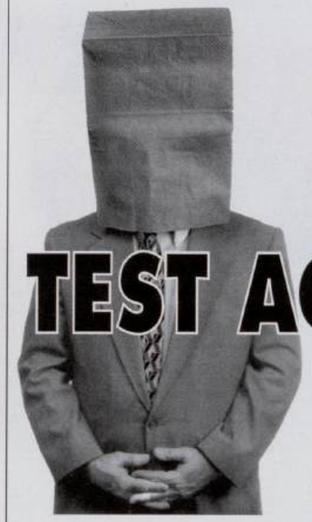
Once more, with feeling. I take a date to Galveston. We are standing right next to a tugboat when it sounds its whistle. I, being conditioned by 20 years of work in petrochemical plants, hit the deck. One problem. I land squarely on my face, abrading my chin, chipping a tooth, and breaking my glasses. Great, now I can't see, I can't talk, and, worst of all, I can't do anything that involves any pressure on my chin. I spend the rest of the weekend with an icebag on my face, leaving myself completely at the mercy of my date. *Quell* sexy. I am still trying to figure out how to recreate this accident without actually hurting myself. . . .

So, dear readers, let me suggest to all of you that you look at all your "disaster dates" and try to find the humor there. This business of taking ourselves too seriously leads to much of the angst we experience in February. Try to remember that laughing at yourself is loving yourself. Happy Dates, Everyone! ■

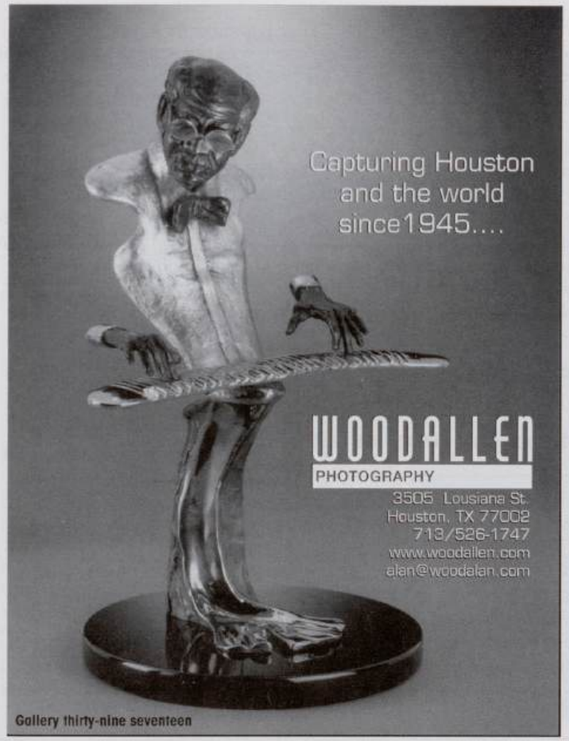
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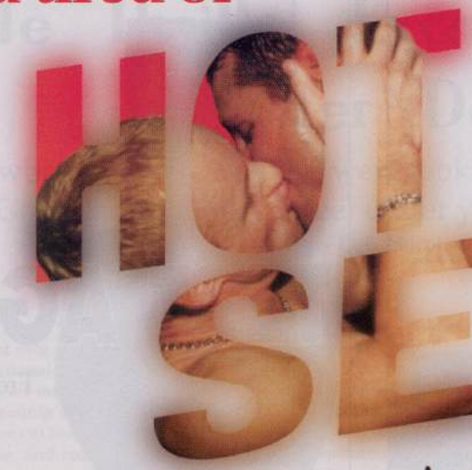


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A gay man draws some lessons from radical lesbian feminists on how to approach sexuality on a deeper level

by Robert Jensen

In a discussion about sexuality with a gay man recently, I used the dreaded "M" word: morality. He visibly recoiled. "I know there are moral issues about sex," he said. "But I get nervous when I hear the two words together."

His fear made sense: When almost all talk about the morality of gay and lesbian sexuality comes from the right wing—which is all about how gay sexuality *isn't* moral—it's easy to understand why gay folks might have a knee-jerk aversion to anyone discussing gay sex in moral terms. In a world in which the expression of love and desire for a person of the same sex can be punished—by anything from a demeaning remark, to loss of a job, to a violent attack—shying away from such conversations is understandable.

But if we throw up our hands and reject any discussion of morality, we leave the topic to the fundamentalists. There is no escape from morality, nor should we seek such escape; to be human is to engage these issues. The fact that the gay community has often been judged by people with little understanding and hostile motives does not mean that we shouldn't raise moral issues. The question is, can we engage in this moral discourse honestly, with a commitment to justice, without turning away from difficult questions?

We need to reclaim morality and redefine it, to discuss and explore what a progressive sexual ethic might look like.

First, a note about the rather complicated position from which I speak. I am a gay guy who has had a girlfriend. Or, maybe it's more accurate to say that I'm a straight man who sometimes has been sexual with men, at one point closeted and later openly. Or maybe I'm bisexual. Or maybe I'm making it up as I go along. Because I have crossed lines often, maybe I have shaky standing to speak about gay male sexuality. Or because I cross lines, maybe my vantage point provides a valuable view. Readers can make their own decisions about how, or whether, to listen to me.

In many ways, gay and straight men are not all that different in the way they are trained in our culture to understand and practice sex.

I am not arguing for a single sexual ethic for all, or for an ethic to be imposed on people by some coercive power. I am simply suggesting that the discussion matters. For me, that discussion is grounded in a school of thought that is decidedly out of vogue these days: radical feminism, especially radical lesbian feminism.

Here's my summary of that radical feminist viewpoint: Sex in our culture is built on a dynamic of domination by men and submission by women. Men in contemporary American culture are commonly trained to view sex as the acquisition of physical pleasure through the taking of women. Sex is a sphere in which men believe (by this I don't mean that every man believes this, but that many men believe this is true for all men) themselves to be naturally dominant and women naturally passive. Women are objectified and women's sexuality is commodified; women become a thing-to-be-taken or a thing-to-be-purchased (for example, by paying for dinner or buying a prostitute). Sex is sexy because men are dominant and women are subordinate—power is eroticized. Emotional intimacy has little or nothing to do with this sex; the

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Jeff Vannice, PhD
Psychologist



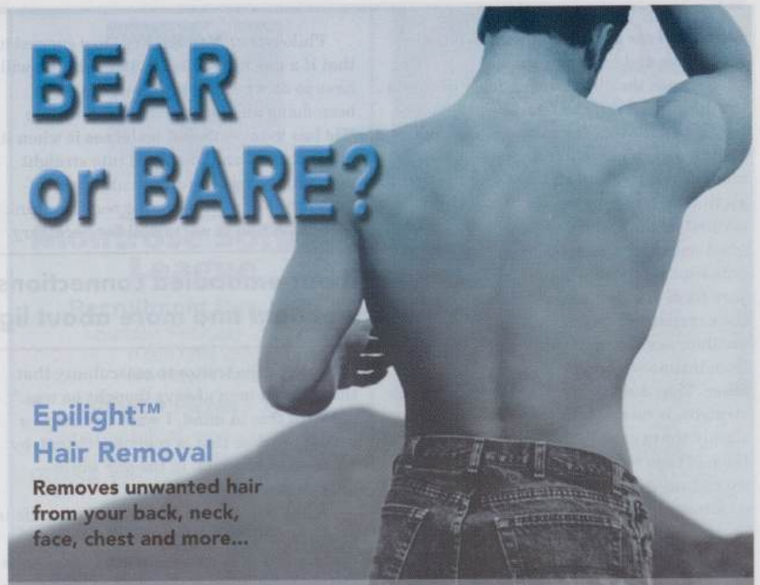
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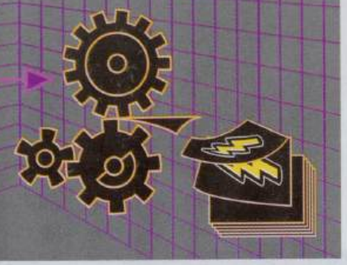
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sexiness of sex comes from simple physical experience and from power.

Because the object of gay male desire is the male body, not the female, it is tempting to dismiss this feminist critique as having no relevance for gay men. Yet in many ways, gay and straight men are not all that different in the way they are trained in our culture to understand and practice sex: sex as the acquisition of physical pleasure from another, sex as the exercise of power over another, sex disconnected from intimacy and affection toward another. That doesn't mean every man, gay or straight, is locked into those values, but simply that typically we are raised with them. Those values are one part of what we can call "patriarchy"; it's the water in which we swim.

For me, coming to understand myself as gay (in the complicated sense mentioned above) has meant not only acknowledging desire for men, but also trying to resist the patriarchal ways of thinking and acting the culture gave me. Such a commitment is difficult to make good on in a world of male privilege, and I have found few role models for how to live ethically as a man—straight or gay—in patriarchy.

Philosopher Marilyn Frye has suggested that if a gay man rejects patriarchy, he will have to do what lesbian feminists have been doing all along: invent. She writes: "He has to invent what maleness is when it is not shaped and hardened into straight masculinity, gay hypermasculinity, or effeminacy. For a man even to begin to think such invention is worthwhile or necessary is to be . . . the traitor to masculinity that the straight man always thought he was."

But what if our embodied connections could be less about heat and more about light?

With this in mind, I want to discuss a sexual practice that is common, though by no means universal, in the gay world—anonymous sex.

A gay friend once told me, "My sex life is great, but my love life stinks." He meant that he was getting adequate physical satisfaction through casual and often anonymous sex partners he picked up, but that he felt something missing in his emotional life. His comment was not only understandable but unexceptional. In a system that views sex as the acquisition of pleasure, anonymous sex is a perfectly plausible way of obtaining sexual gratification. But does such sex provide the human connection that we seek in our erotic lives?

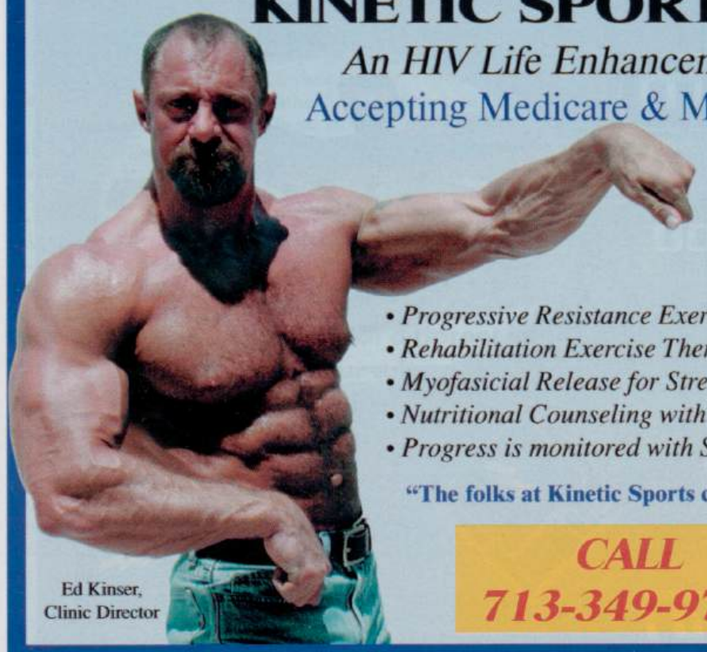
Promiscuous gay sex is often set off against monogamous heterosexual sex, as if the two were somehow inherently opposite. On one level, of course, the generalizations are false: Many gay men are not promiscuous and many straight men are not monogamous. But to probe further, to raise questions about anonymous sex and promiscuity is not to endorse mainstream heterosexual dictates about monogamy. Promiscuity and monogamy (whether gay or straight) are more often like flip sides of a coin. The important question is not simply the number of sexual partners, but *how* one has sex. A married heterosexual man can have sex with his wife in a manner that treats her as nothing more than a physical pleasure object, just as a gay man can enter the bushes in a park and engage in sex with a stranger in the same fashion.

For many men (gay and straight), life includes both a period of promiscuity (in which the goal is to have sex with as many as possible) and a period of monogamy (in which the goal is to have sex with only one, although often with the possibility of illicit sex on the side, kept out of view and hence made more exciting).

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While there is no guarantee that sex within a monogamous relationship moves beyond that, anonymous sex is patriarchal sex and, I believe, incompatible with resistance to patriarchy and the search for a deeper connection to ourselves and each other.

People often press me to explain exactly what sexual practices can create this connection, but I do not think the task is to write a manual. This is more about our relationship to each other than about specific acts. If sexuality is about invention and creation, then a metaphor may be of more help.

There is a cliché that when an argument is of little value, it produces "more heat than light." One of the ways this culture talks about sex is in terms of heat: She's hot, he's hot, we had hot sex. Sex is bump-and-grind; the friction produces the heat, and the heat makes the sex good. Sex produces heat. Sex is hot.

But what if our embodied connections could be less about heat and more about light? What if we could hold onto the passion and intensity of sex, but instead of desperately seeking hot sex we searched for a way to produce light when we touch? What if such touch were about finding a way to create light between people so that we could see ourselves and each other better? If the goal is knowing ourselves and each other like that, then what we need is not heat but light to illuminate the path.

How do we touch and talk to each other to shine that light? I am not always sure. There are lots of ways to produce light in the world, and some are better than others; moral and political considerations are relevant. Sunlight is better than light generated by fossil fuels. Light that draws its power from rechargeable solar cells is better than light that draws on throw-away batteries.

Likewise, there will be lots of ways to imagine sex that transcends the patriarchal straightjacket. Some might be better than others, depending on the values on which they are based. Our task is not only imagining new ways of touching, but always being attentive to the ethics and politics of the touch. ■

Robert Jensen is a professor in the Department of Journalism at the University of Texas at Austin. He can be reached at rjensen@uts.cc.utexas.edu. The ideas in this essay are developed in more detail in his essay "Getting It Up for Politics: Gay Male Identity and Radical Lesbian Feminism," in the 1998 Opposite Sex, *Sara Miles and Eric Rofes, editors. Other articles by Jensen are available online at http://uts.cc.utexas.edu/~rjensen/freelance/freelance.htm.*



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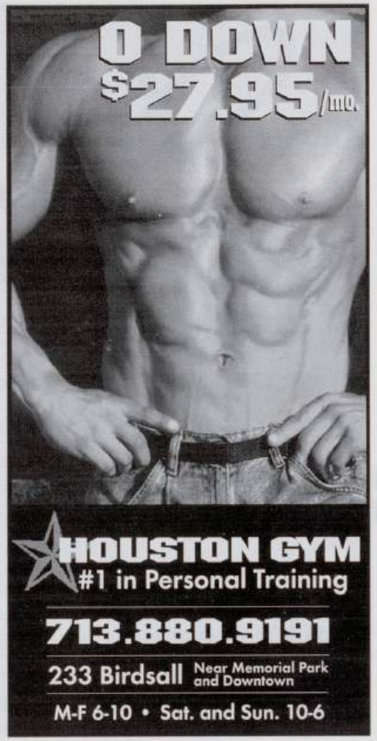
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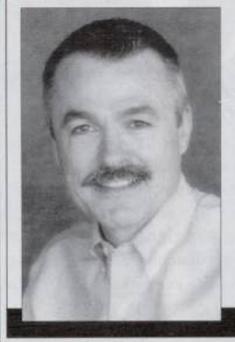
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Diamonds and LUST

My brief yet memorable encounter with Miss Sunshine Cow Patty Sweetheart of the Rodeo 1999 Early Twenties division

by Jama Shelton

Illustration by Tina DeRamus



Well, it's rodeo season again . . . and, as usual, I've been under much financial strain, so I got me a part-time job up there at the rodeo, like I have every year for the past three years—even though after each rodeo season I promise myself I won't go back. I figured I could work myself to death for three weeks and then take it easy. But, I didn't make it this year for more than two days. Let me tell you what happened.

I was on my lunch break on my second day of employment, waiting in line for my daily corndog. The transaction had just been completed when I turned around to the condiment bar to drench my corndog with bright yellow mustard. And then I saw her . . . her head and shoulders floating just above the top of my corndog, the distance between us giving her an elongated oval body of greasy browned cornmeal (which made her all the more intriguing to me).

So I stood still and took small bites of my 12-inch corndog, with each bite revealing a bit more of her body, until the corndog was gone and her red cowboy boots were visible and she stood in front of me some 20 feet away, a vision in tight cowgirl black. She wore black jeans, a black tank with a heart cut out on the chest, just above her breasts, like any good cowgirl would wear (normally I find those shirts completely hideous, but this was an exception), a black belt with a blinding silver buckle the size of a CD, earrings to match, peeking out of her frosted shoulder-length hair, topped off with a black cowboy hat.

When our eyes met, a hush fell over the crowd, and the only sound I could hear over the swoosh of her tight jeans rubbing together as she approached me was the voice of the glittering 13-year-old singing Patsy Cline's "Crazy" on the karaoke stage. The crowd of cowboys—barbecued turkey leg in one hand, other hand in the back pocket of their sweethearts' blue jeans—parted as she walked toward me. As she neared, I noticed a crown around the brim of her hat, rhinestones gleaming in the shape of hearts and the numbers 1999. Oh yes, I had heard tell of this girl. Straight out of Pasadena, she won the hearts of everyone at the 1999 Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, crowned "Miss Sunshine Cow Patty Sweetheart of the Rodeo 1999 Early Twenties division." Her name—Betsy-Rae Rayburn. We met halfway between cowboys packed tightly into Wranglers that were three sizes too small.

She wore black jeans, a black tank with a heart cut out just above her breasts, like any good cowgirl would wear, a black belt with a blinding silver buckle the size of a CD, frosted shoulder-length hair, all topped off with a black cowboy hat.

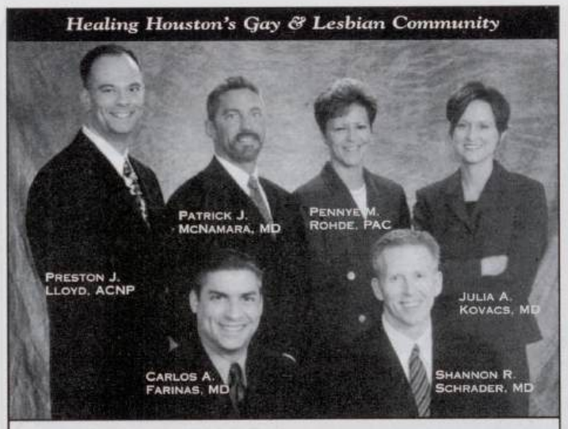
"Hi, Betsy-Rae. I met you last year. Remember? [I was lying.] I work at the Pro-Pork Booth." I laughed nervously.

Let me clarify quickly that I am not a cowgirl . . . though in my childhood I did dream of competing in the barrel races and traveling with the glamorous rodeo circuit. But when my stepdad broke his arm one winter and the truck line laid him off, we had to sell all the cows (and the horse, too); my barrel-racing dreams left with the last of the rusty cattle trailers that pulled out of our gravel driveway and turned right onto Highway 62 that winter. So, no, I am not a rodeo woman, and no, I do not personally agree with the Pro-Pork Booth's mission, which is to find innovative uses for every part of a pig possible for human enjoyment, but I needed the money. And I can do a damn good imitation of a good ol' cowgirl when it is necessary.

Betsy-Rae and I spent the entire day together. My boss at the Pro-Pork Booth figured that if one of her employees was seen with THE Betsy-Rae Rayburn, then it would boost our business. We ate funnel cakes and rode the mechanical bull, had our pictures taken with the rodeo clowns and watched the barrel races, and viewed the 4-H livestock show. Betsy-Rae was a celebrity judge, and because of my extensive knowledge of pigs, she let me pick the winner of the "pig most likely to taste the best as sausage" category. It was truly an amazing day.

As the sun began to set over the fairgrounds, Betsy-Rae and I headed to the carnival, while most of the rodeo-goers made their way inside to hear Billy Ray Cyrus sing. Betsy-Rae had to make an appearance at the concert, but not until the intermission, so we still had a good hour together. We ate cotton candy and rode all the rides that would normally make me sick. As it was, I wasn't sure if the feeling in my stomach was nausea or lustful excitement, and I didn't care. We rode the gravitron and the tilt-a-whirl and that ride that is a circular train of cars that goes like 90 m.p.h. in a circle and over little hills with a strobe light and blaring loud rock music (it happened to be Poison's "Talk Dirty to Me" while we were on it)—our bodies were both crammed into one six-inch space toward the interior of the cart as we spun round and round and round. She screamed with laughter, holding tightly to her rhinestone hat with one hand and gripping my thigh tightly with the other. I knew that, after this ride, it would be time to make my move. →







Time to take her to the double ferris wheel. See, I learned all these picking-up-cowgirl tricks from the redneck boys who used to try to woo me in high school.

I led her in stumbling dizziness to the double ferris wheel, which we immediately boarded, since the "Miss Sunshine Cow Patty Sweetheart of the Rodeo 1999 Early Twenties Division" didn't have to wait in line for anything at any rodeo event for the duration of her reign. So . . . we quickly ascended into the thick Houston sky, looking down onto the fairgrounds—onto the cattle trailers and four-wheel-drive trucks filling up four parking lots, at the carnival-goers and the cows and the cowboys and the security booth and popcorn-eating children and the litter that results from a crowd of hundreds of thousands of people—looking down onto a seemingly distant culture from which we had momentarily been separated.

Our creaking cart rocked back and forth as I nervously shifted my gaze between Betsy-Rae and the small bolt that connected our cart to the larger machine. These cheap carnie rides had always frightened me. We came to a sharp halt when our car was directly on top of the upper Ferris wheel as others boarded the cars on the lower section of the ride, hundreds of feet below and a world away.

"Ma'am, you sure are good at that," she said in a faux male voice, "but I'll wager a pack of Red Man and my best hog that you've met your match."

"I have some candy. Do you want some candy?" Betsy-Rae Rayburn asked from her ripped red vinyl throne across from me.

"Sure," I answered.

She reached inside her cowhide purse and pulled out a sucker. "Shit, I only have one. I guess we'll have to share."

"Sure," I answered.

She unwrapped the crinkly plastic with fumbling fingers—nails painted fire red and glossy. It was one of those torpedo suckers—know what I'm talking about? One of those long, pointy, crystally rainbow-colored suckers? She leaned forward aiming the torpedo at my mouth, offering me the first lick. I could see her black bra through the heart cut out of her tank top. I took the sucker deep into my mouth, sucking all the flavor out that I could possibly suck out—my eyes focused downward on her boots, her fire-red fingernails in the foreground.

"Ma'am, you sure are good at that," she said in a faux male voice, "but I'll wager a pack of Red Man and my best hog that you've met your match," at which time she leaned forward and extracted the torpedo from my mouth with her teeth and somehow managed to fit the entire length of it into her own mouth.

I reached over and pulled the torpedo out of her mouth a bit, genuinely concerned with the well-being of her throat. She didn't need to do *that* to impress me.

"Oh . . . I get it. You like it like this, huh?" she said as she cupped her lips around the narrow tip of the torpedo and turned it round and round inside her mouth. I blushed. Like I have never blushed before. My cheeks hotter than a branding iron. She leaned toward me and put her free hand on my belt buckle snatching it open. . . .* And right there, in the rusted yellow cart of the double Ferris wheel, overlooking a crowd of now gaping-mouthed rodeo-goers, Betsy Rae Rayburn, "Miss Sunshine Cow Patty Sweetheart of the Rodeo 1999 Early Twenties Division," discovered a brand spankin' new use for that torpedo sucker (one that is most likely illegal in the state of Texas).

And the car *jolted* into motion. Literally. The Ferris wheel started again. Betsy-Rae glanced at her rhinestone watch—time for her to be at the Billy Ray Cyrus concert. When we stepped off the cart, she handed me the torpedo, saying, "We'll finish the sucker later, cowgirl," before galloping to the Astro Arena like a mare to the apple orchard.

I slowly followed after her and watched from the entrance as she was summoned to the stage to perform her self-choreographed clogging number to Dolly Parton's "9 to 5," her talent entry that had helped her take her title.

I slipped out of the arena before she could find me, knowing that we could never finish that sucker. The moment had been too perfect to taint with the expectations of another meeting, and I wanted to remember Betsy-Rae Rayburn just as she had been on our first encounter. And, besides, I sold the torpedo for twenty bucks to the ride operator. ■

Jama Shelton is a writer/performance artist living in Houston. Her work is currently featured in the book Gynomite: Fearless, Feminist Porn *under the pseudonym Sassy Johnson. The book is available at BookStop or online at Amazon.com and gynomite.com.*

* For the complete R-rated version of Jama Shelton's "Diamonds and Lust," see our website at http://www.outsmartmagazine.com/issue/i02-01/diamondsandlust.html. (For the *really* complete X-rated version, you'll have to buy the book.)

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Relationship as Growth, Relationship as Expression

Taking our relationships past romance to a new, transcendent level

by Joyce M. Gayles, Ph.D.

Most of us recognize that we are in a time of unprecedented change. We are talking about it in print media, on the Internet, with closest friends over coffee and lunch. We are in the energy of transformation. Our consciousness is changing, we are awakening to our true nature as beings in human form. And therefore, the ways in which we can experience life are no longer the old ways.



One of the most significant transformations I see is in the potentiality of our relationships to each other. We are moving from the arena of what I call "relationship as growth" to the arena of "relationship as expression." So, what does that mean? When we read the writings of well-known authors, such as Harville Hendrix or Barbara DeAngelis, and attend workshops based on their theories and processes, we have immersed ourselves in the energy of relationship as growth. Nothing bad about that! In fact, this pattern in human consciousness is still quite necessary. Relationship as growth is a powerful step in the healing and evolution of humans.

Relationship as Growth

Growth is always happening, even when we feel as though we are down, stuck, or going backward. The question is not *whether* we are changing, but how much *awareness and conscious direction* we can bring to that change.

Let's take a look at the paradigm of relationship as growth. I have, for many years, envisioned this process as a spiraling experience, and give credit to Alan Cohen for inspiring this awareness, as expressed in his 1987 book *The Healing of Planet Earth: Personal Power and Planetary Transformation*, among other of his writings. We begin at the bottom of the spiral, the space of "not being in relationship." Here we feel a certain dissatisfaction and a desire to "be with someone." So, we move across the bottom rung of the spiral into relationship. We become involved in the magic of relationship, and we begin to devote major chunks of time and attention to participating in it, "making it work," and seeking our happiness in it. Sometimes, we have the sense that "things are working out," and sometimes it seems as if it's not worth the effort. Yet, in this interchange, we are growing.

At some point, weeks, months, or years into the relationship, we find that the experiences we are having no longer fit us, or we feel that this person is not really the person we want to be with. So, usually with great difficulty, we move toward being out of relationship again. Then, after a certain time, weeks, months, or years, we start to experience that sense of "something missing," and once again the desire to "be in relationship" begins to bubble to the surface of awareness. And so, it seems that this process can go on forever. Relationship after relationship after relationship. But let's take a closer look at this most human path of relationship, and what it is under closer scrutiny.

The path of relationship as growth is not just an upward moving spiral. It is a spiraling cone—largest at it's base and becoming more tightly coiled as it ascends. So, as we move in and out of relationship—over months, years, and lifetimes—something changes in us. We become transformed. We become transformed via the process of relationship as growth.

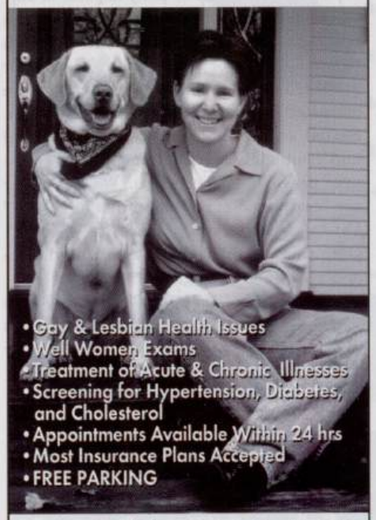
Relationship as Expression

At the very top of the cone, we move into what I call relationship as expression. Relationship as expression is an actual shift in the human relational paradigm. In the realm of relationship as experience, we are still learning and growing; however, the lessons are much more gentle because we are more attuned to our true nature as beings (in) human (form), and thus to the promptings of Spirit. The learnings we now experience occur more internally than externally. Largely gone are the dramatic and disruptive changes shown in images such as the Tower card of the Tarot, and in their place are the more subtle changes of the snake shedding its skin shown in the Death card of the Tarot. I remember here the lovely scene in the movie *Cocoon* in which the leading man demands to know the identity of the woman he is falling in love with. With some hesitation, she peels off the outer layer of her form to reveal the light being who is relating to him. And so we are, too, as we enter the realm of relationship as expression.

In the realm of relationship as expression, we are capable of healing duality. We begin to experience our wholeness and the wholeness of the other. Rather than having a

> We create levels of involvement with another that go beyond the limitations of romanticism and the constrictions of morality to become totally passionate and fully in truth.

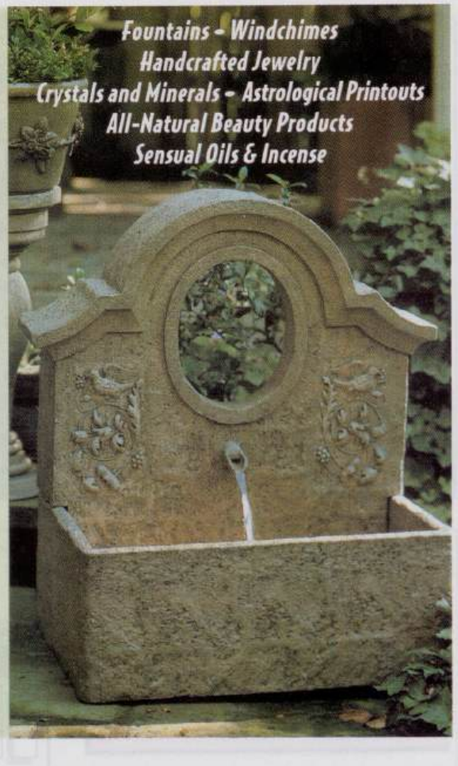
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sense of needing relationship to complete us, we come to relationship as complete. We no longer cut off or deny aspects of ourselves nor deny aspects of the other. We are no longer masculine or feminine, but both to some degree or other. We are no longer attracted only to men or to women; we are attracted to others regardless of gender. Sexual expression becomes fully physical and completely spiritual; it becomes pleasure, passion, and creation. We no longer are "seeing a dim reflection in a mirror. . ." but are now "seeing face to face" (1 Corinthians 13:12). We recognize who we are, and we are recognized.

The forms that our relationships take when we are immersed in relationship as expression are multi-dimensional. We may

> In the realm of relationship as expression, we begin to experience our wholeness and the wholeness of the other.

stay with one person for a long period of time (even until death), realizing that most of what we could learn from other men or women is contained and available in the intimacy of this experience. Or we may choose to have experiences that invite many relational energies into our lives. Or we may do both. At this point, we are also likely to realize the paradox that we are always in relationship and also always single. We are the unique droplet of water and we are the vast ocean. Relationship as expression is the realm where we can know the realness of love and where true partnership becomes possible. We create levels of involvement with another that go beyond the limitations of romanticism and the constrictions of morality to become totally passionate and fully in truth.

When we are in the realm of relationship as expression, we know that we are dismantling the illusions that hide the truth of who we are. We know that we are limitless beings, and we know that we are coming together on the journey Home. Blessed be! ■

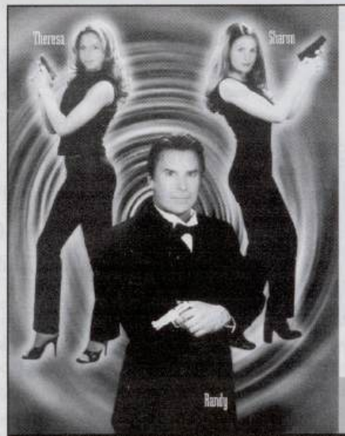
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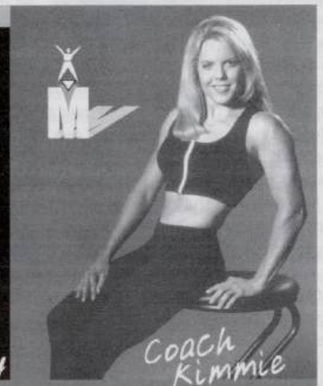
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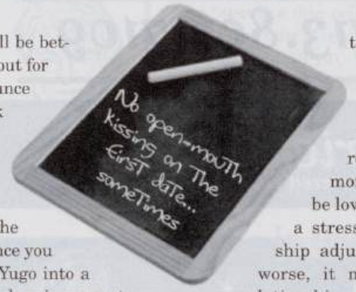
Gay Dating 101

Many in the community come away frustrated and hurt from approaching dating from a "heterosexual" mindset. Here's some basic training in this most basic—and scary—of endeavors

by Daniel Garces

Mom was great at making cookies, showing me how to share, and mending my knee when I tried to jump trash cans. But, strangely enough, gay dating wasn't her strong suit. In fact, I doubt Mom knew gay people dated until I started to bring the same guy around. I wonder what she would have said if, at 16, I had asked her about dating another man? After smelling salts, she would probably have offered something. But, would it have helped? Like so many of us, Mom never thought about gay dating or how it might be different from her own—heterosexual—relationship. All she knew was what she experienced and learned living in a small Texas town. Sure, there are similarities between gay and straight dating. But, that wasn't what kept impeding my relationships. I was stumped by the more specific and subtle issues that arise out of dating someone of the same sex. After all these years, here's what I imagine Mom would have said if she had known.

First, the bumper sticker says it best: "Rush is wrong." Give yourself *time* to find the right one. Remember, we're looking for quality, not quantity. Now if you're out looking to hook up and have a good time, that's one thing. But, when it comes to finding true love—Take Your Time. You'll be better off in the end. Take 'em out for a spin around the block, bounce on the seat awhile, look under the hood . . . and make sure you know a bit about the prior drivers and why they chose to trade in. Can you live with the dents and color? Because, once you buy, don't expect to turn a Yugo into a Cadillac. When it comes to choosing a partner, you need to ask yourself: "Can I live with this person . . . *just* the way they are?" This is a drive-off-the-lot-as-is deal.



Now, I know what you're thinking: This is good advice for any relationship. True. But, keep in mind, gay and lesbian people often rush into relationships looking for love, friendship, community, and acceptance—all at the same time. This creates a lot of pressure to move quickly into intimate relationships.

How do you know if you're rushing? Ask yourself these questions: Have I found and kept a circle of friends? Do I feel part of the community? Am I comfortable in the community? Am I feeling okay about being gay? If you answered "no" to any of these, then you're rushing and may be using your relationship as a way to satisfy your need for community. This often places undue pressure on a relationship to satisfy more than the need to be loved. At best, it may be a stress that your relationship adjusts to over time. At worse, it may overstress your relationship and cause it to end before it truly had a chance. Ease off the gas; give yourself time to enjoy the ride. Find out who you are and what side of the road you drive on before you crash into oncoming traffic.

Second, keep in mind that everyone has a different coming-out experience. If you're straight, you never question your orientation or come to self-awareness that you're different from "everyone" else. If you're gay, you come to this understanding first. Then you realize you may not be whom you assumed yourself to be. And then you begin the difficult process of sorting out which you are: gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender.

Some people are lucky, disclose their orientation, and end up in a PFLAG support group with their parents by the end of the month. Others end up out on the street struggling to find a safe place to stay . . . on top of trying to accept themselves. And still others never reveal a word to anyone and never allow themselves to act on their natural desires. Gay people come in all shapes, sizes, and levels of self-acceptance. Having sex is the easy part. Being comfortable with yourself and living in a society that doesn't secure your basic human rights is tough. People react differently to this challenge. Don't assume that your partner shares the same level of self-acceptance as you—this can be a big mistake. Have you ever reached for her hand in public, only to have it quickly pulled away? Have you ever placed your arm around him only to hear you're being "too affectionate"? Have you ever heard "no fems" or "no butches, please"? If so, then you know how frustrating this can be.

Remember that you have the right to express your affection any way you desire. But, if it's not well received, then you're going to have problems. Don't assume just because someone is older, or has been out longer, that they are more secure in their orientation. And definitely don't assume they will "catch up" with you someday. What you need to ask yourself is: Can you live with it the way it is? Or do you need to move on?

Finally, keep in mind that few people get it right the first time. When your little sister started dating, no one expected her to meet her husband and get married right away. Why then do we rush ourselves into finding that true love? Dating is a skill that takes time to develop. Sure, you may have come out later in life and know more about yourself—you might even be set in a career and have your own home. But, dating is a skill that involves more than just adult competence. It involves your emotions. Remember the first time you kissed someone of the same sex? It felt different, didn't it? When emotions are involved, it becomes a challenge to navigate relationships. Have you found yourself doing something your head was telling you not to? Are you finding you can't live without someone you only just met? If so, then you need to develop a way to handle these deeper-felt emotions.

Our first experiences tend to overwhelm us with emotions that have been pent up for years. Give yourself permission to sort these out and make mistakes. In time, you'll develop a better balance between your head and heart. And your relationships will improve naturally for it.

One day society will recognize our relationships and begin to discuss more openly our community's issues and concerns. The differences we experience as gay people will come to light, and an open dialogue on the gay experience will begin to surface. Then society will come to realize the unique challenges that face gay people in their daily lives. We will begin to see moms better prepared to guide us though dating. Mom will know that our experience of dating is different than heterosexuals, and that we need time to sort this experience out. Until that day arrives, we need to learn from one another and share our common experiences. Remember, we are all family and can nurture one another. Love is universal. The experience of love is not. ■

Therapist Daniel Garces sees individuals, couples, and groups at his Montrose office. He can be reached at dan77006@yahoo.com or www.dansmnd.net.


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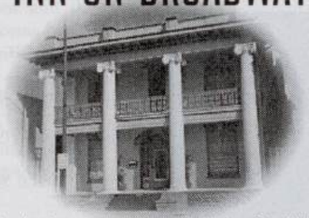
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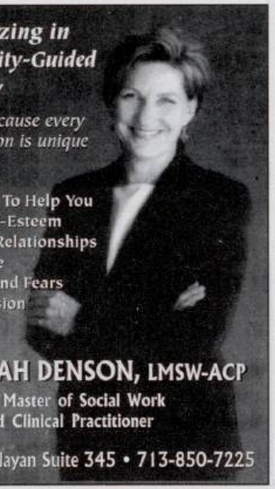
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by Lilly Roddy

The most significant event for this month is the first of this year's three Mercury retrogrades, which occurs Feb. 3–25. And if you include the couple of days before and the couple after, you basically have the entire month. • Mercury retrograde is about reviewing our past: career decisions, relationship choices, or simply a better understanding of our life path. The problem people experience with Mercury retrograde is when they try to begin new projects or enterprises. Then, things do go wrong. • Does this mean Mercury retrograde is bad? The answer is no. Remember, understanding astrology is much like following the seasons. For example, when the Sun is in Capricorn, it is wintertime here. Do we plant our crops? No. Do we flail about, wailing that we have no control over our lives? No, we go and get a coat or sweater and wait for the Sun to move into Aries, i.e. spring. I'd suggest a similar attitude to Mercury retrograde: Accept it for what it is. The best way to gain the benefits from Mercury retrograde is to clean out those bad relationships, family issues, closets, files, lives.• Stay in bed Feb. 3, 9th, 12th, 15th, 22nd, and 25th. Welcome the dawn the 4th, 8th, 11th, 17–18th, 20th, and 24th. Days to party are the 4th, 9th, 15th, 18th, and 22nd.

Aquarius (Jan. 20–Feb. 18) You are the lucky sign this month with Mercury retrograding in your sign. You are scrutinizing what you have accomplished over the last year, plus what you are going to do this new millennium. Take the time to deliberate on just what those plans need to be. Many of you are bored with your current life or looking for a deeper sense of contentment. This could mean the completion of some of the paths that you have been on for a while. Relationships, career paths, and friendships could be ending, all at your choice. Minimally, they have to be upgraded. Enjoy the month in contemplation and look for action in March.

Pisces (Feb. 19–March 20) Mercury teasingly enters your sign on the 1st and backs out on the 6th. Thus, just when you are about ready to act, the universe says, "Maybe you should rethink that!" You begin to feel antsy about your career after the 15th. You may want to just clean out your workspace and leave. Try and wait till the end of the month before you make the final decision. Opportunities should open up for you in March. If you can hold still, you will have more choices than you know what to do with. With the Sun entering your sign on the 18th, you will be ready for some new goals in your life.

Aries (March 21–April 19) Friendships and group associations are your theme this month. With Mercury retrograding through this area, expect to hear from those old friends whom you haven't heard from since they last needed something. You will go out of your way to avoid conflicts this month, being especially sweet and compliant to get your way. Many will be surprised by your new tactics and totally caught off guard. Your money problems are slowly beginning to lighten up. But don't invest in that new DVD player just yet. By month's end, you are ready for a rest.

Taurus (April 20–May 20) You are focused on your career, as you try to align what you do with your awakening spiritual drive. As Mercury retrogrades through this area of your life, you are on the verge of making a decision. In asking if you are happy and fulfilled, if the answer is no, you may be exiting your place of employment on the 9th, 12th, or 15th. You need to find some sense of renewal even if you are blissfully happy about what you do. Generally, things could just be crazy at work. Keep busy. Moving targets are harder to hit. And the pastures are definitely greener for the bulls and cows by the end of the month.

Gemini (May 21–June 21) Mercury is your ruling planet, and when she goes retrograde, watch out. Everything seems to be sdrxpwkcqbf. Take a break, for March will be extremely busy. It's a good time for a short vacation, especially someplace you have been before. You are in an intellectually creative time, your brain drawing on information that you have stashed away for a rainy day. That rainy day is now. Relationships can be adventuresome, hot and wet, combative, or all three. Time for relationship renewal or you may need a new lover/partner/significant other/wife/husband/life partner.

Cancer (June 22–July 22) Mercury retrograde is visiting your solar eighth house of shared resources, sexual activity, and emotional intimacy. So, what would you like to do first: start your taxes, visit your therapist, or have a roll in the hay? After much confusion the past two years, you are ready to get your financial affairs together. Your resources have been limited by situations outside of your control, so that no matter how hard you tried, you felt like a crab crawling uphill. That all seems to be easier now. Bad money days are Feb. 3 and 12. If you pay attention, you can use these days to get things in order. If you're not paying attention, watch out. Vacation time arrives at the end of the month.

Leo (July 23–Aug. 22) Yes, you have been wanting to hear from those old lovers, rescuers, and paramours with their smoldering sensual looks. Ah yes, where are the good old days? They are here this month. If you're in a relationship, time to renew the courtship. Do what you used to do before your partner was your partner. And don't be surprised to hear from those old flames. Yes, they are still interested and just waiting for an invitation. If you are not involved, this is *not* the time to be alone. For you who are in that spiritual retreat mode, souls can mingle quite well in a hot tub.

Virgo (Aug. 23–Sept. 22) Mercury is your ruling planet. With it going retrograde, you are reviewing your past, cleaning up your office, and settling those inter-office battles. You have really had it with those coworkers who don't contribute to office efficiency. They will have to get on board or walk the plank. You will not be as understanding as usual, and others may wonder who *is* this new person coming to work. Activity at home becomes quite a focus around mid-month, and will continue until the end of September. Family issues will have to be addressed. You will be losing your temper more easily. An exercise or diet program may help, along with a course in how to use a handgun.

Libra (Sept. 23–Oct. 23) Where oh where has that youthful creative spirit gone? Time to awaken that inner child from the nap with a kiss from Princess/Prince Charming. You are ready for play and fun. Nothing too serious this month or you will take your sandbox and go home. Responsibility is for anyone else but you. This month is a time of self-indulgence and sensual pleasure. If you have to work, then this is a wonderful time to market yourself, your products, or your ideas. Your charisma is strong. Build on established relationships. Avoid new people unless they want to take you out for drinks and dinner. By the end of the month, you will have to get back to work. You won't like it, but you have to.

Scorpio (Oct. 24–Nov. 21) Retrograding Mercury is visiting the family this month. A visit home is expected—you might as well go and enjoy that emotional button-pushing, or they will visit you—there is no escape. Projects around the house also take your attention. Try a family meeting. All is not running smoothly, but you can easily get things back on track. Escapist activities will show up, like your wanting to spend money impulsively. Days you feel trapped are the 3rd, 9th, 12th, and 15th. Avoid overloading yourself then.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22–Dec. 21) Mercury is helping you reorganize your daily activities, taking care of all those small jobs that you haven't found time for before. By mid-month you will be ready to do something different. During the first half, you should be careful driving, especially on the 3rd, 9th, and 15th. By mid-month, Mars, planet of personal challenges and dynamite, will be spending an exceptionally long time in your sign. Usually, Mars visits for about a month and a half every two years. This time, she is there mid-February to mid-September. Look for some outlets for this energy so that you don't rough up those who care about you.

Capricorn (Dec. 22–Jan. 19) Retrograding Mercury is touring your solar second house of money, personal resources, and talents. Balance your checkbook, finish your taxes before April 15, take care of old debts, and make a general reassessment of what your value is to yourself and others. This could be a great time to consider raising your fees, asking for a raise, or in general expecting more from others. But the key is to *consider,* not act . . . yet. You have to wait until the end of February. Relationships, both business and personal, could be a bit more testy if you feel that you are undervalued. The pressure does begin to ease some by the 19th.



Lilly Roddy is a Houston-based astrologer. She can be reached at lillycath@aol.com or www.cybersim.com/hermes.



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